

LESSON 34
“How Could You Have Forgotten Your God?”
Helaman 6-12

OVERVIEW:

The people are righteous and are blessed with peace and prosperity. The Nephites become proud and wicked. Nephi calls them to repentance. The Lord gives Nephi the sealing power. The unrepentant Nephites face warfare and famine. The Nephites humble themselves and repent.

Because the secret conspiracies and combinations are so strong and powerful, the only way to eliminate them is to convert the perpetrators to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES:

THE BOOK OF HELAMAN
CHAPTER 6

The righteous Lamanites preach to the wicked Nephites—Both peoples prosper during an era of peace and plenty—Lucifer, the author of sin, guides the Gadianton robbers in their murders and wickedness—They take over the Nephite government. [Between 29 and 24 B.C.]

1 AND it came to pass that when the sixty and second year of the reign of the judges *had ended (29 BC), all these things had happened and the Lamanites had become, the more part of them, a righteous people, (Samuel the Lamanite comes from these people) insomuch that their ^arighteousness did exceed that of the Nephites, because of their firmness and their steadiness in the faith.

2 For behold, there were many of the Nephites who had become ^ahardened and impenitent and grossly wicked, insomuch that they did reject the word of God and all the preaching and prophesying which did come among them.

3 Nevertheless, the people of the church did have great joy because of the conversion of the Lamanites, yea, because of the church of God, which had been established among them. And they did ^afellowship one with another, and did rejoice one with another, and did have great joy.

4 And it came to pass that many of the Lamanites did come down into the land of Zarahemla, and did declare unto the people of the Nephites the manner of their ^aconversion, and did exhort them to faith and repentance. (John Taylor had been converted to the gospel and baptized in Canada in May of 1836 through the inspired preaching of Elder Parley P. Pratt. B.H. Roberts writes of a difficult time in the history of the Church: “In March of the following year [1837], Elder Taylor visited Kirtland, and there met the Prophet Joseph Smith, who entertained him at his house and gave him many items of information pertaining to the work of the Lord in this dispensation. At that time there was a bitter spirit of apostasy rife in Kirtland. A number in the quorum of the Twelve were disaffected towards the Prophet, and the Church seemed on the point of disintegration. Among others, Parley P. Pratt was floundering in darkness, and coming to Elder Taylor told him of some things wherein he considered the Prophet Joseph in error. To his remarks Elder Taylor replied: I am surprised to hear you speak so, Brother Parley. Before you left Canada you bore a strong testimony to Joseph Smith being a prophet of God, and to the truth of the work he has inaugurated; and you said you knew these things by revelation, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. You gave to me a strict charge to the effect that though you or an angel from heaven was to declare anything else I was not to believe it. Now Brother Parley, it is not man that I am following, but the Lord. The principles you taught me led me to Him, and I now have the same testimony that you then rejoiced in. If the work was true six months ago, it is true today; if Joseph Smith was then a prophet, he is now a prophet. To the honor of Parley, be it said, he sought no further to lead

Elder Taylor astray; nor did he use much argument in the first place. He with many others, says Elder Taylor, were passing under a dark cloud; he soon made all right with the Prophet Joseph, and was restored to full fellowship. (B.H. Roberts, *The Life of John Taylor*, p. 39-40) DCBM, 3:362)

5 Yea, and many did ^apreach with exceedingly great power and authority, unto the bringing down many of them into the depths of humility, to be the humble followers of God and the Lamb.

6 And it came to pass that many of the Lamanites did go into the land northward; and also ^aNephi and ^bLehi went into the ^cland northward, to preach unto the people. And thus ended the sixty and third year.

7 And behold, there was peace in all the land, insomuch that the Nephites did go into whatsoever part of the land they would, whether among the Nephites or the Lamanites.

8 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did also go whithersoever they would, whether it were among the Lamanites or among the Nephites; and thus they did have free intercourse one with another, to ^abuy and to sell, and to get gain, according to their desire. (Spencer W. Kimball: *Peace is the fruit of righteousness*. It cannot be bought with money, and cannot be traded nor bartered. It must be earned. The wealthy often spend much of their gains in a bid for peace, only to find that it is not for sale. But the poorest as well as the riches may have it in abundance if the total price is paid. Those who abide the laws and live the Christ-like life may have peach and other kindred blessings, principal among which are exaltation and eternal life. *Unlocking the Book of Mormon*, 381)

9 And it came to pass that they became exceedingly rich, both the Lamanites and the Nephites; and they did have an exceeding plenty of ^agold, and of silver, and of all manner of precious metals, both in the land south and in the land north.

10 Now the land south was called ^aLehi, and the land north was called ^bMulek, which was after the ^cson of Zedekiah; for the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north, and Lehi into the land south.

11 And behold, there was all manner of gold in both these lands, and of silver, and of precious ore of every kind; and there were also curious workmen, who did ^awork all kinds of ore and did refine it; and thus they did become rich.

12 They did raise grain in abundance, both in the north and in the south; and they did flourish exceedingly, both in the north and in the south. And they did multiply and wax exceedingly strong in the land. And they did raise many flocks and herds, yea, many fatlings.

13 Behold their women did toil and spin, and did ^amake all manner of ^bcloth, of fine-twined linen and cloth of every kind, to clothe their nakedness. And thus the sixty and fourth year did pass away in peace.

14 And in the *sixty and fifth year (27 BC) they did also have great joy and peace, yea, much preaching and many prophecies concerning that which was to come. And thus passed away the sixty and fifth year.

15 And it came to pass that in the *sixty and sixth year (26 BC) of the reign of the judges, behold, ^aCezoram was murdered by an unknown hand (*Assassinations by Gadianton robbers*) as he sat upon the judgment-seat. And it came to pass that in the same year, that his son, who had been appointed by the people in his stead, was also murdered. And thus ended the sixty and sixth year.

16 And in the *commencement of the sixty and seventh year (25 BC) the people began to grow exceedingly wicked again.

17 For behold, the Lord had blessed them so long with the ^ariches of the world that they had not been stirred up to anger, to wars, nor to bloodshed; therefore they began to set their hearts upon their riches (Hugh Nibley: "The sequence is a natural one: with easy wealth comes the feeling of superiority which makes people status-conscious; and with a feeling for status comes a desperate need to acquire the one thing that will give status; and with the recognition of the all-importance of that one thing, any scruples that may stand in the way of its acquisition are pushed aside, even murder being permissible as long as one is not found out." (*Since Cumorah*, p. 363) Bruce R. McConkie: "One of the great purposes of this mortal probation is to allow men to choose between the riches of the world and the riches of eternity. Those who set their hearts on the things of this world lose their souls. 'Wo unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their God. And behold, their

treasure shall perish with them also.’ (2 Ne. 9:30.) ‘For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’ (Mark 8:36-37.) Those who set their hearts on the things of the Spirit inherit eternal riches which consist of eternal life.” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, vol. P. 94) Dallin H. Oaks: “The message of the modern prophets is the same as the ancient ones: If we set our hearts upon riches, we have set a worldly god ahead of the eternal God of Israel. “President Brigham Young feared that the Latter-day Saints would succumb to materialism. Less than two years after their arrival in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, he spoke these words to the people: ‘The worst fear that I have about this people is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and His people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth; and yet they have to be tried with riches, for they will become the richest people on this earth.’” (*Pure in Heart*, p. 81)); yea, they began to seek to get gain that they might be lifted up one above another; therefore they began to commit ^bsecret murders, and to rob and to plunder, that they might get gain. (There is a book that created an immense sensation in Europe a couple of years ago and still does. It’s called *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, by Baigent, Leigh, and Lincoln. They were correspondents for the BBC. They got the idea that there came from Palestine in the time of Christ certain relatives of the family of Christ, who settled near Marseilles [France] and spread out. There was an order descended from them. The Holy Grail is the *Sang réal*, the Royal Blood, which came down from Christ’s family, and which is claimed by every family in Europe. All sorts of intrigues and murders and everything center around that. It’s an interesting thing. [There were] the chivalric orders, such as the Rosicrucians. Each one has been accused of world ambition and been persecuted. The cleverest of all were the Jesuits. They were really after it. That is why the Spanish Inquisition was to go everywhere. That was their object. They established the office of the *Sang real* for propagating the faith. Our word propaganda comes from them. They became expert liars, very clever. In our day we’ve had such things as the Anti-Mason party in this country. That was a big thing, and it all centered right around the time and place where Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon. That’s an interesting thing. In 1797 a French Jesuit by the name of August Baruel wrote a book (five volumes), which became enormously popular. He [supposedly] proved that the Freemasons were trying to take over the world. They caused the French Revolution. They caused revolutions everywhere [according to him] as the ultimate conspiracy against royalty in all the world – the identical charges brought against Communism after that. He accused George Washington of being one of the Illuminati. The Wiesskopf organized a branch of that called the Illuminati. In 1776 the Illuminati was organized in Europe. George Washington was a Mason. There was a great excitement about it. Hugh Nibley, TBM, 3:236)

18 And now behold, those murderers and plunderers were a band who had been formed by Kishkumen and ^aGadianton. And now it had come to pass that there were many, even among the Nephites, of Gadianton’s band. But behold, they were more numerous among the more wicked part of the Lamanites. And they were called Gadianton’s robbers and murderers. (Hugh Nibley: “Let us summarize the essential nature of what some have called ‘Gadiantonism’: “Objectives. (1) ‘Power and gain,’ the two being interactive: power wins gain and gain wins power for whoever has either. (2) Control or overthrow of the government; using political office ‘to rule and do according to their wills, that they might get gain and glory’ (Helaman 7:5). “Methods. (1) Secret agreements between individuals and groups. The Gadiantons are essentially an underground movement. (2) Assassination. These two things, ‘secret combinations’ and ‘that men should shed blood,’ have been forbidden by God ‘in all things . . . from the beginning of man’ (Ether 8:19). (3) “Payola”: ‘Akish did offer them money’ (Ether 9:11); ‘letting the guilty . . . go unpunished because of their money’ (Helaman 7:5). (4) Skillful propaganda and public relations: ‘flattering words.’ (5) The hate campaign: a steady output of charges, accusations, and rumors, in the manner of Amalickiah: Accuse--always accuse. Eagerness to accuse is from the devil, as Brigham Young often taught. (6) Intimidation: ‘breathing out many threatenings,’ operating ‘by the hand of secrecy,’ wearing fearsome disguises (3 Nephi 4:7). (7) Showmanship, e.g., the picturesque

uniforms and romantic appeal to the young (3 Nephi 1:29). (8) Tight control of members--death penalty for betrayal (Ether 8:14; Helaman 1:11).“Attitude. (1) The Gadiantons were totally partisan, the laws and interests of the combination taking priority over all other laws and interests. (2) All were ambitious, hence the labor for power and gain: Cain is the type and model. (3) The combinations were highly competitive, feuding fiercely among themselves. (4) They sought to project a noble image, with much talk of rights and wrongs, high courage and upright character (the letter to Lachoneus). (5) They professed piety and religion, swearing their forbidden oaths not by the demons but ‘by the God of heaven’ (Ether 8:14), ‘by their everlasting Maker’ (Helaman 1:11). (6) They were paranoid, always attributing their troubles to the wickedness of others; never the aggressors, they are constantly seeking to avenge their wrongs. Vengeance is their watchword. “Ecology. (1) They flourish best in an affluent business society, and wither in times of poverty. (2) They crystallize around ambitious individuals. (3) They readily coalesce with king-men, would-be nobility, great families, ambitious local officials, and rapacious Lamanite overlords, i.e., with all who are opposed to popular government among the Nephites. (4) They have destroyed every civilization in the New World in which they have been able to thrive. (5) They cannot thrive or even survive without the acceptance and encouragement of the society in general. Being predatory and non-productive, i.e., parasites, they must have a complacent society to host and support them. Such a society is one which accepts as desirable the Gadianton goals of power and gain. (6) They can become dormant for long periods of time and then, when circumstances are favorable, suddenly appear in full strength and vigor, their plans having been buried and preserved intact against the day of opportunity. “The Gadiantons, terrible as they were, are treated more as a symptom than as a disease: the society that has them is sick, but they are like maggots that prey only on dead tissue; they simply exploit the evil situation that gives them their opportunity.” (Adapted from *Since Cumorah*, pp. 370-2))

19 And it was they who did murder the chief judge ^aCezoram, and his son, while in the judgment-seat; and behold, they were not found.

20 And now it came to pass that when the Lamanites found that there were robbers among them they were exceedingly sorrowful; and they did use every means in their power to destroy them off the face of the earth.

21 But behold, Satan did stir up the ^ahearts of the more part of the Nephites, insomuch that they did unite with those bands of robbers, and did enter into their covenants and their oaths, that they would protect and preserve one another in whatsoever difficult circumstances they should be placed, that they should not suffer for their murders, and their plunderings, and their ^bstealings.

22 And it came to pass that they did have their signs, yea, their ^asecret signs, and their ^bsecret words; and this that they might distinguish a brother who had entered into the covenant, that whatsoever wickedness his brother should do he should not be injured by his brother, nor by those who did belong to his band, who had taken this covenant. (James E. Talmage: “Satan from the first has been a great imitator; he is an experienced strategist. Never has the Lord set his hand to do a specific thing for the good of his people upon the earth, of outstanding feature, but that Satan has attempted to imitate it in some degree.”

(*Conference Report*, Apr. 1931, p. 27))

23 And thus they might murder, and plunder, and steal, and commit ^awhoredoms and all manner of wickedness, contrary to the laws of their country and also the laws of their God.

24 And whosoever of those who belonged to their band should reveal unto the world of their ^awickedness and their abominations, should be tried, not according to the laws of their country, but according to the laws of their wickedness, which had been given by Gadianton and Kishkumen.

25 Now behold, it is these secret ^aoaths and covenants which Alma commanded his son should not go forth unto the world, lest they should be a means of bringing down the people unto destruction.

26 Now behold, those ^asecret oaths and covenants did not come forth unto Gadianton from the ^brecords which were delivered unto Helaman; but behold, they were put into the heart of ^cGadianton by that ^dsame being who did entice our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit—

27 Yea, that same being who did plot with ^aCain, (The story of the origin and rise of secret combinations on earth was once contained in the record of the Old Testament times. Such plain and precious truths concerning the nature of the gospel anciently; the particulars of the plan of salvation and the then future ministry of Jesus Christ as prophesied among the ancients; and the manner in which Cain plotted with Satan to become Master Mahan, master of the great secret, that he could murder and get gain – these matters were deleted from the Bible records before that book was compiled. They were known among the Nephites through that scriptural record we know as the brass plates. These truths were restored by revelation to Joseph Smith the Seer through his inspired translation of the Bible. DCBM, 3: 366) that if he would murder his brother Abel it should not be known unto the world. And he did plot with Cain and his followers from that time forth.

28 And also it is that same being who put it into the hearts of the people to ^abuild a tower sufficiently high that they might get to heaven. And it was that same being who led on the people who came from that tower into this land; who spread the works of darkness and abominations over all the face of the land, until he dragged the people down to an ^bentire destruction, and to an everlasting hell.

29 Yea, it is that same being who put it into the heart of ^aGadianton to still carry on the work of darkness, and of secret murder; and he has brought it forth from the beginning of man even down to this time.

30 And behold, it is he who is the ^aauthor of all sin. And behold, he doth carry on his works of darkness and secret murder, and doth hand down their plots, and their oaths, and their covenants, and their plans of awful wickedness, from generation to generation according as he can get hold upon the hearts of the children of men.

31 And now behold, he had got great hold upon the hearts of the Nephites; yea, insomuch that they had become exceedingly wicked; yea, the more part of them had turned out of the ^away of righteousness, and did ^btrample under their feet the commandments of God, and did turn unto their own ways, and did build up unto themselves ^cidols of their gold and their silver.

32 And it came to pass that all these iniquities did come unto them in the space of ^anot many years, insomuch that a more part of it had come unto them in the sixty and seventh year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

33 And they did grow in their iniquities in the ^asixty and eighth year (24 BC) also, to the great sorrow and lamentation of the righteous.

34 And thus we see that the ^aNephites did begin to dwindle in unbelief, and grow in wickedness and abominations, while the Lamanites began to grow exceedingly in the knowledge of their God; yea, they did begin to keep his statutes and commandments, and to walk in truth and uprightness before him.

35 And thus we see that the Spirit of the Lord began to ^awithdraw from the Nephites, because of the wickedness and the hardness of their hearts.

36 And thus we see that the Lord began to pour out his ^aSpirit upon the Lamanites, because of their easiness and ^bwillingness to believe in his words. (Spencer W. Kimball: “The converted Lamanite is devout. Few ever apostatize. Some lose their way as they partake of the worldliness about them, but generally the children of Lehi of the twentieth century have inherited that grace and ability to believe like their ancestors of long ago. We read in Hel. 6:36: ‘And thus we see that the Lord began to pour out his Spirit upon the Lamanites, because of their easiness and willingness to believe in his words’ “ (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 178))

37 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did hunt the band of robbers of Gadianton; and they did preach the word of God among the more wicked part of them, insomuch that this band of robbers was utterly destroyed from among the Lamanites.

38 And it came to pass on the other hand, that the Nephites did build them up and support them (Bruce R. McConkie: “Our Book of Mormon authors speak a great deal about the secret combinations that arose among the Jaredites and among the Nephites and that were destined to arise among the Gentile nations in the last days. They tell us that these secret combinations brought to pass the destruction of the

Jaredites and the Nephites and will bring similar destruction on any latter-day nations that permit them to gain an ascendancy. Writing of nations in the last days, Moroni says: ‘Whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed; for the Lord will not suffer that the blood of his saints, which shall be shed by them, shall always cry unto him from the ground for vengeance upon them and yet he avenge them not.’ (Ether 8:22.) What are these secret combinations which have such powers that whole civilizations are destroyed by them? They wear many guises and appear in many forms. They were the Gadianton robbers among the Nephites, and the perpetrators of the Spanish inquisition in the dark ages. Among us they include some secret and oath-bound societies and such Mafia-like groups as engage in organized crime. They include some political parties, some revolutionists who rise up against their governments and those evil and anarchist groups which steal and kidnap and murder in the name of this or that political objective. They are always groups that seek money and power and freedom from the penalties that should attend their crimes.” (*The Millennial Messiah*, p. 64)), beginning at the more wicked part of them, until they had overspread all the land of the Nephites, and had seduced the more part of the righteous until they had come down to believe in their works and partake of their spoils, and to join with them in their secret murders and combinations.

39 And thus they did obtain the sole management of the government, (Hugh Nibley: “If the reader has imagined to himself the Gadianton band as abandoned wretches or street Arabs lurking in dark alleys and fleeing from the light of day in dingy and noisome hideouts, let him disabuse his mind of such a concept. They were a highly respected concern that made their handsome profits by operating strictly within the letter of the law, as they interpreted and controlled it. They were the government, the well-to-do, the respectable, and the law-abiding citizens.” (*An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, p. 385) “So this is the situation: they were in office to get gain and the glory of the world, and they did everything with an eye single to their glory. They were politically, socially, and economically ambitious. They were opposed by the common people organized by Moroni, who made them conscious of themselves as the poor and humble afflicted outcasts of Israel, always calling upon the Lord. Here we have the two totally different, clearly defined ideologies; the one prevails throughout the world today and throughout ancient, medieval, and modern history.” (*Approaching Zion*, p. 101)) insomuch that they did trample under their feet and smite and rend and turn their backs upon the ^apoor and the meek, and the humble followers of God. (“It seems to be a fact of human nature that those engaged in pursuing ‘the good life’ also spend much energy, time, and money seeking association with the wealthy, powerful, and famous. They live where there are no poor, socialize in private clubs where there are no poor, travel first class, and otherwise isolate themselves from regular exposure to the needy except for occasional giving on the street or to the seasonal charities. Such benign neglect can often be as devastating as a deliberate reviling of the poor. This is in contrast to Him whom we claim to follow, who deliberately lived with and, for the most part, regularly sought out the poor and needy.” (Quinn G. McKay, *Ensign*, June 1987, p. 20))

40 And thus we see that they were in an awful state, and ^aripening for an everlasting destruction.

41 And it came to pass that thus ended the sixty and eighth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

* Verse 1 [29 B.C.]; Verse 14 [27 B.C.]; Verse 15 [26 B.C.]; Verse 16 [25 B.C.]; Verse 33 [24 B.C.].

THE PROPHECY OF NEPHI, THE SON OF HELAMAN—*God threatens the people of Nephi that he will visit them in his anger, to their utter destruction except they repent of their wickedness. God smiteth the people of Nephi with pestilence; they repent and turn unto him. Samuel, a Lamanite, prophesies unto the Nephites. Comprising chapters 7 to 16 inclusive.*

CHAPTER 7

Nephi is rejected in the north and returns to Zarahemla—He prays upon his garden tower and then calls upon the people to repent or perish. [Between 23 and 20 B.C.]

1 BEHOLD, now it came to pass in the *sixty and ninth year (23 BC) of the reign of the judges over the people of the Nephites, that Nephi, the son of Helaman, ^areturned to the land of Zarahemla from the land northward. (Nephi is returning back home. A prophet is not honored in his own country.)

2 For he had been forth among the people who were in the land northward, and did preach the word of God unto them, and did prophesy many things unto them;

3 And they did ^areject all his words, insomuch that he could not stay among them, but returned again unto the land of his nativity.

4 And seeing the people in a state of such awful wickedness, and those Gadianton robbers filling the judgment-seats (The Gadianton robbers took over the government)—having ^ausurped the power and authority of the land; laying aside the commandments of God, and not in the least aright before him; doing no justice unto the children of men;

5 Condemning the righteous because of their righteousness; letting the guilty and the wicked go ^aunpunished because of their ^bmoney; and moreover to be held in office at the head of government, to rule and do according to their wills, that they might get gain and glory of the ^cworld, and, moreover, that they might the more easily commit adultery, and steal, and kill, and do according to their own wills— (This is the overthrow of civilization. They are overthrowing the ten commandments as the basis for law.)

6 Now this great iniquity had come upon the Nephites, in the space of ^anot many years; and when Nephi saw it, his heart was swollen with sorrow within his breast (Boyd K. Packer: “I have come to believe that this is worth knowing, not only for teachers, but for everyone. If you get a little depressed during those dreary days, do not begin to think that you're psycho-something-or-other. For missionaries, this was well worth knowing. Occasionally a missionary told me in an interview, ‘I'm not doing very well. I just seem to be depressed and discouraged.’ Unless there was an unusual reason for these feelings, my answer was, ‘Well, I'm glad to hear that. At least now we know that you're normal. Enjoy the feeling—it probably won't last. And the first sunny day will do wonders for it.’ We know from the Book of Mormon that there must be opposition. ‘For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my first-born in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad.’ (2 Nephi 2:11.) It helps a great deal if we realize that there is a certain healthy element in getting the blues occasionally. It is quite in order to schedule a good, discouraging, depressing day every now and again just for contrast.” (*Teach Ye Diligently*, p. 101–2)); and he did exclaim in the agony of his soul:

7 Oh, that I could have had my days in the days when my father Nephi first came out of the land of Jerusalem, that I could have ^ajoyed with him in the promised land; then were his people easy to be entreated (Nephi would have disagreed with this. Abraham was also a stranger in a strange land.), ^bfirm to keep the commandments of God, and slow to be led to do iniquity; and they were quick to hearken unto the words of the Lord—

8 Yea, if my days could have been in those days, then would my soul have had joy in the righteousness of my brethren.

9 But behold, I am consigned that these are my days (Neal A. Maxwell: “Like Alma, who wished for a trumpet-like voice of an angel (see Alma 29:1), we too need to understand our motivations and limitations. Even so, let us use well the season in which we serve. Tolkien put it eloquently: ‘Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succor of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule.’ Nephi wished, nostalgically, he'd

lived in a different time, yet finally concluded, ‘But behold, I am consigned that these are my days’ (Helaman 7:9). Like Alma, he no doubt realized that he should not ‘desire more than to perform the work to which [he had] been called’ (Alma 29:6). Faith in God includes faith in His wisdom in placing us in our particular time and place, ‘those years wherein we are set.’” (*That Ye May Believe*, p. 156)), and that my soul shall be filled with ^asorrow because of this the wickedness of my brethren.

10 And behold, now it came to pass that it was upon a tower (Not a rameumpton), which was in the ^agarden of Nephi, which was by the highway which led to the chief market, which was in the city of Zarahemla; therefore, Nephi had bowed himself upon the tower which was in his garden, which tower was also near unto the garden gate by which led the highway.

11 And it came to pass that there were certain men passing by and saw Nephi as he was pouring out his soul unto God upon the ^atower; and they ran and told the people what they had seen, and the people came together in multitudes that they might know the cause of so great mourning for the wickedness of the people.

12 And now, when Nephi arose he beheld the multitudes of people who had gathered together.

13 And it came to pass that he opened his mouth and said unto them: Behold, ^awhy have ye gathered yourselves together? That I may tell you of your iniquities?

14 Yea, because I have got upon my tower that I might pour out my soul unto my God, because of the exceeding sorrow of my heart, which is because of your iniquities!

15 And because of my ^amourning and lamentation ye have gathered yourselves together, and do marvel; yea, and ye have great need to marvel; yea, ye ought to marvel because ye are given away that the devil has got so great hold upon your hearts.

16 Yea, how could you have given way to the enticing of him who is seeking to hurl away your souls down to ^aeverlasting misery and endless wo?

17 O repent ye, repent ye! ^aWhy will ye die? Turn ye, turn ye unto the Lord your God. Why has he forsaken you?

18 It is because you have hardened your hearts; yea, ye will not ^ahearken unto the voice of the ^bgood shepherd; yea, ye have ^cprovoked him to anger against you.

19 And behold, instead of ^agathering you, except ye will repent, behold, he shall scatter (Gathering and scattering a common theme among Israel.) you forth that ye shall become meat for dogs and wild beasts.

20 O, how could you have ^aforgotten your God in the very day that he has delivered you?

21 But behold, it is to get ^again, to be ^bpraised of men, yea, and that ye might get gold and silver. And ye have set your hearts upon the ^criches and the vain things of this world, for the which ye do murder, and plunder, and steal, and bear ^dfalse witness against your neighbor, and do all manner of iniquity.

22 And for this cause ^awo shall come unto you except ye shall repent. For if ye will not repent, behold, this ^bgreat city, and also all those great cities which are round about, which are in the land of our possession, shall be taken away that ye shall have no place in them; for behold, the Lord will not grant unto you ^cstrength, as he has hitherto done, to withstand against your enemies.

23 For behold, thus saith the Lord: I will not show unto the wicked of my strength, to one more than the other, save it be unto those who repent of their sins, and hearken unto my words. Now therefore, I would that ye should behold, my brethren, that it shall be ^abetter for the Lamanites than for you except ye shall repent.

24 For behold, they are more righteous than you, for they have not sinned against that great knowledge which ye have received; therefore the Lord will be merciful unto them; yea, he will ^alengthen out their days and increase their seed (Righteous posterity has ever been the crowning blessing of the faithful.

Because of his faithfulness Abraham received promises concerning his seed that were to continue both in the world and out of the world. Indeed, he was promised that they would be as innumerable as the stars, or if you were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them. For those who enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, this promise is yours also because ye are of Abraham. DCBM, 3:371), even when thou shalt be utterly ^bdestroyed except thou shalt repent.

25 Yea, wo be unto you because of that great abomination which has come among you; and ye have united yourselves unto it, yea, to that ^asecret band which was established by Gadianton!

26 Yea, ^awo shall come unto you because of that pride which ye have suffered to enter your hearts, which has lifted you up beyond that which is good because of your exceedingly great riches!

27 Yea, wo be unto you because of your wickedness and abominations!

28 And except ye repent ye shall perish; yea, even your lands shall be taken from you, and ye shall be destroyed from off the face of the earth.

29 Behold now, I do not say that these things shall be, of myself, because it is not of myself that I ^aknow these things; but behold, I ^bknow that these things are true because the Lord God has made them known unto me, therefore I testify that they shall be. (Orson Pratt: "I felt as though I was not qualified to stand before the people, and tell them that the Book of Mormon was a divine revelation, and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, unless I had a stronger testimony than that afforded by ancient prophets. However great my assurance might be, it seemed to me, that to know for myself, it required a witness independent of the testimony of others. I sought for this witness. I did not receive it immediately, but when the Lord saw the integrity of my heart and the anxiety of my mind--when He saw that I was willing to travel hundreds of miles for the sake of learning the principles of the truth, He gave me a testimony for myself, which conferred upon me the most perfect knowledge that Joseph Smith was a true prophet, and that this book, called the Book of Mormon, was in reality a Divine revelation, and that God had once more, in reality, spoken to the human family. What joy this knowledge gave me! No language that I am acquainted with could describe the sensations I experienced when I received a knowledge from Heaven of the truth of this work." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 12, p. 85) Joseph F. Smith: "I received a testimony for myself from the Lord of this work, and that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God before I ever saw him, while I resided in the state of New York, given in answer to prayer. I knew him in his lifetime and know him to have been a great, true man, and a servant of God." (*Collected Discourses 1886-1898*, ed. by Brian Stuy, vol. 5, Dec. 23, 1894))

* Verse 1 [23 B.C.].

CHAPTER 8

Corrupt judges seek to incite the people against Nephi—Abraham, Moses, Zenos, Zenock, Ezias, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lehi, and Nephi all testified of Christ—By inspiration Nephi announces the murder of the chief judge. [Between 23 and 20 B.C.]

1 AND now it came to pass that when Nephi had said these words, behold, there were men who were judges, who also belonged to the secret band of Gadianton, and they were angry, and they cried out against him, saying unto the people: Why do ye not seize upon this man and bring him forth, that he may be condemned according to the crime which he has done?

2 Why seest thou this man, and hearest him revile against this people and against our law?

3 For behold, Nephi had spoken unto them concerning the corruptness of their law; yea, many things did Nephi speak which cannot be written; and nothing did he speak which was contrary to the commandments of God.

4 And those judges were angry with him because he ^aspake plainly unto them concerning their secret works of darkness; nevertheless, they durst not lay their own hands upon him, for they feared the people lest they should cry out against them.

5 Therefore they did cry unto the people, saying: Why do you suffer this man to revile against us? For behold he doth condemn all this people, even unto destruction; yea, and also that these our ^agreat cities shall be taken from us, that we shall have no place in them.

6 And now we know that this is impossible, for behold, we are ^apowerful, and our cities great, therefore our enemies can have no power over us.

7 And it came to pass that thus they did ^astir up the people to anger against Nephi, and raised contentions among them (Sounds like the liberal democrats, calling good evil and evil good.); for there were some who did cry out: ^bLet this man alone, for he is a good man, and those things which he saith will surely come to pass except we repent; (Validity draws the fire. Jacob's older sons mocked the dreams of their younger brother Joseph, saying they were foolishness; yet they could not rest until they had sold him into bondage. Joseph Smith was a youth of no social standing and no hint of eminence; yet men of high standing excited the public mind against him. Why the opposition against that which has been declared foolish? Again, validity draws the fire. DCBM, 3:373)

8 Yea, behold, all the judgments will come upon us which he has testified unto us; for we know that he has testified aright unto us concerning our iniquities. And behold they are many, and he ^aknoweth as well all things which shall befall us as he knoweth of our iniquities;

9 Yea, and behold, if he had not been a prophet he could not have ^atestified concerning those things.

10 And it came to pass that those people who sought to destroy Nephi were compelled because of their fear, that they did not lay their hands on him; therefore he began again to speak unto them, seeing that he had gained favor in the eyes of some, insomuch that the remainder of them did fear.

11 Therefore he was constrained to speak more unto them saying: Behold, my brethren, have ye not read that God gave power unto one man, even Moses, to smite upon the waters of the Red ^aSea, (Israelites always remember the parting of the Red Sea.) and they parted hither and thither, insomuch that the Israelites, who were our fathers, came through upon dry ground, and the waters closed upon the armies of the Egyptians and swallowed them up?

12 And now behold, if God gave unto this man such power, then why should ye dispute among yourselves, and say that he hath given unto me no power whereby I may ^aknow concerning the judgments that shall come upon you except ye repent?

13 But, behold, ye not only deny my words, but ye also deny all the words which have been spoken by our fathers, and also the words which were spoken by this man, Moses, who had such great power given unto him, yea, the words which he hath spoken concerning the coming of the Messiah. (All true prophets testify of Christ.)

14 Yea, did he not bear record that the Son of God should come? And as he ^alifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, even so shall he be lifted up who should come.

15 And as many as should look upon that serpent should ^alive, even so as many as should look upon the Son of God with faith, having a contrite spirit, might ^blive, even unto that life which is eternal.

16 And now behold, Moses did not only testify of these things, but also ^aall the holy prophets, from his days even to the days of Abraham.

17 Yea, and behold, ^aAbraham saw of his coming, and was filled with gladness and did rejoice. (The original texts of the Bible probably had much more concerning the prophecies of Christ that have been lost and have been mentioned here in more detail than we currently have in the Bible. Jesus refers to Abraham seeing his day, but it only exists in the Joseph Smith translation of Genesis.)

18 Yea, and behold I say unto you, that Abraham not only knew of these things, but there were ^amany before the days of Abraham who were called by the ^border of God; (Melchizedek Priesthood) yea, even after the order of his Son (D&C 107:1:1 THERE are, in the church, two ^apriesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and ^bAaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood. 2 Why the first is called the ^aMelchizedek Priesthood is because ^bMelchizedek was such a great high priest. 3 Before his day it was called the ^aHoly Priesthood, after the ^bOrder of the Son of God. 4 But out of ^arespect or ^breverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood.); and this that it should be shown unto the people, a great many thousand years before his coming, (Adam and Eve knew of Christ's coming and they taught it to their children.) that even redemption should come unto them.

19 And now I would that ye should know, that even since the days of Abraham there have been many prophets that have testified these things ("One of the teachings of the Book of Mormon that is well

known among the members of the Church is that the Bible has suffered a loss of many plain and precious parts. This fact was revealed to Nephi when he was given the vision his father had seen of the nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles. (1 Ne. 13). Other prophets frequently mentioned in the plates of brass include Zenoch, Neum and Ezias. (See 1 Ne. 19:10; Alma 33:16-17; Hel. 8:20; 3 Ne. 10:16.) The Bible itself testifies of the titles of 11 books which are no longer included and of others that are alluded to which do not include those mentioned in the Book of Mormon. (See Dictionary in the 1979 LDS edition of the Bible, "Lost Books" page 725.) Because the Lord has granted humans their agency, He has allowed these parts of scripture to be taken away. However, He has compensated for this loss by preserving other records to come forth in the latter days to 'make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away.' (1 Ne. 13:40.)" (Monte S. Nyman, *Church News*, 01/01/94); yea, behold, the prophet ^aZenos did testify boldly; for the which he was slain.

20 And behold, also ^aZenock, and also ^bEzias ("Zenock was... a prophet of Israel of whose personal history, or to what age he belonged, we know nothing. His writings were familiar to the Nephites as he is quoted by Nephi (I Nephi 19:10); Alma (Alma 33:15); Amulek (Alma 34:7); and Mormon (III Nephi 10:16). Ezias was also a Hebrew prophet, referred to by Nephi (Helaman 8:19). Elder Orson Pratt suggests that 'Ezias may have been identical with Esaias, who lived contemporary with Abraham.' (See Doctrine and Covenants 84:11-13.)" (Reynolds and Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 5, p. 270)), and also ^cIsaiah, and ^dJeremiah, (Jeremiah being that same prophet who testified of the destruction of ^eJerusalem) and now we know that Jerusalem was destroyed according to the words of Jeremiah. O then why not the Son of God come, according to his prophecy?

21 And now will you dispute that ^aJerusalem was destroyed? Will ye say that the ^bsons of Zedekiah were not slain, all except it were ^cMulek? Yea, and do ye not behold that the seed of Zedekiah are with us, and they were driven out of the land of Jerusalem? (Zedekiah was the king of Judah at the time Lehi and his colony fled from Jerusalem. (1 Nephi 1:4.) A few years later when the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem, they 'slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes.' (2 Kings 25:7.) Most people have assumed all of the sons of Zedekiah were killed at that time; however, the Book of Mormon records that the sons of Zedekiah were slain 'all except it were Mulek.' (Helaman 8:21.) Mulek... was spared at the time of the Babylonian captivity and... later came to the Americas. The descendants of Mulek were included among the people of Zarahemla, and later they were numbered among the Nephites. Thus, among the combined Nephite-Lamanite-Mulekite peoples are represented at least three of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel: (1) the tribe of Manasseh, represented by the descendants of Lehi; (2) the tribe of Ephraim, represented by the descendants of Ishmael; (3) the tribe of Judah, represented by the descendants of Mulek." (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p.241-5))

But behold, this is not all—

22 Our father Lehi was driven out of Jerusalem because he ^atestified of these things. Nephi also testified of these things, and also almost all of our fathers, even down to this time; yea, they have testified of the ^bcoming of Christ, and have looked forward, and have rejoiced in his day which is to come.

23 And behold, he is God, and he is ^awith them, and he did manifest himself unto them, that they were redeemed by him; and they gave unto him glory, because of that which is to come (Bruce R. McConkie: Christ-Messiah is God! Such is the plain and pure pronouncement of all the prophets of all the ages. In our desire to avoid the false and absurd conclusions contained in the creeds of Christendom, we are wont to shy away from this pure and unadorned verity: we go to great lengths to use language that shows there is both a Father and a Son, that they are separate Persons and are not somehow mystically intertwined as an essence or spirit that is everywhere present. Such an approach is perhaps essential in reasoning with the Gentiles of sectarianism; it helps to overthrow the fallacies formulated in their creeds. But having so done, if we are to envision our Lord's true status and glory we must come back to pronouncement of pronouncements, the doctrine of doctrines, the message of messages, which is that Christ is God. And if it were not so, he could not save us. Promised Messiah, p. 98)

24 And now, seeing ye know these things and cannot deny them except ye shall lie, therefore in this ye

have sinned, for ye have rejected all these things, notwithstanding so many ^aevidences which ye have received; yea, even ye have received ^ball things, both things in heaven, and all things which are in the earth, as a witness that they are true. (All things have their likeness and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath; all things bear record of me. Moses 6:63. The reality of God and Christ as his Son are the two greatest revelations of all eternity. John the Revelator said that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. That is to say, no one can have that spirit without that knowledge. Adam testified of Christ: Enoch, Noah, and Abraham did likewise, as did all their faithful followers. Never has there been a prophet of God in any age who was not a special witness of Christ. Never has there been a prophet who did not know that the Messiah would be the literal son of God. All the prophets who have prophesied since the world began have testified of these things. DCBM, 3:376)

25 But behold, ye have rejected the truth, and ^arebelled against your holy God; and even at this time, instead of laying up for yourselves ^btreasures in heaven (Hugh Nibley: “Another image of great importance in the Book of Mormon is treasure. The Book of Mormon has much to say about earthly and heavenly treasures, in the same sense in which the newly found apocrypha do. Of course the image is also found in the New Testament. The Book of Mormon prophets explain many references to heavenly treasures in the Bible. Helaman is fondest of treasures. ‘And even at this time, instead of laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where nothing doth corrupt, . . . ye are heaping up for yourselves wrath against the day of judgment’ (Helaman 8:25). This is the correct concept of what is meant by a treasure; it is a very common idea in the early apocrypha. We find in the many treasure passages that the treasure is the wisdom and knowledge we left behind us when we came down to this earth. In the premortal existence, we left our treasure in God’s treasury, in his keeping. There it is, and by our good works here we can add to it; more will be waiting for us when we go back. So let us not try to pile up wealth and possessions on earth. They’re not going to do us any good; we can’t take them back there. Let us lay up our treasures there — add to our treasure store. We really do have one there, because we had one before we came. We left it behind, and we’re going back to it. It’s a very vivid concept, and basic to it is the doctrine of the premortal existence. There’s a great treasury in heaven which contains all good things; it is to share in this treasury that all seek. But in the Jewish apocrypha, in the Wisdom of Ben Sira, God orders, by his word, the lights in the heavenly height, and by the utterance of his mouth he opens the treasury, where the righteous have a store of good works preserved. These are good works preserved, already done. And they’re being preserved; everything we add to our credit is being preserved in God’s treasury.” (*Temple and Cosmos*, p. 232-3)), where nothing doth corrupt, and where nothing can come which is unclean, ye are heaping up for yourselves wrath against the day of ^cjudgment.

26 Yea, even at this time ye are ripening, because of your murders and your ^afornication and wickedness, for everlasting destruction; yea, and except ye repent it will come unto you soon.

27 Yea, behold it is now even at your doors; yea, go ye in unto the judgment-seat, and search; and behold, your judge is murdered, and he ^alieth in his blood; and he hath been murdered ^bby his brother, who seeketh to sit in the judgment-seat.

28 And behold, they both belong to your secret band, whose ^aauthor is Gadianton and the evil one who seeketh to destroy the souls of men.

CHAPTER 9

*Messengers find the chief judge dead at the judgment seat—They are imprisoned and later released—By inspiration Nephi identifies Seantum as the murderer—Nephi is accepted by some as a prophet.
[Between 23 and 20 B.C.]*

1 BEHOLD, now it came to pass that when Nephi had spoken these words, certain men who were among them ran to the judgment-seat; yea, even there were ^afive who went, and they said among themselves, as they went:

2 Behold, now we will know of a surety whether this man be a prophet and God hath commanded him to prophesy such marvelous things unto us. Behold, we do not ^abelieve that he hath; yea, we do not believe that he is a prophet; nevertheless, if this thing which he has said concerning the chief judge be true, that he be dead, then will we believe that the other words which he has spoken are true. (They must have believed a little or they wouldn't have run to see.)

3 And it came to pass that they ran in their might, and came in unto the judgment-seat; and behold, the chief judge had fallen to the earth, and did ^alie in his blood.

4 And now behold, when they saw this they were astonished exceedingly, insomuch that they fell to the earth; for they had not believed the words which Nephi had spoken concerning the chief judge.

5 But now, when they saw they believed, and fear came upon them lest all the judgments which Nephi had spoken ^ashould come upon the people; therefore they did quake, and had fallen to the earth.

6 Now, immediately when the judge had been murdered—he being stabbed by his brother by a garb of secrecy, and he fled, and the servants ran and told the people, raising the cry of murder among them;

7 And behold the people did gather themselves together unto the place of the judgment-seat—and behold, to their astonishment they saw those ^afive men who had fallen to the earth.

8 And now behold, the people knew nothing concerning the multitude who had gathered together at the ^agarden of Nephi; therefore they said among themselves: These men are they who have murdered the judge, and God has smitten them that they could not flee from us.

9 And it came to pass that they laid hold on them, and bound them and cast them into prison. And there was a proclamation sent abroad that the judge was slain, and that the murderers had been taken and were cast into prison.

10 And it came to pass that on the morrow the people did assemble themselves together to ^amourn and to ^bfast (Stephen D. Ricks has stated: “I have...compared the types of and motivations for fasting in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Most interesting is the clear shift in motivation for fasting, identical in both books. In the Old Testament and pre-crucifixion passages in the Book of Mormon, the primary types include fasting as a sign of mourning (Alma 30:2), fasting following a death (Hel. 9:10), and petitionary fasting (Mosiah 27:22). The first two of these are not mentioned as types of fasting following the appearance of the resurrected Christ to the Nephites. The main type of fasting mentioned in the New Testament and in the Book of Mormon after the visit of Christ is devotional fasting practiced by the whole church.” (*Ensign*, Feb. 1988, p. 12)), at the burial of the great chief judge who had been slain.

11 And thus also those judges who were at the garden of Nephi, and heard his words, were also gathered together at the burial.

12 And it came to pass that they inquired among the people, saying: Where are the five who were sent to inquire concerning the chief judge whether he was dead? And they answered and said: Concerning this five whom ye say ye have sent, we know not; but there are five who are the murderers, whom we have cast into prison.

13 And it came to pass that the judges desired that they should be brought; and they were brought, and behold they were the five who were sent; and behold the judges inquired of them to know concerning the matter, and they told them all that they had done, saying:

14 We ran and came to the place of the judgment-seat, and when we saw all things even as Nephi had testified, we were astonished insomuch that we fell to the earth; and when we were recovered from our astonishment, behold they cast us into ^aprison.

15 Now, as for the murder of this man, we know not who has done it; and only this much we know, we ran and came ^aaccording as ye desired, and behold he was dead, according to the words of Nephi.

16 And now it came to pass that the judges did expound the matter unto the people, and did cry out against Nephi, saying: Behold, we know that this Nephi must have agreed with some one to slay the

judge, and then he might declare it unto us, that he might convert us unto his faith, that he might raise himself to be a great man, chosen of God, and a prophet.

17 And now behold, we will detect this man, and he shall confess his fault and make known unto us the true murderer of this judge.

18 And it came to pass that the five were liberated on the day of the burial. Nevertheless, they did rebuke the judges in the words which they had spoken against Nephi, and did contend with them one by one, insomuch that they did confound them.

19 Nevertheless, they caused that Nephi should be taken and bound and brought before the multitude, and they began to question him in divers ways that they might cross him, that they might accuse him to death—

20 Saying unto him: Thou art confederate; who is this man that hath done this murder? Now tell us, and acknowledge thy fault; saying, Behold here is ^amoney; and also we will grant unto thee thy life if thou wilt tell us, and acknowledge the agreement which thou hast made with him.

21 But Nephi said unto them: O ye ^afools, ye uncircumcised of heart, ye blind, and ye ^bstiffnecked people, do ye know how long the Lord your God will suffer you that ye shall go on in this your way of sin?

22 O ye ought to begin to howl and ^amourn, because of the great destruction which at this time doth await you, except ye shall repent.

23 Behold ye say that I have agreed with a man that he should murder Seezoram, our chief judge. But behold, I say unto you, that this is because I have testified unto you that ye might know concerning this thing; yea, even for a witness unto you, that I did know of the wickedness and abominations which are among you.

24 And because I have done this, ye say that I have agreed with a man that he should do this thing; yea, because I showed unto you this sign ye are angry with me, and seek to destroy my life.

25 And now behold, I will show unto you another sign, and see if ye will in this thing seek to destroy me.

26 Behold I say unto you: Go to the house of Seantum, who is the ^abrother of Seezoram, and say unto him—

27 Has Nephi, the pretended prophet, who doth prophesy so much evil concerning this people, agreed with thee, in the which ye have murdered Seezoram, who is your brother?

28 And behold, he shall say unto you, Nay.

29 And ye shall say unto him: Have ye murdered your brother?

30 And he shall stand with fear, and wist not what to say. And behold, he shall deny unto you; and he shall make as if he were astonished; nevertheless, he shall declare unto you that he is innocent.

31 But behold, ye shall examine him, and ye shall find blood upon the skirts of his cloak.

32 And when ye have seen this, ye shall say: From whence cometh this blood? Do we not know that it is the blood of your brother?

33 And then shall he tremble, and shall look pale, even as if death had come upon him.

34 And then shall ye say: Because of this fear and this paleness which has come upon your face, behold, we know that thou art guilty.

35 And then shall greater fear come upon him; and then shall he confess unto you, and deny no more that he has done this murder.

36 And then shall he say unto you, that I, Nephi, know nothing concerning the matter save it were given unto me by the power of God. And then shall ye know that I am an honest man, and that I am sent unto you from God.

37 And it came to pass that they went and did, even according as Nephi had said unto them. And behold, the words which he had said were true; for according to the words he did deny; and also according to the words he did confess.

38 And he was brought to prove that he himself was the very murderer, (“Cases of unwitnessed murders

presented special problems under the law of Moses. While the two-witness rule would seem to stand insurmountably in the way of ever obtaining a conviction in such cases, such slayings could not simply be ignored... Seantum's self-incriminating admission would normally not be admissible in a Jewish court of law. Under the Talmud, no man could be put to death on his own testimony: 'No man may call himself a wrongdoer,' especially in a capital case. But from earlier times came four episodes that gave rise to an exception to this rule against self-incriminating confessions under certain circumstances. Those precedents, each of which involved convictions or punishments based on confessions, were the executions of (1) Achan (see Joshua 7), of (2) the man who admitted that he had killed Saul (see 2 Samuel 1:10-16), and of (3) the two assassins of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul (see 2 Samuel 4:8-12), as well as (4) the voluntary confession of Micah, the son who stole from his mother (see Judges 17:1-4). The ancients reconciled these four cases with their rigid two-witness rule by explaining that they involved confessions before trial or were proceedings before kings or rulers instead of judges. An exception was especially granted when the confession was 'corroborated by an ordeal as well as by the production of the *corpus delicti*,' as in the case of Achan, who was detected by the casting of lots and whose confession was corroborated by the finding of the illegal goods under his tent floor. Thus, one can with reasonable confidence conclude that in the biblical period the normal two-witness rule could be overridden in the special case of a self-incriminating confession, if the confession occurred outside of court, or if God's will was evidenced in the matter by ordeal, lots, or otherwise in the detection of the offender, and if corroborating physical evidence of the crime could be produced." (John W. Welch, *Reexploring The Book of Mormon*, p. 243-4)) insomuch that the five were set at liberty, and also was Nephi.

39 And there were some of the Nephites who believed on the words of Nephi; and there were some also, who believed because of the testimony of the five, for they had been converted while they were in prison.

40 And now there were some among the people, who said that Nephi was a prophet.

41 And there were others who said: Behold, he is a god, for except he was a god he could not ^aknow of all things. For behold, he has told us the thoughts of our hearts, and also has told us things; and even he has brought unto our knowledge the true murderer of our chief judge. (As the Book of Mormon was given as a sign or wonder attesting to all honest truth-seekers the authenticity of the Restoration, so Joseph Smith, in harmony with the scriptural pattern, was given a sign to confirm the verity of all that Moroni told him. The sign was that when it became known that the Lord had entrusted him with this ancient record, the workers of iniquity would seek his overthrow. "They will circulate falsehoods to destroy your reputation, and also will seek to take your life; but remember this, if you are faithful, and shall hereafter continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, you shall be preserved to bring these things forth; for in due time he will again give you a commandment to come and take them. When they are interpreted the Lord will give the holy priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim this gospel and baptize by water, and after that they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. Then will persecution rage more and more; for the iniquities of men shall be revealed, and those who are not built upon the Rock will seek to overthrow this church; but it will increase the more opposed, and spread farther and farther, increasing in knowledge till they shall be sanctified and receive an inheritance where the glory of God will rest upon them." Messenger and Advocate, 2:199, DCBM, 3:382)

CHAPTER 10

The Lord gives Nephi the sealing power—He is empowered to bind and loose on earth and in heaven—He commands the people to repent or perish—The Spirit carries him from congregation to congregation. [Between 23 and 20 B.C.]

1 AND it came to pass that there arose a division among the people, insomuch that they divided hither and thither and went their ways, leaving Nephi alone, as he was standing in the midst of them.

2 ^aAnd it came to pass that Nephi went his way towards his own house, ^apondering upon the things which the Lord had shown unto him. (Gordon B. Hinckley: “We all do a lot of studying, but most of us don’t do much meditation. We don’t take time to think. I’d like to suggest that next fast day . . . everybody in this hall set aside an hour or two. Sit by yourself. Go in the bedroom and lock the door. Go out in the yard under a tree. Go in your study if you have one and shut the door, and think about yourself and your worthiness. Read from this great book [Book of Mormon]... There’s a great word that’s used, ‘ponder.’ ‘Ponder.’ What do we mean by ‘ponder’? Well, I think it simply means kind of quietly thinking things through. Ponder what you have read. Ponder your life. Are you worthy, are you living the commandments...?” (*Church News*, 01/06/96))

3 And it came to pass as he was thus pondering—being much cast down because of the wickedness of the people of the Nephites, their secret works of darkness, and their murderings, and their plunderings, and all manner of iniquities—and it came to pass as he was thus pondering in his heart, behold, a ^avoice came unto him saying:

4 ^aBlessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with ^bunwearyingness declared the word (Neal A. Maxwell: “President Spencer W. Kimball exhibited the same ‘unwearyingness’ as the Lord commended in Nephi (Helaman 10:4-5). One of the author’s last real conversations with President Kimball included his wistful comment concerning his ministry: ‘I should have done more!’ How he could have done more none of us knows, but this comment is indicative of his unwearyingness. He endured so well the unusual number of afflictions life placed upon him while serving so many so incessantly.” (*A Wonderful Flood of Light*, p. 124) “Nephi had not selfishly sought his ‘own life,’ but rather had sought to do God’s will. This gave him the extra and undivided energy which made his striving with unwearied diligence possible. Nephi knew in which direction he faced: toward God. In contrast, and to be pitied, are the ambivalent, forever pivoting as between looking toward God or man. With all the incessant pivoting, no wonder some grow so weary! Instead, if we let our own wills be swallowed up in the will of the Lord, there is a more holistic deployment of our talents (see Mosiah 15:7). Like Nephi, we are not to pursue our own wills.” (*If Thou Endure It Well*, p. 116)), which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine ^cown life, (Joseph Smith: “After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized... then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God... When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 150)) but hast sought my ^dwill, and to keep my commandments.

5 And now, because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, (He has kept his covenants. President Kimball said most of the good work in the Church is done by people who don’t feel very well.) behold, I will bless thee forever; (Calling and election made sure) and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that ^aall things shall be ^bdone unto thee according to thy ^cword, for thou shalt ^dnot ask that which is contrary to my will. (Same promise to Joseph Smith, Heber C. Kimball, and others. So complete is the trust that God has in Nephi, so perfect is the assurance that he would not do or say anything contrary to the divine will, that Nephi is granted the promise that all that he asks, all that he says, and all that he does in the name of the Lord will be honored. What Nephi prays for he will get, because his hands are clean and his heart pure. His prayers and his deepest yearnings are directed and motivated by the Holy Spirit. He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh. D&C 46:30. Further: And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask. D&C 50:29-30 This latter scriptural passage seems to have at least two possible meanings: first, those who pray in the Spirit have it given to them – revealed to them – what they should pray for; second, those who so live as to come under the influence

of this marvelous grace and Christian discipline – these are they who receive what they pray for. Like Nephi, their hearts cry out only for the right things. DCBM, 3:385)

6 Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels, that ye shall have power over this people, and shall smite the earth with ^afamine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people.

7 Behold, I give unto you ^apower, (It is unlikely that this is the first time that the keys of the priesthood were granted to a Nephite prophet-leader; more likely, this is simply the first mention of it. We would suppose that Lehi, as a leader of the Nephite dispensation, was given the keys of the kingdom. Nephi and Jacob and Mosiah and Alma and Mormon and Moroni – many of the Nephite prophets – surely had the directing power, the right of presidency, the keys of the kingdom, bestowed upon them. The fact that temples were established among the Nephites early in their history suggests that sealings and marriages and ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood were a part of their religious life. DCBM, 3:386-87) that whatsoever ye shall ^bseal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; (**Apostolic powers**) and thus shall ye have power among this people. (Joseph Smith: “The doctrine or sealing power of Elijah is as follows: If you have power to seal on earth and in heaven, then we should be wise. The first thing you do, go and seal on earth your sons and daughters unto yourself, and yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory, and go ahead, and not go back, but use a little wisdom, and seal all you can, and when you get to heaven tell your Father that what you seal on earth should be sealed in heaven, according to his promise. I will walk through the gate of heaven and claim what I seal, and those that follow me and my counsel.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 340) Boyd K. Packer: “That sacred sealing power is with the Church now. Nothing is regarded with more sacred contemplation by those who know the significance of this authority. Nothing is more closely held. There are relatively few men who have been delegated this sealing power upon the earth at any given time—in each temple are brethren who have been given the sealing power. No one can get it except from the prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A clear statement follows regarding the sealing power as binding on all that we do for the living and the dead. ‘Whenever the fulness of the gospel is on earth, the Lord has agents to whom he gives power to bind on earth and seal eternally in the heavens (Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18; Hel. 10:3-10; D&C 132:46-49.)’ All things that are not sealed by this power have an end when men are dead. Unless a baptism has this enduring seal, it will not admit a person to the celestial kingdom; unless an eternal marriage covenant is sealed by this authority, it will not take the participating parties to an exaltation in the highest heaven within the celestial world. “‘All things gain enduring force and validity because of the sealing power. So comprehensive is this power that it embraces ordinances performed for the living and the dead, seals the children on earth up to their fathers who went before, and forms the enduring patriarchal chain that will exist eternally among exalted beings’ (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, p. 683). “In the Church we hold sufficient authority to perform all of the ordinances necessary to redeem and to exalt the whole human family. And, because we have the keys to the sealing power, what we bind in proper order here will be bound in heaven. Those keys—the keys to seal and bind on earth, and have it bound in heaven—represent the consummate gift from our God. With that authority we can baptize and bless, we can endow and seal, and the Lord will honor our commitments.” (*Ensign*, Feb. 1995, p. 32) D&C 132: 45 For I have conferred upon you the ^akeys and power of the priesthood, wherein I ^brestore all things, and make known unto you all things in due time. 46 And verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you ^aseal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you ^bbind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whosoever sins you ^cremit on earth shall be remitted eternally in the heavens; and whosoever sins you retain on earth shall be retained in heaven. 47 And again, verily I say, whomsoever you bless I will bless, and whomsoever you curse I will ^acurse, saith the Lord; for I, the Lord, am thy God. 48 And again, verily I say unto you, my servant Joseph, that whatsoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you ^agive any one on earth, by my word

and according to my law, it shall be visited with blessings and not cursings, and with my power, saith the Lord, and shall be without condemnation on earth and in heaven. 49 For I am the Lord thy God, and will be ^awith thee even unto the ^bend of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I ^cseal upon you your ^dexaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your ^efather.)

8 And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple it shall be rent in twain, it shall be done.

9 And if ye shall say unto this ^amountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done.

10 And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass.

11 And now behold, I command you, that ye shall go and declare unto this people, that thus saith the Lord God, who is the Almighty: Except ye repent ye shall be smitten, even unto ^adestruction.

12 And behold, now it came to pass that when the Lord had spoken these words unto Nephi, he did stop and did not go unto his own house, but did return unto the multitudes who were scattered about upon the face of the land, and began to declare unto them the word of the Lord which had been spoken unto him, concerning their destruction if they did not repent.

13 Now behold, ^anotwithstanding that great miracle which Nephi had done in telling them concerning the death of the chief judge, they did harden their hearts and did not hearken unto the words of the Lord.

14 Therefore Nephi did declare unto them the word of the Lord, saying: Except ye repent, thus saith the Lord, ye shall be ^asmitten even unto destruction.

15 And it came to pass that when Nephi had declared unto them the word, behold, they did still harden their hearts and would not hearken unto his words; therefore they did ^arevile against him, and did seek to lay their hands upon him that they might cast him into prison.

16 But behold, the power of God was with him, and they could not take him to cast him into prison, for he was taken by the Spirit and ^aconveyed away out of the midst of them. (Bruce R. McConkie: “Other prophets had been and would be transported bodily from place to place by the power of the Spirit. Ezekiel was lifted up and carried by the Spirit. (Ezek. 8:2-3.) Nephi ‘was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceeding high mountain,’ upon which he ‘never had before’ set his ‘foot.’ (1 Ne. 11:1.) Mary herself ‘was carried away in the Spirit’ at the time of the conception of Jesus. (1 Ne. 11:19-21.) Nephi the son of Helaman ‘was taken by the Spirit and conveyed away out of the midst’ of those who sought to imprison him, and thus ‘he did go forth in the Spirit, from multitude to multitude, declaring the word of God.’ (Hel. 10:16-17.) After Philip baptized the eunuch, ‘the Spirit of the Lord caught [him] away,’ and he was carried to Azotus. (Acts 8:39-40.) It is not an unheard-of thing for the Lord, by the power of the Spirit, to transport mortals from place to place...” (*The Mortal Messiah*, p. 413))

17 And it came to pass that thus he did go forth in the Spirit, from multitude to multitude, declaring the word of God, even until he had declared it unto them all, or sent it forth among all the people.

18 And it came to pass that they would not hearken unto his words; and there began to be contentions, insomuch that they were divided against themselves and began to slay one another with the sword.

19 And thus ended the seventy and first year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

CHAPTER 11

Nephi persuades the Lord to replace their war with a famine—Many people perish—They repent, and Nephi importunes the Lord for rain—Nephi and Lehi receive many revelations—The Gadianton robbers entrench themselves in the land. [Between 20 and 7 B.C.]

1 AND now it came to pass in the *seventy and second year (20 BC) of the reign of the judges that the contentions did increase, insomuch that there were wars throughout all the land among all the people of Nephi.

2 And it was this ^asecret band of robbers who did carry on this work of destruction and wickedness. And this war did last all that year; and in the *seventy and third year (19 BC) it did also last.

3 And it came to pass that in this year Nephi did cry unto the Lord, saying:

4 O Lord, do not suffer that this people shall be destroyed by the sword; but O Lord, rather ^alet there be a ^bfamine in the land, to stir them up in remembrance of the Lord their God, and perhaps they will repent and turn unto thee. (“Famine is one of heaven's most eloquent sermons. When virtually all else has failed to get the attention of the rebellious and turn them to God, famines have succeeded. Famines can strip men of every sense of self-sufficiency and turn their eyes and ears to the voice of heaven. (See Isaiah 51:19; Jeremiah 14:13-18; Amos 4:6.) In this story it seems that Nephi felt that the people simply did not see the connection between devastating war and their sinful ways.” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 390)

5 And so it was done, according to the words of Nephi. And there was a great famine upon the land, among all the people of Nephi. And thus in the *seventy and fourth year (18 BC) the famine did continue, and the work of destruction did cease by the sword but became sore by famine.

6 And this work of destruction did also continue in the *seventy and fifth year. (17 BC) For the earth was smitten that it was ^adry, and did not yield forth grain in the season of grain; and the whole earth was smitten, even among the Lamanites as well as among the Nephites, so that they were smitten that they did perish by thousands in the more wicked parts of the land. (Joseph Smith: “the destroying angel will...exercise his tremendous mission upon the children of disobedience; and destroy the workers of iniquity, while the Saints will be gathered out from among them, and stand in holy places ready to meet the Bridegroom when he comes.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 92))

7 And it came to pass that the people saw that they were about to perish by famine, and they began to ^aremember the Lord their God; and they began to remember the words of Nephi.

8 And the people ^abegan to plead with their chief judges and their leaders, that they would say unto Nephi: Behold, we know that thou art a man of God, and therefore cry unto the Lord our God that he turn away from us this famine, lest all the words which thou hast spoken concerning our ^bdestruction be fulfilled.

9 And it came to pass that the judges did say unto Nephi, according to the words which had been desired. And it came to pass that when Nephi saw that the people had ^arepented and did humble themselves in sackcloth, he cried again unto the Lord, saying:

10 O Lord, behold this people repenteth; and they have swept away the band of Gadianton from amongst them insomuch that they have become extinct, and they have concealed their secret plans in the earth.

11 Now, O Lord, because of this their humility wilt thou turn away thine anger, and let thine anger be appeased in the destruction of those wicked men whom thou hast already destroyed.

12 O Lord, wilt thou turn away thine anger, yea, thy fierce anger, and cause that this famine may cease in this land.

13 O Lord, wilt thou hearken unto me, and cause that it may be done according to my words, and send forth ^arain upon the face of the earth, that she may bring forth her fruit, and her grain in the season of grain.

14 O Lord, thou didst hearken unto ^amy words when I said, Let there be a famine, that the pestilence of the sword might cease; and I know that thou wilt, even at this time, hearken unto my words, for thou saidst that: If this people repent I will spare them.

15 Yea, O Lord, and thou seest that they have repented, because of the famine and the pestilence and destruction which has come unto them.

16 And now, O Lord, wilt thou turn away thine anger, and try again if they will serve thee? And if so, O Lord, thou canst bless them according to thy words which thou hast said.

17 And it came to pass that in the *seventy and sixth year (16 BC) the Lord did turn away his anger from the people, and caused that ^arain should fall upon the earth, insomuch that it did bring forth her fruit in the season of her fruit. And it came to pass that it did bring forth her grain in the season of her grain.

18 And behold, the people did rejoice and glorify God, and the whole face of the land was filled with

rejoicing; and they did no more seek to destroy Nephi, but they did esteem him as a ^agreat prophet, and a man of God, having great power and authority given unto him from God.

19 And behold, Lehi, his brother, was not a ^awhit behind him as to things pertaining to righteousness. (George Q. Cannon: “But Lehi was scarcely a whit behind him in the power of God that he attained unto and the blessings that were bestowed upon him. So it is with us. If we will live for these blessings, there is no limit to them. The only limit is our faith. If we have no faith; if we do not qualify ourselves; if we do not live near unto the Lord and seek unto Him for power and for gifts and graces, He will not bestow these blessings upon us. Every one of you brethren who bear the Holy Priesthood should be in such close communication with the Lord that you will know for yourselves all things pertaining to your duties; that you will not need to be taught, or, if you are taught, that you will understand in a moment what is required of you.” (*Collected Discourses*, Vol.1, March 3rd, 1889))

20 And thus it did come to pass that the people of Nephi began to prosper again in the land, and began to build up their waste places, and began to multiply and spread, even until they did ^acover the whole face of the land, both on the northward and on the southward, from the sea west to the sea east.

21 And it came to pass that the seventy and sixth year did end in peace. And the seventy and seventh year began in peace; and the ^achurch did spread throughout the face of all the land; and the more part of the people, both the Nephites and the Lamanites, did belong to the church; and they did have exceedingly great peace in the land; and thus ended the seventy and seventh year.

22 And also they had peace in the seventy and eighth year, save it were a few contentions (Dallin H. Oaks: “It is noteworthy that the Savior did not limit his teaching about disputations and contention to those who had wrong ideas about doctrine or procedure. He forbade disputations and contention by everyone. The commandment to avoid contention applies to those who are right as well as to those who are wrong.” (*Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, 4 Nephi – Moroni, p. 177) Joseph F. Smith: “You find the spirit of contention only among apostates and those who have denied the faith, those who have turned away from the truth and have become enemies to God and his work. There you will find the spirit of contention, the spirit of strife. There you will find them wanting to ‘argue the question,’ and to dispute with you all the time. Their food, their meat, and their drink is contention which is abominable in the sight of the Lord. We do not contend. We are not contentious, for if we were we would grieve the Spirit of the Lord from us, just as apostates do and have always done.” (*Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, 4 Nephi – Moroni, p. 177)) concerning the points of doctrine which had been laid down by the prophets.

23 And in the *seventy and ninth year (13 BC) there began to be much strife. But it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi, and many of their brethren who knew concerning the true points of doctrine, having many ^arevelations daily, (“There is a definite relationship between knowing the ‘true points of doctrine’ and ‘having many revelations daily’. Knowledge alone is not a barometer of righteousness, but certain knowledge, when learned and lived, points one toward that redemption which is in Christ and the abundant life that is available to the true disciple. In addition, those who know the doctrines of salvation teach the doctrines of salvation. There is strength in their testimony and power in their words. ‘Those who preach by the power of the Holy Ghost,’ Elder Bruce R. McConkie has written, ‘use the scriptures as their basic source of knowledge and doctrine. They begin with what the Lord has before revealed to other inspired men. But it is the practice of the Lord to give added knowledge to those upon whose hearts the true meanings and intents of the scriptures have been impressed. Many great doctrinal revelations come to those who preach from the scriptures. When they are in tune with the Infinite, the Lord lets them know, first, the full and complete meaning of the scriptures they are expounding, and then he oftentimes expands their views so that new truths flood in upon them, and they learn added things that those who do not follow such a course can never know.’ (*Promised Messiah*, pp. 515-16.)” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 391) Neal A.

Maxwell: “The living God can give much operational revelation to the living Church just as he is doing in the true and living Church today. We read of how, during a strife-filled period of time around 12 B.C.,

leaders and some of their brethren 'who knew concerning the true points of doctrine' were 'having many revelations daily, therefore they did preach unto the people, insomuch that they did put an end to their strife in that same year.' (Helaman 11:23. Italics added.) The quantity of revelations was obviously very great, though we do not at this point know much concerning their content, and they were sufficient unto the needs of their day. Doctrinal revelation is more occasional, since the great foundation of the doctrine has been laid in the early days of this dispensation and before." (*Things As They Really Are*, p. 63)) therefore they did preach unto the people, insomuch that they did put an end to their strife in that same year.

24 And it came to pass that in the *eightieth year (12 BC) of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, there were a certain number of the dissenters from the people of Nephi, who had some years before gone over unto the Lamanites, and taken upon themselves the name of Lamanites, and also a certain number who were real descendants of the Lamanites, being stirred up to anger by them, or by those dissenters, therefore they commenced a ^awar with their brethren. (The Book of Mormon is careful to specify that the terms Lamanite and Nephite are used in a loose and general sense to designate not racial but political, military, religious and cultural divisions and groupings of people. The Lamanite and Nephite division was tribal rather than racial, each of the main groups representing an amalgamation of tribes that retained their identity. Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 246)

25 And they did commit murder and plunder; and then they would retreat back into the mountains, and into the wilderness and secret places, hiding themselves that they could not be discovered, receiving daily an addition to their numbers, inasmuch as there were dissenters that went forth unto them.

26 And thus in time, yea, even in the space of ^anot many years, they became an exceedingly great band of robbers; and they did search out all the ^bsecret plans of Gadianton; and thus they became robbers of Gadianton.

27 Now behold, these robbers did make great havoc, yea, even great destruction among the people of Nephi, and also among the people of the Lamanites.

28 And it came to pass that it was expedient that there should be a stop put to this work of destruction; therefore they sent an army of strong men into the wilderness and upon the mountains to search out this band of robbers, and to destroy them.

29 But behold, it came to pass that in that same year they were driven back even into their own lands. And thus ended the eightieth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

30 And it came to pass in the *commencement of the eighty and first year (11 BC) they did go forth again against this band of robbers, and did destroy many; and they were also visited with much destruction.

31 And they were again obliged to return out of the wilderness and out of the ^amountains unto their own lands, because of the exceeding greatness of the numbers of those robbers who infested the mountains and the wilderness.

32 And it came to pass that thus ended this year. And the robbers did still increase and wax strong, insomuch that they did defy the whole armies of the Nephites, and also of the Lamanites; and they did cause great fear to come unto the people upon all the face of the land.

33 Yea, for they did visit many parts of the land, and did do great destruction unto them; yea, did kill many, and did carry away others captive into the wilderness, yea, and more especially their women and their children.

34 Now this great evil, which came unto the people because of their iniquity, did stir them up again in ^aremembrance of the Lord their God.

35 And thus ended the eighty and first year of the reign of the judges.

36 And in the eighty and second year they began again to ^aforget the Lord their God. And in the eighty and third year they began to wax strong in iniquity. And in the eighty and fourth year they did not mend their ways.

37 And it came to pass in the *eighty and fifth year (7 BC) they did wax stronger and stronger in their

pride, and in their wickedness; and thus they were ^aripening again for destruction.

38 And thus ended the eighty and fifth year.

* Verse 1 [20 B.C.]; Verse 2 [19 B.C.]; Verse 5 [18 B.C.]; Verse 6 [17 B.C.]; Verse 17 [16 B.C.]; Verse 23 [13 B.C.]; Verse 24 [12 B.C.]; Verse 30 [11 B.C.]; Verse 37 [7 B.C.].

CHAPTER 12

Men are unstable and foolish and quick to do evil—The Lord chastens his people—The nothingness of men compared with the power of God—In the day of judgment men shall gain everlasting life or everlasting damnation. [About 7 B.C.] (In 1787 Edward Gibbon completed his noble work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Here is the way he accounted for the fall. 1. The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society. 2. Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public monies for free bread and circuses for the populace. 3. The mad craze for pleasure, sports becoming every year more and more exciting and brutal. 4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within the decadence of the people. 5. The decay of religion – faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to warn and guide the people. Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, County*, 363-364)

1 AND thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men (Henry B. Eyring: “You and I need to be patient, and for a reason. A quick reading of the Book of Mormon, a few prayers, a shallow attempt at repentance, a casual regard for the covenants we’ve made—of course, that is not enough. The scriptures use over and over again the word ‘steadiness’ to describe faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. When faith and repentance and diligent efforts to live the commandments have gone on long enough that virtue garnishes our thoughts unceasingly, then the doctrine of the priesthood, the truthful answers to the questions that really matter, will distill upon us as the dew from heaven. “That’s been my experience with seeking the confirmation of truth by the Spirit of God. I have at times sought it by singular effort, in times of great need, and it has come. Investigators have that experience when they reach the point where they must know if the Book of Mormon is true. But far more often for me, I notice the Spirit’s presence in quiet confirmations at times when all I seem to have done is plod on in diligence, doing the simple things—searching the scriptures with a prayer in my heart and with more concern for others, and therefore less time for pursuits that let Satan, the father of lies, entice me. It’s in periods of that steadiness that I notice the Holy Ghost, almost in the way you’re surprised to discover that your shoes are wet from the dew formed on the grass overnight, and I look up and realize that my mind has been enlightened and my heart has been enlarged.” (*To Draw Closer to God*, p. 120)); yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and ^aprosper those who put their ^btrust in him.

2 Yea, and we may see at the very ^atime when he doth ^bprosper his people, yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of ^cprecious things of every kind and art; sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time that they do ^dharden their hearts, and do ^eforget the Lord their God, and do ^ftrample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity.

3 And thus we see that except the Lord doth ^achasten his people with many afflictions, (The Lord has made no secret of the fact that He intends to try the faith and the patience of His Saints. We mortals are so quick to forget the Lord: “And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions...they will not remember him.” However, the Lord knows our bearing capacity, both as to coping and to comprehending, and He will not give us more to bear than we can manage at the moment, though to us it may seem otherwise. Just as no temptations will come to us from which we cannot escape

or which we cannot bear, we will not be given more trials than we can sustain. President Brigham Young said of a geographical destination, "This is the place," of God's plan of salvation, with its developmental destination, it can be said, "This is the process!" President Young, who knew something about trial and tribulation but also of man's high destiny, said that the Lord lets us pass through these experiences that we might become true friends of God. By developing our individual capacities, wisely exercising our agency, and trusting God – including when we feel forsaken and alone – then we can, said President Young, learn to be 'righteous in the dark.' The gospel glow we see radiating from some – amid dark difficulties – comes from illuminated individuals who are of good cheer. To be cheerful when others are in despair, to keep the faith when others falter, to be true even when we feel forsaken – all of these are deeply desired outcomes during the deliberate, divine tutorials which God gives to us – because He loves us. These learning experiences must not be misread as divine indifference. Instead, such tutorials are a part of the divine unfolding. Neal A. Maxwell, CR, Oct 1983, p. 97) yea, except he doth visit them with ^bdeath and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not ^cremember him. (Neal A. Maxwell: 'We need to remember, however, that people whose hearts are hardened will have to experience something sufficiently strong to break their hearts and bring them to their senses. If it is true (as it is) that the Lord chasteneth those whom He loves, we would not really want immunity from the chastening of either circumstance or other things. Because God loves us, He will do what is necessary in order to teach us what we need to know. 'Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you whom I love, and whom I love I also chasten that their sins may be forgiven, for with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance in all things out of temptation, and I have loved you.' (D&C 95:1.) In further modern revelation, the Lord says, 'Therefore, they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son. For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified.' (D&C 101:4-5.)" (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, p. 55) Harold B. Lee: "'And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, they will not remember him.' (Helaman 12:2-3.) Isn't that a terrible indictment, and yet that is happening before us today. We are seeing that affluence. Never was there such prosperity in this country. We have been forgetting God, and we have turned aside from His teachings, and we are paying a terrible price. It is the test that, if we survive, will perhaps take some of the punishments that this prophet said would be necessary to bring us back to our knees and seek for the Lord to guide and direct us." (*Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 330) Neal A. Maxwell: "Afflictions can soften us and sweeten us, and can be a chastening influence. (Alma 62:41.) We often think of chastening as something being done to punish us, such as by a mortal tutor who is angry and peevish with us. Divine chastening, however, is a form of learning as it is administered at the hands of a loving Father. (Helaman 12:3.)" (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, p. 39))

4 O how ^afoolish, and how vain, and how evil, and devilish, and how ^bquick to do iniquity, and how slow to do good, are the children of men; yea, how quick to hearken unto the words of the evil one, and to set their ^chearts upon the vain things of the world! (Mormon is looking from his perspective of seeing the Nephites destroyed knowing that we will be faced with the same circumstances in our day.)

5 Yea, how quick to be lifted up in ^apride; yea, how quick to ^bboast, and do all manner of that which is iniquity; and how slow are they to remember the Lord their God, and to give ear unto his counsels, yea, how slow to ^cwalk in wisdom's paths!

6 Behold, they do not desire that the Lord their God, who hath ^acreated them, should ^brule and reign over them; notwithstanding his great goodness and his mercy towards them, they do set at ^cnaught his counsels, and they will not that he should be their guide.

7 O how great is the ^anothingness (without Christ) of the children of men; yea, even they are ^bless than the dust of the earth. (Joseph Fielding Smith: "Now [Mormon] did not mean to say that the Lord has greater concern for and loves the dust of the earth more than he does his children. He did not mean to say that we, the children of the Lord, in his sight are considered less than the dust of the earth. The point he is making is that the dust of the earth is obedient. It moveth hither and thither at the command of the

Lord. All things are in harmony with his laws. Everything in the universe obeys the law given unto it, so far as I know, except man. Everywhere you look you find law and order, the elements obeying the law given to them, true to their calling. But man rebels, and in this thing man is less than the dust of the earth because he rejects the counsels of the Lord, and the greater the blessings he receives, (this because of his agency), the more willingly does he turn from the source of those blessings, feeling self-sufficient, and puts his faith and his trust in the arm of flesh rather than in God.” (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1929, p. 55) Brigham Young: “The animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms abide the law of their Creator; the whole earth and all things pertaining to it, except man, abide the law of their creation.... We tame the animals and make them do our drudgery and administer to our wants in many ways, yet man alone is not tamed—he is not subject to his Great Creator. Our ignorant animals are faithful to us, and will do our bidding as long as they have any strength; yet man who is the offspring of the Gods, will not become subject to the most reasonable and self-exalting principles. How often have we witnessed a faithful animal conveying his master home so drunk that he could not see his way or sit up; yet his faithful animal will plod through mud, shun stumps, trees, and bad places, and land him safely at home.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, pp. 246-7 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 205))

8 For behold, the dust of the earth moveth hither and thither, to the dividing asunder, at the command of our great and everlasting God.

9 Yea, behold at his ^avoice do the hills and the mountains tremble and ^bquake.

10 And by the ^apower of his voice they are broken up, and become smooth, yea, even like unto a valley.

11 Yea, by the power of his voice doth the ^awhole earth shake;

12 Yea, by the power of his voice, do the foundations rock, even to the very center.

13 Yea, and if he say unto the earth—Move—it is moved. (One of the great prophecies that attends the transition of this earth from its present telestial state to the Edenic or paradisiacal state of the Millennium is that of the mountains being made low and the valleys being brought up. “It shall be a voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, which shall break down the mountains, and the valleys shall not be found. He shall command the great deep, and it shall be driven back into the north countries, and the islands shall become one land; and the land of Jerusalem and the land of Zion shall be turned back into their own place, and the earth shall be life as it was in the days before it was divided.” D&C 133:22-24)

14 Yea, if he say unto the ^aearth—Thou shalt ^bgo back, that it ^clengthen out the day for many hours—it is done; (Reference is here made to the biblical account that shows Joshua commanding the sun and the moon to stand still so that his army might complete their rout of the Amorites. (Joshua 10:12-14) Here a corrective note is added to that account, which supposed the sun to rotate around a stationary earth. These verses provide a subtle but certain assurance that the prophet-editor Mormon, like many of the ancient spiritual leaders, was anything but primitive in his understanding concerning God, man, and the universe. DCBM, 3:397)

15 And thus, according to his word the ^aearth goeth back, and it appeareth unto man that the ^bsun standeth still; yea, and behold, this is so; for surely it is the earth that moveth and not the sun. (Joseph Fielding Smith: “There is a prevalent notion in the world today that before the time of Columbus, Galileo, and Copernicus, all ancient people believed that the earth was flat and the center of the universe. From the writings of the Scriptures, and more especially those which have come to us in this dispensation, we know that the ancient peoples, when they were guided by the Spirit of the Lord, had the true conception of the universe. The Lord revealed to Abraham great truths about the heavenly bodies, their revolutions, times and seasons, and these were published by the Prophet Joseph Smith before modern astronomers were familiar with these facts. From the writings of Abraham we learn that the Egyptians understood the nature of the planets. Moses also recorded much about this and other worlds, but because of the unbelief and apostasy from truth, these writings were eliminated from his writings... We learn from the Book of Mormon (Helaman 12:13-15) that the Nephites understood the nature of the

planets. It was not until apostasy and rebellion against the things of God that the true knowledge of the universe, as well as the knowledge of other truths, became lost among men.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, footnote, p. 118-9))

16 And behold, also, if he say unto the ^awaters of the great deep—^bBe thou dried up—it is done.

17 Behold, if he say unto this mountain—Be thou raised up, and ^acome over and fall upon that city, that it be buried up—behold it is done.

18 And behold, if a man ^ahide up a treasure in the earth, and the Lord shall say—Let it be ^baccursed, because of the iniquity of him who hath hid it up—behold, it shall be accursed.

19 And if the Lord shall say—Be thou accursed, that no man shall find thee from this time henceforth and forever—behold, no man getteth it henceforth and forever. (Brigham Young: “We see many of the Elders of Israel desirous of becoming wealthy, and they adopt any course that they think will bring them riches, which to me is as unwise as anything can be—to see men of wisdom, men that seem to have an understanding of the world and of the things of God, searching after minerals throughout these mountains; they traverse the hills, and they dig here and there, and keep digging and picking, and rolling the rocks from morning till night. This chain of mountains has been followed from the north to the south, and its various spurs have been prospected, and what do they find? Just enough to allure them, and to finally lead them from the faith, and at last to make them miserable and poor. Ask the brethren why they do this, and the ready reply will be, ‘Is it not my privilege to find a gold mine, or a silver mine, as well as others?’ As far as I am concerned I would say, ‘Yes, certainly it is your privilege, if you can find one.’ But do you know how to find such a mine? No, you do not. These treasures that are in the earth are carefully watched, they can be removed from place to place according to the good pleasure of Him who made them and owns them. He has his messengers at his service, and it is just as easy for an angel to remove the minerals from any part of one of these mountains to another, as it is for you and me to walk up and down this hall... People do not know it, but I know there is a seal set upon the treasures of earth; men are allowed to go so far and no farther. I have known places where there were treasures in abundance; but could men get them? No. You can read in the Book of Mormon of the ancient Nephites holding their treasures, and of their becoming slippery; so that after they had privately hid their money, on going to the place again, lo and behold it was not there, but was somewhere else, but they knew not where. The people do not understand this; I wish they did, for they would then do as I do, pay attention to the legitimate business that God has given them to perform.” (*Journal of Discourses*, p. 36-39))

20 And behold, if the Lord shall say unto a man—Because of thine iniquities, thou shalt be accursed ^aforever—it shall be done.

21 And if the Lord shall say—Because of thine iniquities thou shalt be ^acut off from my presence—he will cause that it shall be so.

22 And wo unto him to whom he shall say this, for it shall be unto him that will do iniquity, and he cannot be ^asaved; therefore, for this cause, that men might be saved, hath repentance been declared.

23 Therefore, blessed are they who will repent and hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; for these are they that shall be saved.

24 And may God grant, in his great fulness, that men might be brought unto repentance and good works, that they might be restored unto grace for ^agrace, according to their works. (Seek for the real things, not the artificial. Seek for the everlasting truths, not the passing whim. Seek for the eternal things of God, not for that which is here today and gone tomorrow. Look to God and live. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p. 494)

25 And I would that all men might be saved. But we read that in the ^agreat and last day there are some who shall be cast out, yea, who shall be cast off from the ^bpresence of the Lord; (This is a broad classification, ranging from those who inherit the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms to the sons of perdition, those who inherit a kingdom of no glory and remain filthy forevermore. All these are cut off from the presence of the Father, and as revelation states concerning the candidates for the telestial glory, “they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds

without end.” D&C 76:112 DCBM, 3:398)

26 Yea, who shall be consigned to a state of endless misery, fulfilling the words which say: They that have done good shall have ^aeverlasting life; and they that have done evil shall have everlasting ^bdamnation (The phrase “everlasting life” describes more than a life that does not end; it is descriptive of the kind and quality of life enjoyed by the obedient and faithful, the life of exalted and glorified beings. Conversely, “everlasting damnation” is not properly understood to mean an endless stint in hell, but rather is descriptive of the kind of punishment – God’s punishment – which will be meted out to the defiant. D&C 19:4-12, DCBM, 3:398). And thus it is. Amen. (Only through the atonement of Christ can we be saved.)