

pasted with flour and water
onto slabs of wood.

The Garden of Sarah DeArmon Pea Rich

Laura D. Card

The call goes out to England,
"Bring seeds of snowball
and potato,
celery and hedgerow,
plum,
as seems you good."
"We have
5,000 peach seedlings
ready to set out."
Yet not one rose,
until she coaxed
Californian cuttings
into bud.
Laura D. Card

Autumn, Olives and The Atonement

Andrew C. Skinner

Autumn is a magnificent time of the year in the Holy Land for many reasons. The intense heat of summer begins to dissipate. Anticipation of change permeates the air. In a normal year, the first or "early" rains usually come in September or October and bring with them the promise of desperately needed, life-sustaining moisture which come from the "regular" rains that fall November through March. With the early rains also comes the season of the olive harvest. And it is this intense activity centering on the olive harvest and oil production that points our minds and hearts to Him who is symbolized by olive culture. The autumn season of harvest, no less than the spring season of Passover, is a graphic reminder of the truth declared by Nephi that all things given of God are a typifying of Christ (2 Ne. 11:4).

The cultivation of olive vineyards and the production of olive oil have a long and honorable history in the Holy Land among all groups of Abraham's posterity. In ancient times, olive trees and olive oil played a significant role in Israel's daily life. (In more modern times, the same could also be said of Ishmael's posterity.) Evidence indicates that olive trees were even more abundant in the Holy Land in Jesus' day than today⁴². The olive tree acted as both a religious and a national symbol for the people of Israel, and its fruit became one of the most important domestic and exported products in the biblical period. In Old Testament times, most houses and virtually every village had a small oil press to supply families with the necessities of life deriving from olive cultivation. By New Testament times stone olive crushers and lever presses were also quite plentiful throughout the land.

In ancient Israel, the olive tree was supreme among all others, as is reflected in scripture. First mentioned in connection with the great flood, the dove released by Noah is described as returning to the ark with an olive leaf in her mouth, signifying that the waters were abating (Gen. 8:11). Thus, by the appearance together of these two symbolic objects, the dove and olive leaf, the promise of continuing life on earth and peace with Deity were assured. Later in the Pentateuch, olive trees are mentioned in the early descriptions of Canaan, signifying both that the land was a holy land of promise given by Deity to Israel, and that the olive tree itself was a gift from God.

And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full (Deut. 6:10-11).

In the Temple built by Solomon, the cherubim placed within the Holy of Holies were made of olive wood (1 Kgs. 6:23). This was the very seat of God's presence, the place of his earthly dwelling, and the connection between Deity and the olive tree surely did not go unnoticed. In both the Tabernacle and the Temple, only "pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always" (Ex. 27:20) was permitted to be used. Furthermore, the entrance or doors to the inner sanctuary of the Temple were constructed of olive wood, as were the jambs to the entrance of the main hall of God's house (1 Kgs. 6:31-33). Olive branches were also used in the construction of booths for people to dwell during the mandated Feast of Tabernacles (Neh. 8:14-15).

Jeremiah 11:16 indicates that even Israel itself was called by Jehovah "a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit." Later rabbinic commentary expounded on this: "Israel was called 'an olive tree, leafy and fair' because they [Israel] shed light on all" (*Shmot Raba* 36,1).⁴³ This imagery undoubtedly came from the coloration of the olive leaf itself (as well as the fact that the oil was burned for light).

The underside of the olive leaf is covered with miniature whitish scales, while its upper side is dark green. This contrast of shades produces a unique silvery sheen when the wind rustles the leaves of the olive tree. The outer branches, moving in the breeze, expose the silver-colored underside of their leaves, in contrast to the dark green top side of the leaves of the motionless inner branches. These silver clouds of light seem to leap from tree to tree as the wind stirs the leaves, olive tree after olive tree.⁴⁴³

It is not simple happenstance that when Gideon's youngest son, Jotham, climbed Mount Gerizim and proclaimed a parable to the citizens of Shechem, the olive tree was given pride of place.

And when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.

The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us.

But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And

the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? (Judges 9:7-9)

As reflected in this passage, one of the reasons the olive tree was foremost among all others was because it was used to worship God as well as to sustain man. The olive tree and its oil were unequivocally regarded as one of the necessities of life. In fact, nothing from the olive tree went unused in the daily life of Israel. The oil from the fruit (the olives) was used for cooking, lighting, medicine, lubrication, and anointing. Those olives not crushed and pressed were pickled in brine and spices, and then eaten. The wood of the olive tree was not only used in constructing buildings, but also in making furniture, tools, and carvings, and even in crafting the shepherd's crook or staff. In turn, one may truly say that the olive tree was (and continues to be) a staff of life in the Middle East.

Oil Production

Techniques of olive oil production in more modern times suggest the way olives were cultivated, harvested, and processed in ancient times. Olive trees do not mature quickly, and the best yields come only after twelve or more years of patient care—a circumstance that presupposes a certain degree of settlement and peace. But with only a little attention given, an adult olive tree will continue to produce heavily (usually every other year) for many hundreds of years. Yield from a good tree was expected to be anywhere from ten to fifteen gallons of oil each season.⁴⁵

Interestingly, olive trees do not produce the best yields if they are given too much water during the year. Olive trees are hardy and survive—sometimes even thrive—under tremendous stress. Severe frost is harmful to them, but they can withstand long and intense periods of drought. Though it might sound effusive to say so, it is nonetheless true that when one sees an ancient olive tree, gnarled and bent and weather beaten, one feels a certain sense of reverence in the presence of a living thing that has endured so much travail in a hard land. Reputable studies have shown some of the olive trees on the Mount of Olives and in the Garden of Gethsemane to be between 1,800 and 2,300 years old.⁴⁶

Anciently, oil production was a significant and time-consuming undertaking. It consisted of six basic steps or procedures.

1. **Harvesting** the olives, of course leaving some for the poor, the fatherless, the widow, or the sojourner as specifically commanded in scripture (Deut 24:19-21; Leviticus 19:9-10; Ruth 2:2-3). Olives in ancient times were harvested during the period from September to late October, right after the first rains—which signaled the time for the harvest to begin (as they still do according to growers in the Holy Land today). In fact, the cycle of the fanning year is portrayed in one of the oldest, non-biblical, Hebrew inscriptions from the Holy Land, which dates to about the time of King Solomon (tenth century B.C.). It is called the Gezer Calendar and bears the resemblance of a child's ditty to help one remember the months of the agricultural year (similar to our own "Thirty days hath September . . ."). It begins with the olive harvest:

His two months are (olive) harvest,
His two months are planting (grain),
His two months are late planting;
His month is hoeing up of flax,

His month is harvest of barley,
His month is harvest and *feasting*;
His two months are vine-tending,

His month is summer fruit.⁴⁷ 62. **Separating** the olives into two groups—those for pickling and those for crushing.

3. **Crushing** the olives singled out to produce oil so as to make them into a pasty, oily, mash or pulp—pits and all. In Old Testament times, the crushing was usually done either through the use of a millstone, or by pounding from human feet in a rock-hewn press, even a wine-press (Deut. 33:24; Micah 6:15). By New Testament times, crushing was accomplished in a specially designed, carved rock basin called a *yam*. A crushing wheel made of stone was fitted snugly inside the stone basin and was either pushed around the interior of the basin by a strong man or pulled around by a beast of burden.

4. **Gathering** up the crushed pulp from the *yam* and placing it into several flat, round, woven baskets. The baskets, usually about two feet in diameter and three to four inches high, were then stacked, two or three at a time, under one of two traditional kinds of presses—either a lever press or a screw press. The lever press consisted of a long heavy wooden beam with huge stone weights attached to the opposite end of the beam from where the woven baskets were placed. Use of the lever press can be dated to the early Iron Age period (10th century B.C.). However, the screw press is not known to have been used until the late Hellenistic period (first century BC - first century AD).

5. **Pressing** the olive pulp. When pressure was applied to the olive mash located in the woven baskets stacked under the press, the oil then oozed out of the baskets and ran down a shallow channel into a collection pit. To facilitate the flow of the oil, hot water could be poured over the baskets being squeezed. Unlike the production process involving modern hydraulic presses, the pressing procedure in ancient times took many hours, even days, with pressure constantly having to be increased.

6. **Refining** the oil by allowing it to sit for several days in the collection pit before using it. When the oil flowed into the collection basin, it actually consisted of two liquids: the pure olive oil and a heavier, watery, sediment-filled liquid called the "dregs." When the two liquids were allowed to set up or settle, the pure oil rose to the top of the collection pit and was either skimmed off by hand or allowed to spill over into another collecting vat where the settling process was repeated, further refining the oil.

Symbolism

While olive cultivation and oil production inform our understanding of daily life and religious worship in biblical times, there is another aspect of olive culture which gives pause for deeper reflection on the meaning of the olive culture for us today. As Latter-day Saints know, all things testify of the Savior (Moses 6:63). And this is nowhere better demonstrated (or even as well for that matter) than with the cultivation of olive trees and the process of olive oil production. We are taught powerful and lasting lessons about the Savior's life and ministry. For the olive tree and its products, especially the pure oil, are the great symbols of Jesus the Messiah and his Atonement! And when we witness priesthood holders anointing family members and friends, the sick and afflicted, and even those who worship in temples of the Most High, we know to whom those anointings point, and to whom the olive oil points, and to whom the very olive trees point. Anyone who has been in the Holy Land during autumn will likely never forget the unmistakable connections between olives and the Savior. The following are some of the symbolic

relationships: 1. Olives are one of the seven native fruits indigenous to the Holy Land (Deut. 8:8), just as Jesus was a native of the Holy Land. The ancient rabbis likened Judah—the lineage of Jesus—unto the olive tree (Babylonian Talmud, Menahoth, 53b).

2. At least one strand of Jewish tradition identifies the tree of life as the olive tree,⁴⁸⁷ just as the Book of Mormon equates Jesus Christ with the tree of life and identifies his Atonement as the reality behind the symbol of *the fruit* of the tree of life in Lehi's dream (1 Ne. 11:21-22,25-33).

3. Just as Jewish tradition consistently refers to the olive tree as the tree of *light* (*Shmot Raba* 36,1) and a symbol of "light to the world" (*Tankhuma Tzave* 5,1), so too Jesus is *the* "Light of the World" (John 1:4-5, 8:12, 9:5, D&C 11:28). "The *menorah* was lit with 'pure oil of pounded olives'—'not with walnut oil or radish [seed] oil, but only with olive oil which is **a light unto the world.**' However, it is not only the olive oil which gives forth light, but also the olive tree itself."⁴⁹⁸ Among eastern Jews today, olive oil is still the only oil permitted for the eternal lamp in the synagogue. Anciently, Rabbi Tarfon had similarly declared that only pure olive oil could be used for the Sabbath lamps (Mishnah, *Shabbat*26a).⁵⁰⁹

4. Just as the branches that bear the olives have been regarded from earliest times as a universal symbol of peace, so too Jesus is the Prince of Peace whose recognition will someday be universal (Romans 14:11). This is the message of Doctrine and Covenants 88, which "was designated by the Prophet as the 'olive leaf . . . plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord's message of peace to us.'" (See D&C 88 heading.)

5. Just as olives are best picked individually so as not to damage the tree (ideally the olives are not to be stripped from the branches!), so too Christ's love is individual. If one uses alternative methods of harvesting the olives, such as stripping the branches or beating the tree (Deut. 24:20) in order to finish the harvest more quickly, the tree may be damaged⁵¹⁰. As with olives, so too with souls; it takes time and effort on an individual basis to effectively harvest both. But even the process of "beating" the tree is itself a symbol of the atoning act of the Savior (Isaiah 53:4-5), and perhaps that is why it is permitted in the scriptures as a harvesting technique.

6. One of the places Jesus most often visited in Jerusalem was the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:2). It was the place he went with his disciples during the last hours of his life. The name Gethsemane is a contraction of two Hebrew words (*gath* and *shemen*) and literally means "oil press"—or, practically speaking, *olive* oil press since that is the kind of oil that was produced in Gethsemane, which sits at the base of the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39). The connection between the name of the place Jesus went often, what was done there agriculturally, and what he would ultimately do there in the last hours of his mortal life is inescapable.

7. Just as olives were harvested and then bruised and crushed in the *yam*, and the life-fluid of the olives was pressed out under intense pressure in the place called "the oil press," so too the goodness and perfection of Jesus' life was "harvested" in Gethsemane. There *he* was "bruised" (Isaiah 53:5), and there *his* life-fluid, his blood, was pressed out by the crushing weight of sin and the extreme pressure of agony in the garden of the "oil press" (Mark 14:33-35; Luke 22:44).

8. Just as the actual bitter taste of the natural olive pulp is removed or "pressed out" with the pressing process (olives straight from the tree are exquisitely bitter), and the remaining oil actually retains a kind of sweet flavor, so too the bitterness of mortal life,

brought on by both sin and the other effects of the Fall of Adam, was removed or "pressed out" by Christ's Atonement (D&C 19:16-19). As a result of the Atonement both physical death and life beyond the grave become sweet (D&C 42:46). For example, nothing was so "sweet" to Alma as his joy over being redeemed through the Atonement of Christ (Alma 36:19-21).

9. Just as the first hues or color-tones of the oil from the best olives initially run red in the crusher and under the press, so too the perspiration of the best, finest, purest being on earth turned red as he began to bleed from every pore (Luke 22:44). Pure, fresh olive oil is the perfect symbol of Christ's blood which heals our wounds caused by sin, sickness, and death. Those who have been privileged enough to witness a first pressing of the season, when the oil initially flows over the limestone channel on its way to the collection vat, can testify that the color indeed runs red initially—a truly arresting, even chilling, sight. Such imagery turns our thoughts not just to the Savior's first coming, but also to his Second Coming as taught in the scriptures:

And it shall be said: Who is this that cometh down from God in heaven with dyed garments; yea, from the regions which are not known, clothed in his glorious apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?

And he shall say: I am he who spake in righteousness, mighty to save.

And the Lord shall be red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the wine-vat....

And his voice shall be heard: I have trodden the wine-press alone, and have brought judgment upon all people; and none were with me (D&C 133:46-48, 50).

The connection in ancient times between oil pressing and ancient wine presses was a real one. Wine presses were sometimes used as oil presses to crush olives when they were trodden out with the feet (Micah 6:15), and thus were regarded as interchangeable.

10. Just as the pressure on the olives under the press became more intense with each passing second, and thus resulted in the olives exuding more of their oil as more pressure was applied, so too the pressure on the Savior in the Garden became more intense over time and put him under greater and greater stress the longer he was in the place called the "oil press" (Luke 22:39-44; Matt. 26:36-45).

11. Just as pure olive oil was used as a great healing agent for the physical body in the ancient world (a concept that the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches in a profound way [see Luke 10:34]), so too the Atonement—the product of the "pressing" process in Gethsemane—is *the* greatest healing agent in all the universe, "worlds without number" (D&C 76:42-43). Christ is truly the "balm of Gilead."

12. Just as the finished product of the olive-pressing process yields the purest and brightest burning of the vegetable oils (a fact known in ancient Israel—Ex. 27:20), so too the pressing process in Gethsemane involved the purest and brightest, even brightest-burning (in terms of eternal glory) of the Father's children.

13. Just as the refined product of bruised, crushed, and pressed olives, *i.e.* pure olive oil, is set apart to consecrate the sick in order to foster healing, so too the purest of God's children was consecrated and set apart in premortality to be bruised, crushed, and pressed for our "sicknesses" and "pains" as well as our sins (Alma 7:11-12) so that we can be healed on the inside as well as the outside.

14. Just as pure olive oil was used in the temple in ancient times for anointing (Lev. 8:6-12), so it is similarly used in the Lord's temples—in those buildings which teach us the most about *the* "Anointed One." Every aspect of LDS temple worship ultimately centers on, is grounded in, and points us to the Savior and his Atonement.

15. In ancient times, Israel anointed her prophets, priests, and kings with olive oil (see as examples Exodus 30:30; 2 Samuel 2:4; 1 Kings 19:16). This was done as a type and foreshadowing of *the* Anointed One to come (Hebrew, *mashiach* or "Messiah"), who was also the true Prophet, Priest, and King of all eternity—as testified of in song ("I know that my Redeemer lives.... He lives, my Prophet, Priest, and King," *Hymns*, 136). Jesus was anointed to be the Redeemer (D&C 138:42).

16. Just as Deuteronomy 21:23 foreshadowed the death of the Messiah upon a "tree," so too history and geography (unlike art) teach that Roman crucifixion crosses in Palestine were often solidly rooted olive trees with their excess branches removed, and a crossbar (Latin, *patibulum*) attached. This is the image presented by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians on the merits and mercies of Christ (Gal. 3:13); ironically he describes Jesus—who is symbolized by the olive tree—as being crucified *on* an olive tree.⁵²11

17. In ancient times, olive oil was kept in a horn, the well-recognized and suitable repository for the anointing agent. "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam. 16:13). In ancient Israel anointing with olive oil was linked to the Messiah. And the Hebrew idiom, "horn of salvation," signified the Messiah's great power to judge and save (1 Sam. 2:10; 2 Sam. 22:3; Psalm 18:2, and Psalm 132:17). So too Jesus is symbolized by the "horn"—which represents his power. We note what Zacharias said about the Messiah at the time his own son, John the Baptist, was born: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (Luke 1:68-69).

18. Just as we, like the ancients, cannot anoint and consecrate ourselves with olive oil in order to perform ordinances on ourselves (we can only anoint and consecrate others), so too only another, the Anointed One, could make an infinite and eternal atonement for us (Alma 34:9-15). As we serve others by anointing them, we imitate the Messiah, who served *not* himself by consecrating his life, but, rather, served us and our needs.

19. Just as the prophets Zenos and Jacob (like Paul in Romans) symbolized the scattering and gathering of Israel through the image of the tame and wild olive trees, so the Book of Mormon teaches that the actual scatterer and gatherer of Israel is Jesus Christ himself, "and all the people who are of the house of Israel, will / gather in, saith the Lord, according to the words of the prophet Zenos" (1 Ne. 19:16, emphasis added). Israel is gathered first and foremost to the Person of Jesus Christ.

20. Just as putting "oil in the lamp" was a common, everyday necessity in the ancient world, so too "oil in the lamp" has become a powerful metaphor signifying faithfulness and readiness for the time of the Anointed One's Second Coming (Matthew 25:1-13). "Wherefore, be faithful, praying always, having your lamps trimmed and burning, and oil with you, that you may be ready at the coming of the Bridegroom" (D&C 33:17; 45:56-57). Metaphorically, we must constantly strive to burn as brightly as though we were vessels containing pure olive oil. **Conclusion**

As those who have lived in or visited the Holy Land know, a person cannot escape the image of the olive tree. Olive vineyards and ancient olive presses seem to be everywhere, and one's heart and mind become acutely attuned to their existence. Especially after witnessing an autumn olive harvest, some of us will never look at olive trees the same way again. We will never regard them as we might have in the past, never view them as being common or an ordinary part of the landscape.

Olive trees are not ordinary; they are extraordinary in an extraordinary land. They are part of the landscape of belief. It is not by accident that we anoint those seeking a blessing with olive oil. Olive trees and the oil derived from them are the most powerful and plentiful symbols in the Holy Land of Jesus Christ—the master healer, one who was born into a land with abundant reminders of his divinity. Olive trees are witnesses of his and his Father's love. Just as olive trees and olive oil were regarded as gifts from God (Deut. 6:10-11; 11:14), so too we realize that the Savior is our greatest gift from God (John 3:16). Just as the olive tree and olive oil sustained life, so the Savior sustains us. In the place called the "(olive) oil-press," Gethsemane, the Savior became like the olive.

Notes

1. At least two major episodes in the history of the Holy Land witnessed the wholesale destruction of olive trees—from which the region never fully recovered. The first occurred during the First Jewish Revolt (a.d. 66-70) when the Roman legions cut down trees all around Jerusalem to fuel the fires which burned the city and destroyed the temple. The second was the period of the so-called "tree-tax" imposed by the Ottoman Empire (ad 1517-1917) in Palestine.
2. Quoted in Nogah Hareuveni, *Nature in Our Biblical Heritage*, trans. Helen Frenkley (Kiryat Ono, Israel: Neot Kedumim, 1981), 139.
3. Ibid., 139.
4. John C. Trevor, "Olive Tree," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed., George A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:592, 596.
5. The following note comes from "Gethsemane's Ancient Olive Trees," *Biblical Archaeologist*, vol. 40, No. 2 (May, 1977):50. "Tour guides are inveterate romantics so it is not surprising that the guides to Gethsemane maintain that its grove of olive trees sheltered Christ. They may, in fact, be right. Carbon-14 tests on roots from the trees show that they are 2,300 years old. Such dating is notoriously flexible, but the antiquity of the trees is also supported by Prof. Shimon Lavi, director of the Orchard Department of the Volcani Institute, who estimates that they are between 1600 and 1800 years old, but possibly more."
6. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed., James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 320.
7. Louis Ginsberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), 1:93, 2:119. See also the apocryphal writing *Apocalypse of Moses* 9, 12 where the tree of life is associated with the olive tree.
8. Hareuveni, 134. Bolded words appear in the quotation.
9. "Oil," eds., R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 509.
10. In speaking with "old-timers" in the Holy Land today who know olives, they almost unanimously and emphatically say that the tree should *not* be beaten.

11. Research collected by the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem, Israel, and available in their brochure describing their biblical gardens.

¹ *Gospel Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970), 58.

¹ *Ibid.*, 126-28.

¹ 3. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1 vols., ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957), 6:608.

¹ *Ibid.*, 6:244.

¹ *Ibid.*, 5:402.

¹ "A Dedication—to Faith," *1969 BYU Speeches of the Year* (Provo: Brigham Young University Publications, 1969), 6.

¹ Conference Report, April 1971, 94.

¹ Jeffrey R. Holland, in Conference Report, April 1998, 31.

¹ See, for example, Neil Postman, *Technopoly* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 42.

¹ "Pedagogy of the Distressed," *College English*, vol. 52 no. 6 (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1991), 654.

¹ This relationship is detailed in a study of leading and guiding in Matthew O. Richardson, "The World Perspective and its Impact on Leadership Conceptions" (Ed.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1996), 101-106.

¹ *Christian Religious Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980), 136.

¹ Spencer W. Kimball, "Men of Example," *Charge to Religious Educators*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982), 45.

¹ Boyd K. Packer, "The Mantle is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect," *Charge to Religious Educators*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981-82), 34. See also D&C 19:22.

¹ Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, Co., 1975), 154.

¹ Elder Holland's full quotation is as follows: "Are we really nurturing our youth and our new members in a way that will sustain them when the stresses of life appear? Or are we giving them a kind of theological Twinkie—spiritually empty calories? President John Taylor once called such teaching 'fried froth,' the kind of thing you could eat all day and yet finish feeling totally unsatisfied." Jeffrey R. Holland, in Conference Report, April 1998, 32.

¹ Harold B. Lee, "Loyalty," *Charge to Religious Educators*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981-82), 64, emphasis in original.

¹ Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 2.

¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹ Ezra Taft Benson, "The Gospel Teacher and His Message," *Charge to Religious Educators*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981-82), 48.

¹ Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, May 1975, 65.

¹ See, for example, Palmer, 116.

¹ Conference Report, April 1997, 12.

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- ¹ J. Reuben Clark, Jr. "The Charted Course of the Church in Education," in *Charge to Religious Educators*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982), 7.
- ¹ *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory Maxwell (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 338.
- ¹ Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), 446, 449-50, emphasis added.
- ¹ Boyd K. Packer, *That All May Be Edified*, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 339-40, emphasis in original.
- ¹ *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 138, emphasis added.
- ¹ Unpublished address delivered in Los Angeles, California, 2 January 1969, 9, as cited in *Testimony*, comp. H. Stephen Stoker and Joseph C. Muren (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 139, emphasis added.
- ¹ "Eternal Investments," address given to CES personnel, Salt Lake City, 10 February 1989, 3, emphasis in original.
- ¹ *Teach Ye Diligently* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975), 275.
- ¹ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 313.
- ¹ *Gospel Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971), 205-6.
- ¹ See *Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), 21-22.
- ¹ *Matthew Cowley Speaks: Discourses of Elder Matthew Cowley of the Quorum of the Twelve of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971), 298-99.
- ¹ Conference Report, April 1970, 113.
- ¹ Bruce R. McConkie, Conference Report, October 1972, 21.
- ¹ Bruce R. McConkie, Conference Report, April 1985, 12.
- ¹ Harold B. Lee, *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1962, 742.
- ¹ Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 256.
- ¹ James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 3:145.
- ¹ *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards & Sons, 1851-86), 13:158.
- ¹ *The Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), 65.
- ¹ Neal A. Maxwell, *Notwithstanding My Weakness* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981), 59-60.
- ¹ . Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980), 127.
- ¹ Hugh Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, ed. John Welch, vol. 8 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. and F.A.R.M.S., 1989), 281-82. A photograph of the first part of this document and a partial translation can be found in Yigal Yadin, *Bar Kokhba* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), 176.

¹ Paul Hoskisson, "Alma as a Hebrew Name," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, 72-73. This article includes a fine color photograph of the entire document.

¹ On the reading al₆ see Joachim Krecher, "Sumerogramme und Syllabische Orthographic in den Texten aus Ebla," *La Lingua di Ebla*, Series Minor XXII, ed. Luigi Cagni (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, 1981), 142.

¹ Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 124.

¹ Jon Paulien, "Nicodemus," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:1105.

¹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 729-30.

¹ Paulien, 4:1106.

¹ Morris, 187-88, 137-38.

¹ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, The Anchor Bible Series (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 483-84.

¹ David O. McKay, Conference Report, April 1959, 48.

¹ For other examples of the 'hesitant interpretation,' see the following: *The Gospel Kingdom: Selections from the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor*, ed. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), 93. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1962), 163. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1976), 1:141.

² Conference Report, April 1958, 13-17.

³ *Ensign*, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, May 1998, 69-70.

⁴ This is a reduced version of a presentation I gave to the faculty of Religious Education in September 1996. I had circulated written versions of the presentation as early as May 1996 among colleagues for their comments.

⁵ Traditionally, as Elder McConkie in *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 130, has stated, there are three reasons that Christ the Son also bears the title Father: 1) He is the "Creator... of the heavens and of the earth," 2) "He is the Father of all those who are born again," and 3) He is the Father because of "divine investiture." See also the important and more thorough statement dated 30 June 1916 by the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles recorded in James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 5 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), 5:25-34. Sometimes I have heard a fourth reason (similar to Elder McConkie's second reason), that Christ is the Father because he is the Father of the Atonement, just as George Washington is the Father of the United States. The reason Abinadi applied the title Father to Christ in this passage is different than these four, making this a fifth reason. This paper will make the fifth reason clear.

⁶ This and all subsequent scriptural references refer to Mosiah in the Book of Mormon, unless specifically noted otherwise.

⁷ For other references to Christ as the Only Begotten Son of God see Jacob 4:5 and 11; John 1:14 and 18.

⁸ See also D&C 93:4, where Christ states that he is "the Father because he gave me of his fulness, and the Son because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men."

⁹ See also *Lectures on Faith*, 5:2. Christ "is called the Son because of the flesh, and descended in suffering below that which man can suffer; or, in other words, suffered greater sufferings, and was exposed to more powerful contradictions than any man can be."

¹⁰ "Spirit" here does not refer to the spirit person that we were in the premortal life. It refers rather to a characteristic or an aspect of Christ's divine nature which he inherited as the Only Begotten. Another way of stating this would be "spiritual nature" versus "mortal nature." This distinction is obvious for "spiritually" versus "naturally" in Moses 3:5. Compare Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 756-761; and Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 14th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 432.

¹¹ That is why Amulek could say "there should be a great and last sacrifice; yea, not a sacrifice of man, neither of beast, neither of any manner of fowl; for it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice" (Alma 34:10). Christ, if he were only a mortal like all other mortals, could not have performed a sacrifice to atone for mankind. It was because of his immortal nature that his sacrifice was infinite and eternal.

¹² A colleague in Religious Educational Brigham Young University, reminded me of this passage. Note also Christ's words on the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46).

¹³ For a similar listing see Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 192.

¹⁴ The Atonement, if it is to be effected by a valid sacrifice, must be freely given (as all sacrifices must be freely given to be valid). If the Savior's life could be taken from him by force, then his death would be involuntary and not a sacrifice. Thus he said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again" (John 10:17). It was not enough that he had the ability to simply walk away from captivity and death. It was not enough that he allowed himself to be placed in the hands of the executioners. He also had to choose, he had to will, temporal death. For this reason, crucifixion, though we are repulsed by the vile aspects of this form of execution, was probably the only type of execution that gave the Savior the choice of whether to die or not to die. To the casual observer, it would have appeared that Christ had been executed by crucifixion. However, to those like Abinadi who understood the nature of Christ's sacrifice, his death on the cross was an act of his own will and not of the executioners. This recognition is hinted at in Mark 15:39 for the Roman centurion attending the crucifixion, when he stated, "Truly this man was the Son of God." There may be other forms of execution that would fulfil the requirements just outlined, but I am unaware of any.

¹⁵ See King Benjamin's delivery of the words of an angel of God on the Atonement in Mosiah 3. Verses 8 and 9 especially reveal a knowledge of the doctrine Abinadi taught. See also Nephi's vision in 1 Nephi 11, Alma's speech in Alma 7, Amulek's understanding in Alma 34:9-10 and Alma's explanation of the atonement to his son in Alma 42, especially verse 15. It should be noted that Abinadi may not have had access to any of

these discourses, with the exception of 1 Nephi 11. But he could have drawn upon the same source of inspiration for this doctrine that was available to Alma and Amulek.

¹⁶ *Deseret News Church Section*, 1 August 1931, 4, as cited in G. Homer Durham, (comp.) *Gospel Standards*, (1976), 229.

¹⁷ Conference Report, October 1907, 25.

¹⁸ Conference Report, October 1917, 26.

¹⁹ Conference Report, April 1922, 15.

²⁰ Conference Report, October 1924, 5-6.

²¹ Conference Report, April 1928, 5.

²² Conference Report, October 1929, 3.

²³ Conference Report, October 1913, 87-88.

²⁴ Conference Report, October 1925, 3.

²⁵ Conference Report, April 1929, 88; Daniel C. Peterson, *Abraham Divided* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1992), 331-39.

²⁶ *Deseret News Church Section*, 1 August 1931, 4, as cited in *Gospel Standards*, 152-153.

²⁷ Conference Report, October 1933, 9-10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

²⁹ Conference Report, October 1935, 11.

³⁰ Conference Report, April 1930, 183, October 1934, 6. President Grant thanked Tribune writers for their fair and comprehensive coverage of the Church on its centennial anniversary. He thanked Roman Catholic officials for their tributes to counselor Anthony W. Ivins and for tolling the bells of the splendid Cathedral of the Madeleine as the funeral cortege of Elder Ivins passed by. Graciously, Roman Catholic officials also tolled the Cathedral bells during President Grant's funeral procession. See Francis M. Gibbons, *Heber J. Grant: Man of Steel, Prophet of God* (1979), 231-32.

³¹ Gibbons, 227.

³² Conference Report, October 1943, 125.

³³ In April 1990 general conference, President James E. Faust observed that "the expression of kindness is universally appropriate." See *Ensign*, May 1990, 86.

³⁴ This paper was first given at the Conference on Ancient Scriptures and Modern Revelations, Brigham Young University, 7 June 1997.

³⁵ Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1 vols., ed., B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957), 1:224,226.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 226.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 299. The prayer echoed the regrets of Moroni that the Nephites were not "mighty in writing"; "when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words" (Ether 12:24-25; cf. 2 Nephi 33:1). Moroni spoke for every writer in every age, but most poignantly for the prophets who had to bridge the gulf between divine vision and human language.

³⁸ Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:226.

³⁹ Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 111.

⁴⁰ Ezra Booth in Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled; or, A Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, From its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville: Printed and published by the author, 1834), 177, 181.

⁴¹ Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:417.

⁴² At least two major episodes in the history of the Holy Land witnessed the wholesale destruction of olive trees—from which the region never fully recovered. The first occurred during the First Jewish Revolt (a.d. 66-70) when the Roman legions cut down trees all around Jerusalem to fuel the fires which burned the city and destroyed the temple. The second was the period of the so-called "tree-tax" imposed by the Ottoman Empire (ad 1517-1917) in Palestine.

⁴³ Quoted in Nogah Hareuveni, *Nature in Our Biblical Heritage*, trans. Helen Frenkley (Kiryat Ono, Israel: Neot Kedumim, 1981), 139.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁴⁵ John C. Trevor, "Olive Tree," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed., George A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:592, 596.

⁴⁶ The following note comes from "Gethsemane's Ancient Olive Trees," *Biblical Archaeologist*, vol. 40, No. 2 (May, 1977):50. "Tour guides are inveterate romantics so it is not surprising that the guides to Gethsemane maintain that its grove of olive trees sheltered Christ. They may, in fact, be right. Carbon-14 tests on roots from the trees show that they are 2,300 years old. Such dating is notoriously flexible, but the antiquity of the trees is also supported by Prof. Shimon Lavi, director of the Orchard Department of the Volcani Institute, who estimates that they are between 1600 and 1800 years old, but possibly more."

⁴⁷ *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed., James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 320.

⁴⁸ Louis Ginsberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), 1:93, 2:119. See also the apocryphal writing *Apocalypse of Moses* 9, 12 where the tree of life is associated with the olive tree.

⁴⁹ Louis Ginsberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), 1:93, 2:119. See also the apocryphal writing *Apocalypse of Moses* 9, 12 where the tree of life is associated with the olive tree.

⁵⁰ "Oil," eds., R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 509.

⁵¹ In speaking with "old-timers" in the Holy Land today who know olives, they almost unanimously and emphatically say that the tree should *not* be beaten.

⁵² Research collected by the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem, Israel, and available in their brochure describing their biblical gardens.