

PARABLES

We'll touch on this one day—on the subject of parables. We'll do it from the standpoint of indicating possible approaches that could be made in study and investigation of all of the parables. Hopefully, many people will want to take the parables and analyze them and figure out what they mean and learn what is involved in them.

I suppose that if somebody in the world were asked the question (sectarian world), “What is there that is distinctive and unique about the mission and ministry of Jesus?” they probably would say, “Well the atoning sacrifice first; the great miracles he performed second, and then quite likely the fact that he taught in parables.” This is what I suppose was in the minds of the average person in the sectarian world.

I guess if we put it in a little better perspective, than that from our knowledge as Latter-day Saints, we'd say that the first great thing in importance is the atoning sacrifice that He worked out; the second thing, that he bore testimony of His own divinity—proclaimed the divine Sonship on every occasion; and either as a subheading to that, or as a separate heading itself, then we'd say he'd proclaimed the gospel—He taught the gospel. He restored for that day the plan of life and salvation.

This matter of teaching in parables, and of working miracles would be wholly incidental to that. Although the miracles, themselves, stand as a witness of His Divine Sonship and of the truth of the teachings that He gave. The parables stand out in His life because nobody taught in parables with the effect and power and ability that He did.

It's quite a difficult thing to create a parable, if you like it meritorious and particularly good. If you'd like an experience in creative spirituality or original things, go ahead and try to create a parable. Create a parable based on modern circumstances that has some portion of the impact that the parables had that Jesus gave.

Well maybe this morning, if we would discuss the principle of parables—Why Jesus Taught in Parables—and then take one illustration of what is involved in a parable, that illustration being the wheat and the tares, we could get a concept of what's involved. There ought to be a few general statements made in connection with this matter—Why Jesus Taught in Parables.

Let's look on page 281 in our text, just for the purpose of seeing the introductory comments that were made. I think perhaps we ought to read them. These other references I put on the page are just some samples of parables, types of parables, not all of them but outstanding ones that indicate what's involved.

For the Matthew account he states many things unto them in parables, after He's given one.

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

(Notice it says unto them the people.) He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you (the disciples) to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.

For whosoever hath, to him shall he given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall he taken away even that he hath.

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. (Matt. 13:10-16.)

(And so on. Well the 35th verse.)

. . . I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. (Matt. 13:35.)

Here again I think if you ask the average sectarian or the average student in a seminary class, they'd probably say, "Well Jesus taught in parables in order to get His teaching over. In order to give something to people in a way that they'd remember it. Parables are a wonderful way to teach." The fact of the matter is, that just isn't so. Parables are not a wonderful way to teach. Parables are not a good approach to a subject, i.e., if you want people to know what you're talking about. Parables are given, as this indicates, to obscure. They are given so you won't know what the doctrine is unless you already know it. If you already know what the doctrine is and you hear a parable, this is a wonderful thing, but if you don't know what the doctrine is, the parable doesn't help you, really, anything to speak of.

And so if you're going to teach a doctrine in the Church, you ought not teach it by reference to a parable, unless you have already explained the doctrine, and you used the parable in the way that Jesus used it where the disciples are concerned. If you're going out and teach the gospel as missionaries, to the world, to the people that don't know anything about it, you don't talk in parables because the parables would hide what's involved.

Now we could spend the whole course, all of our lessons on the parables. And if we did we'd discover that nobody knows what some of the parables mean. I'll give you a parable this morning and suggest an enterprise to figure out what it means, if you want to

determine and develop this subject. Parables are for the spiritually illiterate, in the sense that they hide the gospel from them, they're for the spiritually literate in the sense that they make a beautiful story for somebody who already knows what the gospel is.

Now if a parable comes to a non-member of the Church and he then gets converted, he can look back and remember what the parable was and this is a helpful thing. There are stories, of course, this helps crystallize a thought. So where a member of the Church is concerned, when he thinks of making bread, or planting wheat, or fishing or anything else, the common ordinary day act will center his attention on the truth that was involved.

Now there is more than one interpretation for most parables. It's just not a single thing. Normally it's a number of things. You can read what somebody says, and what somebody else says, and the chances are that the story is of such a nature that it can be used in more than one way. But when you get right down to it, the only way to understand what a parable says is to get a revelation. Unless you already know the gospel. You just out and out have to get a revelation.

It's obvious in Jesus' setting that he began teaching in parables when the persecution was severe. So the effects of the parable was to hide his doctrine and keep the intensity of His persecution from rising, but at the same time let those who already knew what it was talking about get a vision and concept of what He did.

Now an interesting comparison is that he did not teach in parables to the Nephites. He came and He told the Nephites the doctrine in plain simplicity. This is the doctrine, here it is. No parables. Nothing to hide it. Nothing to cloud the issue. Nothing to keep the full impact of the message from them.

Well I just say that introductorily to indicate a little of what's involved in using parables. Now does anybody want to ask any question about the reasons for the use of parables? I assume from the text statement we read that we're pretty much united on this.

I want to spend the balance of our time, most of it today, on illustrating these principles through the use of this parable—the wheat and the tares. I think maybe this is as easy a parable to understand as any, unless you took just one of these little one sentence parables that are in no sense complex but don't require any particular interpretation. As far as major parables are concerned, this is as easy as any. And yet we'll see that this isn't the easiest thing in the world. Most of them are more difficult, major ones, than this particular parable is.

We'll just take the time to analyze this one in total. Turn to page 293 and we'll keep it open here for a little while and see if we can't learn what's involved. I put those four columns there. And I thought what we'd do is put in the first column—the statements that are made in the parable. This happens to be one that Jesus interprets so we'll have His interpretation of what the experience means and then quite providentially we've got a second interpretation of this parable which is given by latter-day revelation and it's not

quite the same as the one Jesus gave in His ministry. And then we also have some commentary by Joseph Smith on it.

And if you're going to study the parables a very profitable thing to do is always to weave in the Prophet's commentary. Most of the major parables, Joseph Smith interpreted. And at least half the time his interpretation, at least his application, is something that no one in the world would ever think of. It's just purely out of the blue as far as the world is concerned, and yet it's the spirit of inspiration.

With reference to interpreting parables, the best way to interpret them is to wait till they're fulfilled. It's just almost impossible to interpret a parable before it's fulfilled. But after the events have transpired then you can look back. This is what we're going to see here. Jesus is going to interpret it from the perspective of the Meridian of Time.

But now some things have occurred in consequence, the Lord looking back can give a revelation, and in effect he expands the meaning of the parable or gives a dual interpretation of it—enlarges its usage. Well page 293. Matthew 13:24:

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field . . .

The Kingdom of Heaven—now this is something that is repetitiously used in the parable. The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto such and such and we need a good clear understanding of what that means: The Kingdom of Heaven. It doesn't mean what might be inferred. Looking at that someone might say, "That's the Celestial Kingdom." It isn't.

These parables were translated a little differently than we would translate them if we were getting them in the language that's commonly used. The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto means the Church of Christ. Now this isn't in Jesus' interpretation as we'll see. But this is just us writing down, in effect, the synonym for the word. They used the language like we use it. We say, "The Church is the Kingdom of God on earth." "The Celestial Kingdom is the Kingdom of Heaven." The one prepares people to go to the other. So all these parables, I think all of them, there may be an exception, it doesn't occur to me, when it says the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto such and such it means the Church of Jesus Christ is likened unto such and such; a net east into the sea brings in fish of all kinds; a pearl of great price; or whatever may be involved. This is just a matter of understanding what words mean and getting oriented by way of definition.

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sire didst not thou sow good seed in they field? from whence then hath it tares?

He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. (Matt 13:24-30, *DNTC*, p. 293.)

Now that is the story of the parable. Let's fill out this first column so we'll know what we're talking about. First there's the Kingdom of Heaven. We need to know what that means. Then there's the man who sowed the seed. Then there's the good seed. (If you want an experience in interpretation, in effect, do this same thing for any one of the parables.) Then there's the field. Then there's the enemy. (All we're doing at the moment, now, is listing the things that are in the parables so that we can interpret and discover what they mean.) Then number six: there's the fact that the blade grew. Number five the enemy; we have left out the tares. Six is the tares. Seven the blade grew—the grain grew. Eight the fruit. Nine the servants who ask the questions in that day. Ten the tares and the wheat grow together. 11 the harvest. 12 the reapers. 13 the burning of the tares. And we've really got an extra one here that isn't in here but we'll comment about it and we'll make it 13-A, and call it the furnace of fire. Then the final or fourteenth one is the fact that the wheat is gathered into barns.

Now maybe you can divide this up in some other way than I've done it, but what I've done for all practical purposes here is to simply read down the parable and write down every important phrase that's in it that will need definition and need clarification, and interpretation.

All right we've heard what Jesus said in the parable now.

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. (Matt 13:36, *DNTC*, p. 293.)

All right, He's going to tell the disciples something that the general run of people didn't hear. As far as the general run were concerned, here is the parable. And really it's an act of mercy to approach it this way, because if he said in plainness to the multitudes some of these things, they'd be condemned for their added knowledge and they're really not entitled to know the full doctrine of what's involved. But now He's going to tell the disciples the meaning, the full doctrine, in this instance they haven't understood it. And this is the principle that's involved in this sort of thing. In Alma the 12th chapter the Lord gives a principle about teaching. And the principle in substance is like this:

. . . It is given unto many to know the doctrines of the kingdom; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to that portion of his

word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him. (Alma 12:9.)

We in this dispensation have a portion of His word, because we don't live as well as we might. The people who had the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon had more because they lived better. When we get the sealed portion it will be because we live better.

Well here's an illustration of it. He gave the multitudes the parable, the portion of His word they're entitled to hear. Now He gives the disciples more, but he doesn't give them too much as we're going to see.

He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; (Now that's Christ himself.)

The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; (Meaning the members of The Church of Jesus Christ, those who come in and who follow Him and who are adopted into His family.) but the tares are the children of the wicked one; (In the same sense, it's somebody who followed Christ and believed the gospel, is a child of kingdom, somebody who believed false doctrine is a child of the devil—he's believing what doesn't lead to salvation, a false system of religion. The same thing that Jesus said to the Jews that they were the children of the devil and not the children of Abraham.)

The enemy that sowed them is the devil: (He uses his children—those who follow.) The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be at the end of the world. (Matt. 13:37-40, *DNTC*, p. 293.)

Now here is something that wasn't in the original parable. He talks about the burning and the end of the world and hence I added that 13-A. And that furnace in which they're burned we'll just make an interpretation of that is hell and of course the torment that's involved where people are so handled. The burning of the tares is the Second Coming.

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, them which do iniquity;

And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. [That is if you are able to understand and receive this fine, and if you're not just because you're not prepared it can't be helped.] (Matt. 13:41-43, *DNTC*, p. 293.)

Well the blade grew. Now this is not interpreted in the parable. So in parenthesis I'll just put what it means. It's talking about the Primitive Church. It's talking about, obviously, the church in Christ's day. The blade grew.

Now what's the fruit? It isn't specified but it's quite apparent that it the fruit, it comes from sowing the seed, and blades growing is the blessings of the gospel. And the blessings of the gospel which grows in the hearts of men are peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come.

Now the servants who came and asked, should they go out and burn the tares, can't be anything except the servants of Christ who lived in that day. They're Christ's ministers. They're the apostles and prophets of that day who wanted to do something about what was going on.

The reapers, the angels. Now this is a little difficult. All that interpretation said was the angels were the reapers. The reapers could be in two categories. They could be both mortal—people that go out and reap in the fields; and they could be the immortal—the angels who come with the Lord to perform functions incidental to his Second Coming. We don't have quite the room we need here to write, but under this matter of the reapers what we really ought to include is a sentence: The Church is going to be cleansed. Cleansing of the Church, it's not just the world. And in that connection the way we get that is to look at this verse in the parable that says he's going to—"They shall gather out of His kingdom," (Matt 13:41). The Church is going to be cleansed. His kingdom which is The Church.

Now number 13, the burning, well we haven't left room here but right in here after 13, that the earth is burned at the Second Coming of Christ, we're dealing with the Second Coming and that's when the earth will be burned at His coming.

And gathering the wheat into the barn, obviously, is the saving of the fruit so that's salvation of people.

Well I don't know that every word that we've said by way of interpretation is exactly in the parable, but from the whole context of Jesus' interpretation it's pretty clear that in effect this is what that parable meant, as far as its interpretation in the day in which Jesus was talking, is concerned. Now we put that on the board. Any questions anybody wants to ask about whether we're interpreting this the way the apostles or disciples who were with Jesus at the time were entitled to have it interpreted. Do you think that this type, I say was one of the easiest major parables. Do you think you would have gotten all of this interpretation out of it unless the Lord told you what it was? Well you wouldn't obviously if you'd been in a the position of those disciples. They didn't get all of this interpretation.

This interpretation seems fairly easy to us because a good deal of what is involved has taken place. Well having that in mind, new let's read together Section 86 on page 284.

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servants, concerning the parable of the wheat and the tares: [Now this isn't an explicit interpretation but it's relative to it and embraces within it the interpretation.]

Behold, verily I say, the field was the world, and the apostles were the sower of the seed;

And after they have fallen asleep the great persecutor of the church, the apostate, the whore, even Babylon, that maketh all nations to drink of her cup, in whose hearts the enemy, even Satan, sitteth to reign—behold he soweth the tares; wherefore, the tares choke the wheat and drive the church into the wilderness.

But behold, in the last days, even now while the Lord is beginning to bring forth the word, and the blade is springing up and is yet tender—

Behold, verily I say unto you, the angels are crying unto the Lord day and night, who are ready and waiting to be sent forth to reap down the fields;

But the Lord saith unto them, pluck not up the tares while the blade is yet tender (for verily your faith is weak), lest you destroy the wheat also.

Therefore, let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest is fully ripe; then ye shall first gather out the wheat from among the tares, and after the gathering of the wheat, behold and lo, the tares are bound in bundles, and the field remaineth to be burned. (D&C 86:1-7.)

Now we'll pick up the rest next which says that in the light of all that, there's certain things that are involved.

Well let's run down our list and see what this interpretation does to the parable. To begin with under this second one, now the sower of the seed are the apostles, not Christ but the apostles. Well in a sense it's still Christ but he's acting through his servants.

Now nothing is said about the children of the Kingdom.

The field is still the world, there's no change in that.

Now here the enemy is the devil. Well that's good enough in Jesus' day, but now the event has transpired and so as I say you know what a parable means you look back after it's fulfilled and you know particularly what's involved and so the enemy instead of being the devil is the apostate church. This time the explanation is expanded. So it's the apostate church and note particularly it's the church that ruled over the nations of the earth and it's the church that ruled by the power of the devil so the enemy is still the devil in the ultimate but this is the agency through whom the devil is working on earth and the same is true back here.

The man that sows the seed is still the Son of man but here is the agency to whom the seeds were sown—the servants that He used for the purpose of doing it. All right there's no change in six or yes there is.

In six it has the children of the devil in Jesus' day but under six now in effect the Lord talks about a universal apostasy. This false church ruling over all nations.

Now here the blade grew, and it was obviously the Primitive Church but this time the parable means something else. The parable means the restoration. The seed is planted over again now. The restoration of the gospel in latter-days, the latter-day saints, the setting up of the Church and this time a special mention that the faith of the saints is weak, meaning us. The faith of the saints is weak and hence let the wheat and the tares grow together.

All right eight and nine, there's no difference.

Number ten we have here is the time between the First and Second Coming. This time is the time until the end of the world which in essence is the same thing.

Number 11 and 12 no change.

Now number 13 the matter of burning of the tares—and we learned here in this added interpretation that the burning of the tares comes after the gathering of Israel. So here is a new thing somewhat added with the concept of the parable.

Number 14 says that you gather the wheat first and then comes the burning of the vineyard.

Well let's take one more thing about this and then let's talk about it. And this other thing is on page 295. And here's what I suggest that you always do with a parable if you can. And you can with the major ones. The Prophet did this for us.

We learned by this parable, Joseph Smith wrote, not only the setting up of the kingdom in the days of the Savior (which is represented by the good seed which produced fruit), but also the corruptions of the Church (which are represented by the tares which were sown by the enemy), which his disciples would fain have plucked up, or cleansed the Church of, if their views had been favored by the Savior. But he, knowing all things, says, Not so. As much as to say, Your views are not correct; the Church is in its infancy, and if you take this rash step, you will destroy the wheat, or the Church, with the tares; therefore it is better to let them grow together until the harvest, or the end of the world, which means the destruction of the wicked, which is not yet fulfilled.

The harvest and the end of the world have an allusion directly to the human family in the last days . . . As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world; that is, (Now this is very expressive.) as the servants of God go

forth warning the nations, both priests and people, and as they harden their hearts and reject the light of truth—these first being delivered over to the buffetings of Satan, and the law and the testimony being closed up, as it was in the case of the Jews—they are left in darkness, and delivered over unto the day of burning. Thus, being bound up by their creeds, (expanded) and their bands being made strong by their priests, they are prepared for the fulfillment of the saying of the Savior—‘The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace for fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.’

We understand that the work of gathering together of the wheat into barns, or garners, is to take place while the tares are being bound over, (Now this is different from what we previously had.) and incident To preparing for the day of burning, and that after the day of burnings, the righteous shall shine forth like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. (*Teachings*, pp 97-98, 101, *DNTC*, pp. 295, 296.)

Well let’s get that down before us. Now when we get the prophet’s interpretation, when we’re dealing with number three here we’re talking about the Church in the Meridian of Time. That’s clear to you. When we get down to number six the tares, this time the revelation says universal apostasy the prophet calls it the corruptions of the Church, which is a little more explicit in a way, it ties it down to the organization concerned.

Now number seven the blade grew, and in this instance its future, so he talks about it as the proposed destruction of the tares.

The fruit, number eight, in this account he’s talking about the Church in the Meridian of Time, the fruit that was grown back there.

Number nine when he talks about the servants who ask, he’s talking about the angels this time.

Number ten let them grow together until the last days, which pins it down a little more.

Number 11 the harvest is the end of the world in the last days. He says nothing about the reapers.

But now we get down to number 13 and his interpretation and this magnifies the concept that’s involved. It’s going to take place at the end of the world. And it’s going to take place after the warning voice of the missionaries. After the latter-day Israel goes forth to raise the warning voice and he adds this concept that the thing that’s wrong with people is how they’re going to be bound is that they’re bound by their creed. These tares are going to be put in bundles to be burned—bound in bundles—and the thing that binds them is their creed. Which is a concept we haven’t before had.

Now in his explanation, number 13 and 14, in our list occur together at the same time which is a little different than we read before. Number 13 the burning of the tares and the gathering of the wheat.

Well does that sound a little confusing? Does it sound a little tough? Not quite as interesting a thing to be engaged in maybe? There's a doctrine we might be laying out. All right I deliberately took the time to put on the board an illustration of what you can do to try and analyze and figure out what a parable means. And I chose what I think probably is the easiest major parable. Maybe it isn't, maybe it's easier to understand the parable in the 16th chapter of Luke of about Lazareth and the rich man because that's a little different type of a parable, and it's in a category by itself. But here again, we understand that one, not because the parable is given to us but because we have the 40th chapter of Alma which tells us what's involved.

Well this sort of gives a good idea, from my viewpoint at least, as to what's involved in a parable. Here's a parable and it's a glorious thing says someone. Well that's fine, what does it mean? Well what does it mean? Now we've had the Lord's interpretation; we've had the revealed interpretation; we've had the expanded interpretation by the prophet, they're all different.

If I were going to make a little prediction I'd say, "All right when the millennium gets here and it's all over somebody will sit down and write an explanation of this parable and it will say what the parable really means." Somebody will expand this parable out after the Second Coming, after all the events that are involved are transpired and for the first time, we'll end up either knowing what the parable of the wheat and the tares really means. You can't understand a parable, aside from pure revelation. You can't interpret it until after the events have transpired. And if it's interpreted before the events transpired it has to be revelation or inspiration to indicate to you what it means.

Now somebody will get up in our meetings and they'll read the parable of the prodigal son, and they'll say, my isn't it a wonderful thing here it says this that or the other thing and the wayward children can be brought back and they can be saved and all this nonsense. Well it just doesn't work. You don't teach doctrine from a parable until you first know the doctrine—and first teach the doctrine. And then you use the parable to illustrate or dramatize the thing that you already know to be the case. And so if you don't know the doctrine initially, don't use the parable.

Now you can take some of these parables and get a half-a-dozen interpretations and somebody wants to prove something to you they quote a parable. Well it's just not worth listening. It's not worth spending the time on. You don't get the doctrines of the kingdom out of the parables.

Well let me tell you something if you'd like to do it now. You can take the New Testament and somebody has interpreted all the parables. If I'm not mistaken Brother

Talmage has an interpretation of every one of the parables. But obviously in this commentary I've attempted to make an explanation in so far as our light and knowledge goes or what I knew or what every one of these parables means. Well if you'd like to have an experience in scriptural interpretation and analysis let me give you a parable and you interpret it.

You take the fifth chapter of Jacob. If any of you ever interpreted that, and maybe some of the earlier brethren did and I'm not aware of it, I don't know. But if anyone really interpreted that parable I don't know what it is. This is a long parable of nearly 80 verses, it goes on for pages. In some respects it's the most complex of any parable we have as far as having a scope of history is concerned. Here'd be a good thing for somebody to write an article on. They'd want to put on one column what the parable of Zenos is, then in the corresponding column what the interpretation of the parable is. This would be a real fine experience in trying to figure things out.

Now I'll tell you what will come up for one thing. You'll be able to interpret the portions of that parable that are fulfilled. I read through this parable for fun yesterday. Now Zenos lived sometime before the Nephites came to America. (This parable obviously is on the brass plates.) And I just thought as I read this, how could anybody in ancient Israel have had the slightest idea about what this parable was really about—from their vantage point. But I sit back here 3,500 years later and most of the events in that parable have transpired. And so I can look back and I can see in this parable of Zenos' things like this: I can read the story of the scattering of Israel; the story of the gathering of Israel; I can read the Gentile conversion that took place in Paul's ministry; I can read expressly about the Nephites and the Lamanites being planted in this land, (that's about the clearest part of the parable); I can read the story of the apostasy after the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles in Paul's day; I can read the story of the gathering of Israel in the last days; I can read about the Jaredites' destruction as a nation; about the restoration of the gospel in this day; about missionaries going out in our day to preach the gospel; about the rewards that those missionaries are going to get; and about the Second Coming of Christ. Now there's at least that much in the parable of Zenos in the fifth Chapter of Jacob.

I don't think in fairness that anybody who lived in Zenos' day could have been expected to get anything out of that parable and that the Lord made the parable so that it could be copied into the Book of Mormon, so that we who live in this day could read it in a day when most of it is fulfilled, and look back and say well here is the parable and this does make a nice story that crystallizes the doctrine now that the events have already transpired.

Well, you're going to get the idea I don't think very much of parables, but really I do. But parables need to be put in their perspective.

Question: Both Jacob and Nephi encouraged the people to understand Isaiah and other prophets through the spirit.

BRM: Well I think maybe we had better say that that's right. I think that they had some understandings but it's the spirit of prophecy. It sure isn't what the sectarian world would get out of it. Without the spirit of prophecy you just wouldn't work. Now Nephi said this same thing about the words of Isaiah didn't he? He said the Jews understand the words of Isaiah because of the way they're written and they'd been trained this way and nobody else understands them except the Jews, unless they have the spirit of prophecy.

Comment: Providing they don't look beyond the mark.

BRM: Yes, they do that too. This is real tough to understand Isaiah unless you've been trained and your whole schooling system is in the way that the Jews operated and worked in that day, unless you just out and out had the spirit of prophecy and revelation.

Comment: In connection with this, Paul in Romans [11] was talking to the leading Judaists about the allegory of taming the olive tree and maybe commentators looking back at that, today, don't have any idea what.

BRM: I'll tell you a secret, it isn't exactly a secret, the commentators don't really have any idea about what any doctrine really means. The commentaries are very helpful in a limited way, particularly those from the orthodox viewpoint that aren't promulgating the modernistic business that denies the divinity of the Lord.

Well they can read about taming the wild olive tree and they can get a little concept out of it, but they never would figure all these things out about the restoration of the gospel and the missionaries going forth and the Lamanites and the Nephites and the Jaredites and so on—aside from revelation you just don't understand parables, until they're fulfilled. This is why I think the conclusion we ought to reach, on this matter of parables is that as far as teaching the gospel is concerned, you soft peddle the parables, unless you want to tell a story after you've explained the doctrine, with the possible exception of the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. That comes out and out so close to what's in Alma, but here again you have to understand Alma, the 40th Chapter, before you know what that parable is about.

Well any question about what we're saying here? You can do this for any parable that you want to. And it's an interesting spiritual exercise to try and figure out what a parables means. You get a little help by reading what somebody else has said. I got a lot of help by reading what Brother Talmage said. Some of Brother Talmage's interpretations of the parables go along with what the sectarian world in general has always taught. Well that's eternal truth as far as it goes. The best interpretation of the parables that we have is the Prophet's added explanation of them that he has given by the spirit of inspiration to amplify what's involved.

Question: Do you know why Brother Talmage completely ignored the Prophet's interpretation?

BRM: I don't know. But if I'm not mistaken there isn't a single instance in *Jesus the Christ*, is there? There may be, but I don't remember, off hand, a single instance in that book where Brother Talmage picked up the Prophet's interpretation of these parables. And yet the Prophet made some very explicit comments, as this particular one illustrates, and he did it on all the major parables.

Question: Will you summarize what you think this parable means, particularly whether it relates just to the Church or the Church and the World.

BRM: Well I think it must relate to both, since the field is the World. It seems to me that He's talking about both gospel and apostasy and all men. And, yet, there's that one verse in the last days' setting that has particular application to the Church meaning He's going to gather out of the kingdom out of the Church the things that offend.

Now the question you raised, I thought about this when I was writing here and I didn't know what to put so I came up with this—I just made it dual. On page 296, "Both the Church and the earth shall be cleansed before the Son of Man returns; members of 'his kingdom,' which is the Church, shall be cast 'out among the wicked' in the day of destruction proceeding the personal reign of our Lord on earth." (*DNTC*, p. 296.) It's got to mean both but it's not limited to either one.

Question: Isn't this what Section 112 and Section 63 is saying—the destruction is going to start in the Church when the Lord comes?

BRM: I think they're going to start, yes, yes. Well you see you can read revelation and you can know expressly what's involved. You can know that they're going to start in the Church. But you read this parable, and you've got a problem. You think to yourself, well are they going to start in the Church or aren't they. And so in effect, it's just what we've been saying, to understand a parable you have to first know what the doctrine is and then try to apply the parable to what you already know is the doctrine of the Church.

Question: It seems to me that when you go through Section 87 it talks about a destruction that is started back with the Civil War, destruction is going to be poured out starts, with that period. It also says in the 112 Section and 63 Section the Lord is going to start some of these famines and destructions with the Church and more valiant members. It seems it's actually two periods there He's talking about that obviously one has already started and yet another that hasn't come yet.

BRM: Well you'd never know this from a parable would you? You've got to know it from a revelation. Now this lesson is intended to get a perspective of the view of parables and maybe if we're just a little jumbled and uncertain in our interpretations and in our feelings as a result of this one parable that we've read, this will have a helpful effect of crystallizing the concept that parables don't stand alone. The parables aren't the great teachings aids. Stories and illustrations are wonderful but parables don't reveal the gospel, they only illustrate what somebody already knows from other sources.

Well one day on parables is enough, isn't it? And so tomorrow we'll start our first lesson on His miracles and spend a couple of days on that.