

Book of Mormon 35
Repent and Return Unto the Lord
(Helaman 13-16)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background)

I. It is very dangerous to **rely on man's reasoning alone.**

A. Thus "The wisdom of their wise and learned shall perish" (2 Nephi 27:26).

B. In fact, **those who believe only what they see are terribly blind --- and crippled as a result.**

II. Samuel the Lamanite came to the Nephites to **offer them a higher sight, to save them.**

A. He gave an otherwise unforeseeable sight into the future. He told them what would occur in 5 years and **then in 400 years.**

A. The signs of Christ's birth would come in five years. And in 400 years ----

B. "the sword of justice hangeth over this people; and four hundred years pass not away save the sword of justice falleth upon this people" (Helaman 13:5, 9 -10).

C. "And nothing can save this people save it be repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, who surely shall come into the world, and shall suffer many things and shall be slain for his people" (v. 6).

D. He also warned that for the sake of a few righteous, the Nephites were now being spared. **But when they should cast out the righteous, they would be ripe for destruction** (Helaman 13:14).

1. The Bible story of Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah made a similar prophecy in its time.

2. **These events are similar because they are both patterns of what will happen to the world before the final destruction in the very Last Day.**

3. It is when the wicked of the world turn upon the few righteous for whom they are being spared that the final destructions will be poured out in the Last Day.

III. Samuel charged that the Nephites were even then mocking and casting out prophets (Helaman 13:24); [As they later did to him! Helaman 16:2].

A. **The Lord deliberately sent His Son and His prophets in forms which require much faith and spirit to recognize, such as young boys, (Joseph Smith), and in Samuel's case, a Lamanite.**

B. Richard L. Evans said, "...a prophet is seldom popular, and the cost of being a prophet is always great, for he may be called upon to say those things which are not pleasing,... and he may find himself fighting against a tide of mass-misconception, and, as history records, be stoned, crucified, banished, ridiculed, shunned, or rejected. For the truth is not pleasing unto all men, and time has proved that majorities are not always right..." (*The Improvement Era*, Nov. 1939, p. 672).

C. We have a classic example right now. Our modern prophet, Thomas S. Monson, whom faithful Latter-day Saints know as a fountain of good works, has been demonized as a profit-seeking mogul by some. One portrayal used a picture of the priesthood being restored with the restorers saying, sarcastically, "Build a shopping mall!" This arises from the church's efforts to revitalize a severely decaying area around Church headquarters --- **using non-tithing monies.**

IV. Avoiding the destruction in 400 years would depend on obedience to Jesus Christ, whose birth would come in 5 years, with significant signs that it was to occur.

A. "Five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name" (Helaman 14:3),

B. Since He would bring Light into the World, the signs given would pertain to light: "there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day. Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night" (Hel. 14:4).

V. Samuel also foretold the signs of Christ's crucifixion, **His death being the ultimate necessary step for their salvation.**

A. "I give unto you... a sign of his death. For behold, this death bringeth to pass the resurrection, and redeemeth all mankind from the first death --- spiritual death; for all mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual" (Helaman 14:14-16).

1. One sign would show a temporary loss of Christ's Light: the sun, moon and stars would be darkened (14:20). The darkness would last three days (14:20). There would be thundering, lightening, and the shaking of the earth for many hours (14:21).

B. Masses of solid rocks would break up (14:21). There would be tempests (14:23). Mountains would sink to become valleys; Valleys would be lifted up to become mountains (14:23).

Highways would break up; cities would become desolate (14:24). **These things would occur to help bring about belief** (14:28).

1. [In future lessons evidence will be given that these things actually came to pass].

C. He who would perish at this time would have brought about his own destruction (14:30).

D. For the Lord has given man knowledge of good and evil, and the right to choose. "... and ye can do good and be restored unto that which is good, or have that which is good restored unto you or ye can do evil, and have that which is evil restored unto you" (Helaman 14:31).

E. But **the darkness would be replaced with greater light at Jesus' Resurrection and appearance.**

VI. Those Nephites who believed Samuel **received even greater knowledge and blessings.**

A. Nephi added things "that they might know and remember at the time of their coming that they had been made known unto them beforehand" (Helaman 15:5).

B. **"Great signs were given unto the people, and wonders, and the words of the prophets began to be fulfilled.**

C. And angels did appear unto men, wise men, and did declare unto them glad tidings of great joy" (Helaman 16:13-14).

VII. Yet in spite of all the prophesying and the miracles, **many returned to depending "upon ... their own wisdom,**

A. They said: "Some things they [the prophets] may have guessed right, among so many: but behold, we know that all these great and marvelous works cannot come to pass, of which has been spoken" (Helaman 16:16-17).

B. "And they began to reason and to contend among themselves, That it is not reasonable that such a being as Christ shall come; if so and he be the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of earth as it has been spoken, why will he not show himself unto us as well as unto them who shall be at Jerusalem?" (Helaman 16:17-18).

VIII. How fatefully wrong was all their "reasoning."

A. For the Son of God did come; and He did appear to many on the American Continent --- to those who believed!

B. Unfortunately most Nephites rejected the words of the prophets and the visions of the future which had been offered them, and instead relied upon their own short-sighted and flawed reasoning.

C. Even more serious, they began to "go about spreading rumors and contentions ... against that which was good and against that which should come" (Helaman 16:22).

IX. The events which occurred prior to Christ's First Coming are patterns of things to occur prior to Christ's Second Coming.

A. One thing made clear is that riches would become, like then, "slippery" to us.

B. Why would this occur? Samuel makes it clear this occurs because "they have set their hearts upon their riches" (Helaman 13:20).

C. Wickedness is not just immorality!

D. The majority of Old Testament, New Testament and Book of Mormon prophets warned of wickedness in the latter days which would come because men would worship riches.

1. Should this surprise us since we live in times when riches abound above any time of earth?

E. Both the warnings and the consequences are being fulfilled in our days, where ID thieves and con men are scamming the innocent out of thousands, even millions; where natural disasters nearly every day are destroying all that people have "treasured up" through their entire lives.

F. And we can be assured, even more "slipperiness of riches" shall occur in the future.

X. Samuel gives the key to avoiding this Latter-day curse --- "hide up" our treasures unto the Lord (Helaman 13:18-22).

A. But how does one "hide up his treasures unto the Lord?"

B. Jesus gave us the most detailed answer, and for the same reasons:

1. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

C. The Lord was serious when He commanded us not to judge. So none of us can really judge how others are keeping Jesus' injunction about treasures. The poorest can spend all their lives coveting and thus keeping their heart on riches.

D. So it is a question we can only ask for ourselves. "Where is my heart?"

1. If our hearts are truly "in Heaven," then that must be where we have hidden our treasure.

E. And I know many examples of those who do "hide up unto the Lord." For I have seen many who have left comfortable homes and all they possess to serve mission after mission for Jesus the Christ. Truly they have hidden up their treasures unto the Lord.

XI. There are likely other ramifications to these teachings. But I feel the above are the most useful. In particular, if we go to the temple and make the covenants that we are asked to make there, and then keep them, we are most assuredly "hiding up our treasures unto the Lord."

A. Thus when the Savior comes, our true treasures will be administered back to us.