Lesson 35
Helaman 13–16

Helaman 13

**Verse 1ff.** Does the Lord threaten the Nephites through Samuel, telling them to “repent or else”? If so, how do we understand such a threat? How does it differ from bullying? If not, how are we to understand this kind of prophecy?

**Verse 5:** What does Samuel mean by “the sword of justice”?

**Verse 7:** What are the glad tidings that the angel brought him and that he hoped the Nephites would receive?

**Verse 8:** Why does the Lord say he will withdraw from them because of the hardness of their hearts, rather than because of their wickedness?

What does the Lord mean when he says he will take his word from among them? When he says he will suffer them no longer? When he says he will turn the hearts of their brethren against them? (After all, it can’t mean he’ll send the Lamanites against them since the Lamanites are now righteous.)

**Verses 12–14:** Why does he emphasize the fact that he is sparing Zarahemla for the righteous’ sake?

**Verses 18–19:** What does it mean to hide one’s treasure up to the Lord? What kinds of treasure might Samuel mean?
Notice that the parallel but opposite phrase is “hide up their treasure in the earth.” What does that mean? What significance might it have for us? Few of us bury our treasure, but what do we do that is comparable?

**Verse 20:** In concrete, contemporary terms, what does it mean to have one’s heart set upon riches?

**Verse 21:** He says that they are cursed and their riches are cursed because they have set their hearts on riches. It may be relatively easy to understand how they are cursed for having their hearts so set, but how are their riches cursed?

**Verse 22:** Does this verse answer the question above, about verse 20? What does it mean not to remember the Lord in the things with which he has blessed us? What does it mean to remember our riches?

How do pride, boasting, great swelling, and so on, result from remembering our riches and forgetting God, as the verse implies they do?

What does it mean for our hearts to swell with great pride unto boasting and unto great swelling? Why is the phrase so repetitive? About what would we boast? How does pride bring envy?

How does envy bring strife, malice, persecution, murder, and all sorts of iniquities?

**Verses 26–28:** Perhaps we don’t openly deny the prophets as do the people described in verse 26, but are there ways in which we do what is described in verses 27 and 28? What kinds of people does our culture honor—whom do we honor with gold, silver, and fine clothes? What kinds
of people flatter us, saying that all is well? In this context, what does “All is well” mean? What other kinds of things do they teach?

**Verse 33:** They seem to be saying, “If only we had repented, we would still be rich.” Is this a portrayal of genuine repentance? If not, why is it part of the record?

**Verse 36:** Not only have their riches become slippery, but all things have. What does that mean?

**Verse 38:** In verse 11 he told them that if they would repent, the Lord would turn away his anger. Now he tells them that their destruction is sure, that it is too late. How do you reconcile these—especially when he admonishes them in verse 39 to repent as soon as he says it is too late?

### Helaman 14

**Verse 1:** What might prevent these things from being written?

**Verse 2:** Why does the prophet give them a sign?

**Verse 8:** Does this mean that those who believe after having seen the sign will be saved? If so, isn’t that unfair to those who haven’t seen such signs?

**Verse 13:** What does it mean to believe on the Savior? We usually speak of believing in him. Is believing on him different, or is that just a difference between the older language of the Book of Mormon and our own language?

Notice that Samuel says “if you believe on Christ, you will repent” instead of “if you believe, you ought to repent.”
Why does he put it that way? Is it possible to believe on Christ and not repent? Why not?

**Verse 16:** Those cut off from the presence of the Lord are dead, both temporally and spiritually. To be dead temporally means to have a physical body that will die or to already be dead. But what does it mean—here—to be dead spiritually? Here we learn that spiritual death and temporal death come together: we are dead spiritually and temporally because of Adam’s fall. So to be human is, at least initially, to be spiritually dead. How is what Samuel says in this verse like what we usually say about spiritual death (we bring it about through sin), and how is it different?

**Verse 28:** What reason does the angel give for the signs of Christ’s birth in the New World?

**Verse 29:** The second word of the verse is this. To what does it refer? In other words, what is this verse explaining?

**Verse 30:** It is pretty clear that if we die, we do it to ourselves. But what does it mean that whoever does iniquity does it to himself? Didn’t Hitler do evil to others rather than to himself? How does our freedom account for the fact that when we do evil we do it to ourselves?

**Helaman 15**

**Verses 1–2:** The calamity predicted for the Nephites is clearly a literal one. It may also be a literal one for us if we aren’t repentant. But are there also other ways to understand these verses? For example, in what other ways might our houses be desolate if we don’t repent?
Verse 4: What does it mean to say that the Lord has hated something? (This isn’t the only scripture that says this; the phrase is relatively common, especially in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon.) How do we square that description of him with the scripture that says he is love?

At the end of the verse Samuel says “for this intent hath the Lord prolonged their days.” For what intent? Whose days?

Verse 7: Faith and repentance bring a change of heart in the Lamanites. What is a change of heart? How might our hearts be changed?

Verse 9: Notice that this behavior isn’t confined to the Anti-Nephi-Lehies. The other Lamanites appear to have taken up the same covenant, or at least to be motivated by the same fear.

Verses 12–13: What promises have been extended to the Lamanites in the last days? Does verse 13 describe those promises completely?

Helaman 16

Verses 18–19: Notice the irony in their question.

Verse 21: What is the Nephite and Lamanite explanation of why the prophets have come? Compare what they say here to what Korihor said (Alma 30). If you talk to some inactive members of the Church, or to people who aren’t members of the Church, you sometimes hear modern variations of the same charge. What explains the frequency of this charge? How can we best refute it?