

# HELAMAN 13–16

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## Overview

### **Mormon's Interest in Samuel's Speech Ran Deep**

In this final section of the book of Helaman, we are given an extensive record of the words of Samuel the Lamanite. It even includes the words in Helaman 14:25 that had been omitted, an oversight for which Jesus gently chided Nephi and the disciples. Samuel's words were important, and Jesus wanted to be sure that they were included among the Nephite records (see 3 Nephi 23:9–13). With that high level of attention given to the details and completeness of Samuel's prophetic speech, readers can be quite confident that Mormon would not have taken anything out of this record or tampered editorially with it, even if he might otherwise have been tempted to do so. The speech is in some ways rather raw and repetitive. But it was given under the pressures of the moment, and its bold spontaneity bares the authentic marks of a traditional prophetic curse oracle.

Mormon also had several of his own reasons for wanting to include all the words of Samuel in his record. For example, in Mormon chapter 1, he is sorry to say that he "was forbidden to preach unto [his own people], because of the hardness of their hearts" (Mormon 1:17), and that the Gadianton robbers again "did infest the land" (Mormon 1:18), as they had in Samuel's day (Helaman 11:24-37). And so, it is all the more exactly on target for Mormon to refer to the fulfilling in his own day "of all the words of Abinadi, and also Samuel the Lamanite" (Mormon 1:19). Mormon, of course, knew where his story was headed, even as he abridged it. Hence, he gave special attention to the full inclusion of these prophetic words of warning in particular.

### Some Questions to Think about as You Study Samuel's Speech

- What strikes you as impressive about the courage and powerful words of this Lamanite convert?
- How well did Samuel know and use the scriptures (13:1; 14:12; 15:11; and many more)?
- What can we learn today from Samuel's words about the unrighteous behaviors and bad attitudes of the unrighteous Nephites about wealth (13:18–23), about casting out the prophets (13:24–29), and about their poor social attitudes toward the Lamanites (15:3–14)?
- What does it really mean to be “free”? What makes us “free”? Why would being “free” have been a topic of special interest to Samuel and his people at this time? (14:30–31; 15:8).
- What did Samuel prophesy would happen within 400 years? Why might that number (which is 20 x 20) have been symbolically significant? (And notice that Mormon remembers this prophecy in particular, Mormon 1:19).
- What did Samuel prophesy would happen in (or after) 5 more years? (14:2–6).
- Did he say when the signs of Christ's death would be given? (14:20–29).
- Do you think Samuel's prophecies were “reasonable”? Why did some people think they were not? (16:18–19). Should a person believe only that which is “reasonable”?

### Samuel's Speech Patterns

It seems to me that Samuel's speech contains linguistic and rhetorical elements which suggest that he may not have been a native Nephite speaker or that he may have grown up using a different dialect. If so, that might have made it difficult for Nephite people to understand or accept him. As you read Samuel's words, listen for patterns of speech that might have struck his audience as unusual or “different.” Indeed, it would be surprising if the dialects spoken by Samuel and by the people in Zarahemla had not diverged over time from each other. If so, this language barrier could have added to the rejection of Samuel's message by the people in Zarahemla.

In addition, there appears to have been certain stylistic elements that may have put some of his listeners off even further. For example, Samuel's repetition of groups of words sometimes sounds redundant. In some instances, he repeated the same idea several times. He hovered over a point and repeated words in a staccato style. This could be a natural inclination of speakers of a second language when emphasizing a main point. Such speakers usually operate in the second language with a limited vocabulary. They reuse the same words, without speaking in flowery perlocutions, eloquent synonyms, or subtle euphemisms.

As a result, we can see in Samuel's words indications of very straight-forward public speaking. The Nephite anti-Christ's and other enemies of the church were often described as "flattering" and eloquent with their language. This is not said of Samuel, who may not have had that kind of training in Nephite oratory. What he did have was the truth, and he spoke it directly. Whether he had picked up the Nephite dialect or accent since his conversion or had been taught the language since birth, by the time he boldly addressed the people of Zarahemla, he had come to know the spirit of prophecy, to recognize the voice of his Lord Jesus Christ, and to understand certain Nephite scriptures very well.

## Helaman 13

### Helaman 13:1–39 — Samuel's Main Themes in Chapter 13

In chapter 13, the following themes are expressed:

- God's fierce anger will come unless the people repent (vv. 8–11).
- Wo on the great city (vv. 12–16).
- Why God places curses on the land, on riches, and the people (vv. 17–23).
- Wo to the people for rejecting the prophets (vv. 24–29).
- God's anger is already kindled unless the people repent (vv. 30–39).

The basic structure of Samuel's speech in chapter 13 includes five themes, and he repeats these points several times in no specific order. Three times he reiterated that the Lord would "visit them with the sword and with famine and with pestilence" (13:9) and would "visit them in my fierce anger" and shall "visit your destruction" (13:10). He uses the word "Wo" seven times in this chapter (13:11, 12, 12, 14, 15, 16, 24; and twice more in chapter 15). The word "destroy/destruction" appears nine times in chapter 13 alone. The "anger" of the Lord appears five times, and only, in chapter 13 (verses 10, 11, 30, 37, 39). Taken altogether, the large number of his expressions of "wo," of "famine and pestilence" (13:9), of cursings (13:17, 18, 19, 23, 25), and destruction are punctuated by three times as many succinct expressions involving "repent, repentance, repented, repenteth" (twenty-seven occurrences, running throughout his speech), such as, "except they repent" (13:8), "except ye repent, saith the Lord" (13:10), and "but if ye will repent and return unto the Lord your God I will turn away mine anger, saith the Lord" (13:11). Several other words appear in similarly high concentrations here.

Toward the end of chapter 13, perhaps when it was clear that the people as a whole were not accepting his warnings, Samuel was prompted to say, "But behold, your days of probation are past; ye have procrastinated the day of your salvation until it is everlastingly

too late, and your destruction is made sure" (13:38). However, he still ended this first section of his speech on a note of hope, "O ye people of the land, that ye would hear my words! And I pray that the anger of the Lord be turned away from you, and that ye would repent and be saved" (13:39).

### **Helaman 13:1–2 — Samuel Prophecies Among the Nephites**

Samuel the Lamanite arrived in Zarahemla on this occasion in the eighty-sixth year of the reign of the judges. This was only sixteen years after the famine prescribed by Nephi, the son of Helaman, had caused the Nephite people to repent. However, after that things had gone downhill very rapidly—the Nephites were now very wicked. In Helaman 6:1, we had already learned "... when the sixty and second year of the reign of the judges had ended, ... the Lamanites had become, the more part of them, a righteous people, insomuch that their righteousness did exceed that of the Nephites, because of their firmness and their steadiness in the faith." The righteous and converted Lamanites were now preaching to the Nephites, and "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 conversion, and did exhort them to faith and repentance" (Helaman 6:4).

What can be discerned or surmised about where Samuel came from? Might he have been one of those early Lamanite missionaries who came among the Nephites as "missionaries and witnesses" to "the land of Zarahemla," perhaps not so much to the city, but to the villages round about? They also went northward to teach, and Nephi and Lehi went with them (Helaman 6:6). It appears that until Samuel's call by God, missionaries may not have been called to preach in the great city of Zarahemla. However, now, in the eighty-sixth year, the Lord then directed Samuel that it was time to go, not only to teach, but to warn the people of impending doom if they did not repent.

It appears that Samuel was the first of the Lamanite missionaries to visit the city of Zarahemla, resulting in their anger and desire to evict him. My supposition is this: I think that Samuel the Lamanite may have been a leader among the Lamanites who had joined the church in the city of Nephi in Helaman 5, and probably had been there on the day that Nephi and Lehi converted the 300 people, as recorded in their missionary account. These Lamanites "did observe strictly to keep the commandments of God, according to the law of Moses" (13:1), and these new converts had laid down "their weapons of war" (Helaman 5:51; 15:9), as had the Lamanites who had previously followed Ammon. Samuel was now a great religious leader among his own people.

Thus, it appears that Samuel had a close relationship with Nephi, the son of Helaman. He had missionary experience. He belonged to a group of converts who were especially diligent in keeping the law of Moses and laying down their weapons in the interests of peace.

### Helaman 13:3 — The Lord Calls Samuel to Preach

In Helaman 7, we learn that Nephi and Lehi had returned from the land north earlier. This was when Nephi was so shocked at the wickedness he found back in Zarahemla, that he went up on his tower to mourn over the Nephites who would not repent and to chastise the people. Several years later, Nephi was probably at home in Zarahemla at the time Samuel spoke there from the walls of the city.

If Samuel had been a convert of Nephi, perhaps Samuel was with him or had come to visit Nephi and Lehi on their way home from teaching in the land northward. He may have been shocked, as Nephi had been, when he discovered how wicked the people had become in the city of Zarahemla. He likely prayed about the situation, and was told something like, “Samuel, I need you to deliver a serious message—and there is bad news. These people must repent. But there is good news—I want you to explain specific signs that will shortly appear so that the people will be able to believe and know that Christ has come into the world.”

#### Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[What does the Book of Mormon Teach About Prophets?](#) (Helaman 13:4),” *KnoWhy* 284 (March 8, 2017).

### Helaman 13:4 — Samuel Preaches from the Wall

Samuel the Lamanite was quite a figure, but sketching or painting him is a problem because we lack information. We do not know how old he was, if he was married, or if he had children. Many Latter-day Saint artists have tried to encapsulate the event.



Minerva Teichert depicted Samuel in the bottom half of a horizontal diptych, with arrows flying at him. She seems to have placed Samuel in between two parts of a wall within a city, not upon a rampart. In the upper field, she illustrated the Ammonite Stripling Warriors, often referred to as the Sons of Helaman, being sent off by their mothers on the right and given their swords by the high priest Helaman on the left.

I believe that Teichert had noticed the place in Samuel’s speech which refers to the practice begun by the Ammonite people of laying down their weapons of war (see Helaman 15:9), and thus she connected these two groups of Lamanite converts—the recently converted Lamanites in Helaman 5 and the earlier converted Ammonites in Mosiah 24. All those Lamanites were then represented by Samuel the Lamanite.



*Figure 1 Sketch of Samuel the Lamanite by Arnold Friberg.*

Second, this is a sketch by Arnold Friberg, showing how he brainstormed ideas as to how to paint a picture of Samuel the Lamanite on top of a wall. If Samuel was at least five feet tall, the wall in the painting would be about 40 feet high. Friberg was using artistic license. The only problem is, how would Samuel have escaped? If he jumped off the wall, he would probably not have survived. Friberg may have overdone the drama as he composed this scene of epic proportions in the Book of Mormon. Because we do not know much about Samuel, we all have to read between the lines to really appreciate his impact as a prophet. These are amazing chapters.

#### **Further Reading**

Anthony Sweat, "[History and Art: Mediating the Rocky Relationship](#)," 2020 Fairmormon Conference Presentation, online at [fairmormon.org](http://fairmormon.org).

### Helaman 13:5–6 — Samuel Issues a Traditional War Oracle

In verses 5 and 6, Samuel the Lamanite uses a common prophetic device known as a “war oracle.” “War oracles” are prophetic warnings to the people that God’s “army” will be coming after them. The words “army” and “host” are often used interchangeably in these pronouncements. The phrase, “Lord of hosts,” is the name used for God when he is standing ahead of his army and his legions of angels who are coming to cleanse the earth and to vindicate the righteous and judge the wicked. Scholars identify phrases like “sword of justice,” “fierce anger,” and “Lord of hosts” as characteristic language in war oracles. In chapter 13, but only in that opening chapter, Samuel speaks three times of “the Lord of Hosts” (13:17, 18, 32).

#### Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[How Can People Today Avoid Being Destroyed Like the Nephites Were?](#) (Helaman 13:5–6),” *KnoWhy* 327 (June 16, 2017).

### Helaman 13:11–13 — Samuel Pronounces a Traditional Wo Oracle

There is another prophetic device known as a “wo oracle.” As one might expect, the repeated use of the word “wo” as part of a prophetic warning constitutes a “wo oracle.” How many times is the word “wo” used by Samuel? There are nine uses of the word—seven in chapter 13 and two in chapter 15. “Wo” warnings in chapter 13 include: “wo unto him that repenteth not” (13:11); “wo unto this great city of Zarahemla” (twice stated in 13:12); “wo be unto the city of Gideon (13:15); “wo be unto all the cities which are in the land round about” (13:16); and “wo unto this people” (13:24). The two “wo” warnings in chapter 15 are: “wo unto them which are with child” (verse 2) and “wo unto this people” (verse 3).

What was the curse on the city of Zarahemla that was prophesied by Samuel? What was the “wo”? Samuel prophesied that Zarahemla would be burned with fire. Why consumed by fire? Because wickedness must be purged out by fire, and thus atonement sacrifices in the temple were consumed by fire. Less than forty years later, in 3 Nephi 8–9, many cities will be destroyed. Some cities were sunk into the sea or had the mountains fall on them, and others were devastated by earthquakes. However, only one known Nephite city was destroyed by fire—Zarahemla. Twice, Samuel prophesied of a fiery destruction of Zarahemla (13:13; 14:18). That prophecy was not forgotten by the Book of Mormon historians, and it was certainly not forgotten by the Lord. He fulfilled that very prophecy.

#### Further Reading

Donald W. Parry, “[‘Thus Saith the Lord’: Prophetic Language in Samuel’s Speech](#),” in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon: The FARMS Updates of the 1990s*, ed. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 204.

### Samuel Knew His Scriptures

In addition to being very adept and inspired in using various prophetic speech forms, Samuel also knew and used specific language from previous Nephite prophets, particularly Nephi the son of Lehi, Jacob, Benjamin, Alma, Amulek, and Nephi the son of Helaman. In chapter 13, see if you can find the particular words Samuel used from these sources. They come from Alma and Amulek's condemnation speeches in Ammonihah, from Nephi's and Jacob's prophetic warnings in the city of Nephi, and Nephi's words in Zarahemla. These speeches were delivered in locations where Samuel would have had some awareness and great interest.

- Helaman 13:9 = Alma 10:23
- Helaman 13:10 = Alma 9:18
- Helaman 13:14 = Alma 10:19, 23
- Helaman 13:16, 17, 24, 26 = Jacob 2:29, 31, 33, 35
- Helaman 13:21–23 = Helaman 7:18, 20–22
- Helaman 13:24 = 2 Nephi 26:3
- Helaman 13:28 = 2 Nephi 28:21, 25
- Helaman 13:29 = 2 Nephi 26:10; Alma 9:8, 10:17, 25; Helaman 9:21
- Helaman 13:30 = 2 Nephi 26:6
- Helaman 13:32, 37 = Helaman 11:8, 10–11
- Helaman 13:38 = Alma 34:31, 33

### Further Reading

John Hilton III, Sunny Hendry Hafen, and Jaron Hansen, "[Samuel and His Nephite Sources](#)," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 56 no. 3 (2017): 115–139.

### Helaman 13:10 — Samuel's Words Reflect Alma's Prophetic Words

In particular, there is a fair amount of "Alma" material in Samuel's speech, especially from Alma 9 and 42. Alma the Younger also had prophesied that the Nephite nation would be destroyed four hundred years after the appearance of the Savior (Alma 45:10). Samuel the Lamanite reflected Alma's words as he prophesied. Samuel was alone in giving his five-year prophecy about the birth of the Savior, but he drew upon the words of Alma for the four-hundred-year and the fourth-generation prophecies about the destruction of the Nephites.

The fourth-generation prophecy stated that there would be righteousness for four generations. Then before the conclusion of four hundred years, the Nephite nation would be destroyed. That, of course, is what happened. Such precision is not common in prophecy. It seems likely that when the exact timing is included in the record, the timing itself was somehow significant. And so this number has attracted the attention of scholars.

All ancient societies had important calendar units or time periods that were carefully marked. Latter-day Saint scholar and Mesoamericanist John E. Clark has noted, “The major cycle of Maya time was a four-hundred-year period called a *baktun*.” Each *baktun* was broken down into 20 units called a *katun*, which was a 20-year cycle, and the *katun* was subdivided into units called a *hotun*, which was a five-year cycle. According to renowned Mesoamerican scholar John L. Sorenson, “Omens and prophecies ... among the Maya were commonly phrased in terms of the beginning or ending of whole calendar units.”

In this light, it is significant that both of Samuel the Lamanite’s time-specific prophecies correlate to the specific units of measurement within the Mesoamerican calendrical system. As Clark put it, “Samuel the Lamanite warned the Nephites that one *baktun* ‘shall not pass away before ... they [would] be smitten’ (Helaman 13:9).”

Another Latter-day Saint Mesoamerican scholar, Mark Wright, suggested, “Samuel the Lamanite may have been making a *hotun* prophecy when he stated that in ‘five years’ signs would be given concerning the birth of Christ (Helaman 14:2).” Interestingly, according to Sorenson, “In Yucatan at the time of the Spanish conquest, the ruler or his spokesman ... had the duty to prophesy five years in advance what fate the next twenty-year *k’atun* would bring.” In similar fashion, Samuel the Lamanite prophesied the fate of the next *baktun* (Helaman 13:5, 9), and apparently did so five years in advance (Helaman 14:2).

To put the Maya calendar discussion in perspective, Brant A. Gardner, another LDS Mesoamerican specialist, proposed, “It is important to note that the Nephites need not be using the Mayan calendar to nonetheless recognize the sacred importance of these numbers in the calendaring of their neighbors, and to even be influenced in such a way as to also give weight and import to time cycles of 5, 20, and 400 years themselves. Though commonly referred to as the ‘Maya’ calendar system, it was known throughout Mesoamerica and likely had its origins among the Olmec between 500–400 BC. The earliest long count date attested is 36 BC, on Stela 2 in Chiapa de Corzo, confirming its use in Samuel’s time.”

### Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why Did Samuel Make Such Chronologically Precise Prophecies? \(Helaman 13:5\)](#),” *KnoWhy* 184 (September 9, 2016).

John E. Clark, “[Archaeology, Relics, and Book of Mormon Belief](#),” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14, no. 2 (2005): 46–47.

Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 5:177.

John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985), 274.

John L. Sorenson, *Mormon's Codex: An Ancient American Book* (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2013), 192–195, 434–442.

John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Record," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997), 409.

Mark Alan Wright, "Nephite Daykeepers: Ritual Specialists in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon," in *Ancient Temple Worship: Proceedings of the Expound Symposium*, 14 May 2011, ed. Matthew B. Brown, Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Stephen D. Ricks, and John S. Thompson (Salt Lake City and Orem, UT: Eborn Books and Interpreter Foundation, 2014), 253.

**Helaman 13:14, 37; 14:10 — Reliance on the Words of Nephi, the Son of Helaman**  
Nephi, the son of Helaman, talked about "ripening unto destruction." In Helaman 8:26, he stated, "[E]ven at this time ye are ripening ... for everlasting destruction." Nephi used that phrase twice. Samuel's statement, "then shall ye be ripe for destruction" (Helaman 13:14) likely reflects his learning from Nephi's words.

In Helaman chapter 11, Nephi used the following phrase three times as he prayed: "O Lord, wilt thou turn away thine anger?" (see Helaman 11:11–16). Samuel also used that phrase when describing how the Nephites would pray when they saw the destruction because of their sins: "O Lord, canst thou not turn away thine anger from us? (Helaman 13:37)

Finally, Samuel used a third phrase of Nephi's when addressing the wicked Nephites. In Helaman 9, Nephi identified Seantum as a murderer. When confronted with false accusations, Nephi stated, "because I showed unto you this sign ye are angry with me, and seek to destroy my life" (Helaman 9:24). With little variation, Nephi's words were used by Samuel the Lamanite in Helaman 14:10: "[Y]e are angry with me and do seek to destroy me."

Compare further verbiage from Nephi in these passages that are also found in Samuel's speaking:

- Helaman 7:18, 20–22 = Helaman 13:21–23
- Helaman 7:23 = Helaman 15:14
- Helaman 7:24 = Helaman 15:11–13, 15
- Helaman 9:21 = Helaman 13:29.

While it is perfectly understandable that Samuel would have known and used words spoken by his mentor Nephi, especially in the same city where Nephi had said these things, it is quite astonishing that these linkages between Samuel and Nephi would have been so purposefully used by Samuel in the first place, preserved by Mormon in the second place, and included and translated by Joseph Smith with such exact continuity in the third place.

### **Helaman 13:21 — Samuel Warns of Divine Talionic Judgment**

Samuel pronounced a massive rebuke of the pride, greed, and ingratitude of the wicked Nephites who were willing to embrace false prophets while persecuting and rejecting the righteous prophets. Samuel pulled no punches. He declared God’s divine judgment upon the people. His words reflect God’s law of reciprocal or “talionic” justice: “an eye for an eye.” Alma taught this principle when he stated, “that which ye do send out shall return unto you again, and be restored” (Alma 41:15).

Samuel’s warnings were consistent with legal thinking in the ancient world—divine talionic judgment was considered to be righteous, just and fair. In this instance, the suitable punishment for unrighteously and *tenaciously holding onto* one’s treasures would be that those very treasures would become “slippery” and no one would be able to *hold onto* them (Helaman 13:31, 36). Of note, Samuel used the word “slippery” three times, and the word “slipped” once, the opposite of “holding,” in his warning to the people (in 13:30-36).

Reliance on this ancient legal principle can be found in the text of early Nephite preaching. Jacob, the brother of Nephi, explained that the loss of prosperity was a result of divine displeasure and a sign of what would be the ultimate fate of “the rich” who “despise the poor” if they did not repent. Jacob stated, “their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their god. And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also” (2 Nephi 9:30).

Helaman put the attainment of riches in perspective when he taught his sons Lehi and Nephi—who then may have been the missionaries who converted Samuel—that they should seek intangible eternal treasure which cannot be lost: “Lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, yea, which is eternal, and which fadeth not away; yea, that ye may have that precious gift of eternal life” (Helaman 5:8). So there is a good genealogy for the transmission of these ideas through Nephite channels.

Several other ancient texts reflect the understanding that wealth and possessions can become lost in the earth because of iniquity. According to scholar, Blake Ostler, this section of the Book of Mormon and Samuel’s warnings about the land becoming cursed

“is best interpreted from an understanding of the Deuteronomic covenant which required obedience and pronounced resulting curses and blessing upon the land

for breach or obedience to the covenant respectively (Deut. 11:26-29). ... The ethic prominent throughout the Book of Mormon [is] that seeking wealth while ignoring the poor is abhorrent to God. The ability to obtain riches and keep them was dependent upon obedience to the Deuteronomic covenant: 'And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, ... ye shall surely perish' (Deuteronomy 8:17-19)."

Here also this makes sense, for Samuel and his Lamanite brethren were strict in obeying the law of Moses, and Deuteronomy would have been one of the main texts on the plates of brass where they would have gone for an understanding of the conditional covenant nature of the Lord's promises that came with the promised land in the New World.

Hugh Nibley, as well as Ostler, have drawn attention to 1 Enoch as another potential ancient parallel for the curses pronounced by Samuel. 1 Enoch 94:8-10 reads, "Woe to you, ye rich, for ye have trusted in your riches. And from your riches shall ye depart, because ye have not remembered the Most High in the days of your riches." This thought is continued in 1 Enoch 97:8-10: "Woe unto you who acquire silver and gold in unrighteousness, ... for your riches shall not abide but speedily ascent from you; ... and ye shall be given over to a great curse." Enoch (and Zenoch) seem to have figured particularly in the Nephite understanding of prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah.

### Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, "[Why Did Samuel Say the Wealth of Some Nephites Would Become 'Slippery'?](#) (Helaman 13:31)," *KnoWhy* 539 (November 7, 2019).

Blake T. Ostler, "[The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source](#)," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 71-21.

### Helaman 13:22 — Samuel Uses Alma the Younger's Law List to Warn against Sin

Moreover, Samuel's warning to the people of Zarahemla that they must not have "great pride, unto boasting, and unto great swelling, envyings, strifes, malice, persecutions, and murders, and all manner of iniquities" (13:22), reflects Alma 4:9 and 16:18, where Alma the Younger, as chief judge and then high priest, gave two law lists of rules required of his people in the land of Zarahemla. His lists included prohibitions against contentions, envyings, strife, malice, persecutions, pride, murders, and all manner of lasciviousness. By directly alluding to the traditional law of the land, Samuel the Lamanite was

perpetuating the rules of public conduct that Nephi’s great-grandfather had laid down right there in Zarahemla, and which the people there would have known well as the standard by which they should have been living.

### **Helaman 13:32–37 — Samuel Pronounces a Traditional Warning or Lamentation Oracle**

There is yet another a prophetic device known as a “warning or lamentation oracle,” and Samuel used it too. It is not the strident “Wo!” as in the Wo oracle, but rather a lamenting desire that some person or some circumstance could be different. There are six prophetic laments in 13:29–39 alone:

1. “O ye wicked ... ”
2. “O that I had repented ... ”
3. “O that we had remembered ... ”
4. “O that we had repented ... ”
5. “O Lord, ... ”
6. “O ye people ... ”

“O” is a sure operative word in the traditional psalms and oracles of lamentation. Latter-day Saint scholar S. Kent Brown wrote a superb article entitled “The Prophetic Laments of Samuel the Lamanite” on the places throughout Samuel’s speech where beautiful, typical, ancient Hebrew prophetic lamentation can be identified.

#### **Further Reading**

S. Kent Brown. *“The Prophetic Laments of Samuel the Lamanite,”* in *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla: Literary and Historical Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1998), 128–145.

## Helaman 14

In Helaman 14, the center of his speech, Samuel turns his attention to prophesying about the signs of the birth of the Savior. He talks about his commission as a Lamanite. He then gives a didactic explanation of the necessity of the resurrection in order for people to be judged justly by God. He follows that teaching with prophecies about the signs of the Messiah’s death that would bring about the resurrection, and he concludes by emphasizing the necessity of repentance, which God has mercifully made possible, in order for all people to avoid condemnation. Throughout his discourse, Samuel maintains his method of returning to certain traditional words or phrases that reverberate through what he is saying. In Helaman 14:10, he draws upon Helaman 9:23–24; in 14:12, he quotes

one of the central texts of King Benjamin's speech; and in 14:16, he makes use of Alma's words to Corianton in Alma 42:9, 14.

## Samuel the Lamanite's Prophecies

### Concerning Christ's Birth



Prophecy	Reference	Fulfillment
Christ will be born in 5 years	Helaman 14:2	3 Nephi 1:13
No darkness for 2 days, 1 night	Helaman 14:3-4	3 Nephi 1:15
A new star will arise	Helaman 14:5	3 Nephi 1:21
There will be signs and wonders	Helaman 14:6	3 Nephi 2:1
People will fall to the earth	Helaman 14:7	3 Nephi 1:16-17

### Concerning Christ's Death



Prophecy	Reference	Fulfillment
No light for 3 days	Helaman 14:20, 27	3 Nephi 8:19-23
Thunderings and lightnings	Helaman 14:21	3 Nephi 8:6-7
Earth will shake, tremble, and be broken up	Helaman 14:21-22	3 Nephi 8:12, 17-18
Mountains will be laid low and valleys raised	Helaman 14:23	3 Nephi 8:10, 13; 9:8
Resurrected people will appear to many	Helaman 14:25	3 Nephi 23:9-14

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*Figure 2 John W. Welch and Greg Welch, "Samuel the Lamanite's Prophecies," in Charting the Book of Mormon, chart 48.*

### Helaman 14:2–7 — Prophecy of Christ’s Birth

Samuel gave five signs of the coming of Christ: (1) the five-year prophecy, (2) no darkness for two days and one night, (3) a new star, (4) signs and wonders, and (5) people will fall to the earth (see Figure 2). As the time neared for Samuel the Lamanite’s prophecies to be fulfilled, Nephi witnessed the growing skepticism of the people concerning the predicted earthly advent of Jesus Christ. This skepticism led to the persecution of those who believed in Christ’s coming by those who felt the time of his birth had already passed. These skeptics threatened to kill the believers, unless the sign of Christ’s birth appeared before a certain date. Possibly because the very lives of the believers depended on the fulfillment of those prophecies, Nephi paid careful attention to documenting Samuel’s precise wording as well as their exact fulfillments (see 3 Nephi 1:13, 15, 16–17, 21; 2:1).

#### Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why did Samuel Rely so Heavily on the Words of Past Prophets?](#) (Helaman 14:1),” *KnoWhy* 185 (September 12, 2016).

John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch, “[Samuel the Lamanite’s Prophecies](#),” in *Charting the Book of Mormon*, (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), chart 48.

### Helaman 14:9 — An Angel Commands Samuel to Preach

Angels often quote scriptures. For example, on the first occasion when Moroni visited Joseph Smith—and many times thereafter—he quoted scripture and sometimes explained what those scriptures meant. It was not as though the Prophet Joseph spoke with an angel, and then everything simply came to him from scratch.

As the many forms of Hebrew prophetic speech and scriptural passages in Samuel’s material are examined, we can tell that he was using certain conventions and words to make his presentation as acceptable as possible. Samuel wanted to sound authoritative; after all, he was an outsider, and he wanted to ring bells and allude to passages that would help persuade his listeners. Samuel knew what to say because, as he says in Helaman 13:3, he had angels as well as the voice of the Lord to guide and instruct him.

As we have seen above, scholars who have studied the literary aspects and elements of the Bible have identified a long list of what are sometimes called “prophetic speech forms.” This type of research is called “Form Criticism,” where the text is critically examined from formal perspectives. As the kinds of expressions used by prophets in the Old Testament are studied, a consistent pattern emerges.

For example, many prophets explained how they received their prophetic call and commission. Two Old Testament representations of this prophetic speech form include:

- Jeremiah 1:5, in which Jeremiah tells how the Lord described his prophetic calling, which was made before he was even born: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; ... I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”
- Isaiah 6:8–12 in which the Lord commissioned Isaiah to go and be a prophet.

Both are recognized as examples of the “prophetic call and commission” formulas.

Samuel the Lamanite also gave an account of his prophetic call and commission. In Helaman 14:9 he said: “And behold, thus hath the Lord commanded me, by his angel, that I should come and tell this thing unto you; yea, he hath commanded that I should prophesy these things unto you; yea, he hath said unto me: Cry unto this people, repent and prepare the way of the Lord.”

One of the most important things that Israelite prophets were expected to do was to deliver the precise message that they had been given, and not deviate one word from what the Lord had told them to say. Here, Samuel had been told, “Cry unto this people, repent and prepare the way of the Lord,” and that is exactly what he does.

#### Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, [“What Does the Book of Mormon Teach about Prophets? \(Helaman 13:4\),”](#) *KnoWhy* 284 (March 8, 2017).

#### Helaman 14:9–11 — Samuel’s “Prophetic Lawsuit”

Yet another form of prophetic speech is called a “prophetic lawsuit.” What is a prophetic lawsuit? Prophets often delivered God’s message by presenting the facts in such a way as to lay out a type of legal case and controversy against the people—they were sinners, they had broken the law, and God was not happy with them. Thus, God had a cause of action against them for breach of covenant. They had a contract with God, and they had broken it.

Sometimes the prophets then called witnesses to testify of what the people had done. After the testimonies of witnesses, a condemnation was issued, and the prophet passed judgment on the people. Often God, speaking through the prophet, did not immediately execute judgment. The prophet let the people know that although they had been convicted and the sword of judgment hung over them, God would be merciful. He would stay the execution of the judgment and would prolong their days, giving them a little longer to repent and change their ways.

Samuel issued such a prophetic lawsuit. His entire speech takes the overall form of a prophetic judgment speech. He pointed out the weaknesses and problems of the people and then leveled specific charges against them. What had the people of Zarahemla done wrong? They had hidden up their treasures unto themselves and not to the Lord. They

had cast out the living prophets. These indictments were brought up as if the prophet was dragging the people before the judgment seat—and in a prophetic lawsuit, God is ultimately the judge.

As is indicated in at least ten prophetic lawsuits in the Old Testament, it was standard procedure that the judgment was not revoked, but rather the punishment was suspended or held in abeyance in hope that the people would repent. This is what Samuel, in effect, does, constituting very powerfully and impressively a prophetic lawsuit, a legal action by God against this people.

Samuel's Quotation of Benjamin	
Mosiah 3:8	Helaman 14:12
And he shall be called	And also that ye might know of the coming of
Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning;	Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning;
and his mother shall be called Mary.	and that ye might know of the signs of his coming, to the intent that ye might believe on his name.

Figure 3 John W. Welch and Greg Welch, "Samuel's Quotation of Benjamin," in *Charting the Book of Mormon*, chart 105.

### Helaman 14:12 — Samuel Quotes King Benjamin's Ten-Part Name for Christ

Regarding the coming of Christ, Samuel again and most impressively quotes specific words found in the Nephite scriptures. Where and when would he have learned all this? It is possible that Samuel learned from Nephi, the son of Helaman, who would have been

his mentor, as well as from any records in Nephi's possession. Because Helaman stressed that his sons should remember the words of king Benjamin (see Helaman 5:9), it is likely that Lehi and Nephi used exact quotes from Benjamin in their proselytizing, which Samuel also likely witnessed.

So, it is interesting to note that "the name" of Christ found in the dead center of king Benjamin's speech in Mosiah 3:8 is found precisely in Samuel's text in Helaman 14:12: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of Heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning." How would Samuel have known that exact wording except through Nephi and Lehi, who were told to "remember, remember" the words of king Benjamin (see Helaman 5:9)?

These words are the ten-part (twenty-one-English-word) title for the Lord—"Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of Heaven and of earth, the creator of all things from the beginning." King Benjamin had called his people together to give them something special—a name that would distinguish them before God and from all other people on earth. The name could not be "Jehovah" or "Jesus Christ"—many groups had already been given that name. The name that king Benjamin gave to his people was a ten-noun name: Jesus Christ, Son God, Father Heaven Earth, Creator All Beginning.

It was this new name that king Benjamin gave to his people when they entered into the covenant at the temple and took upon them the name of Christ. This was a most sacred name that the Nephites who Samuel was addressing would have already known. King Benjamin was in Zarahemla when he gave his people that name 118 years earlier. He was then on a tall tower by the temple. Samuel was also in Zarahemla. The Nephites would not let him in, so he stood on a tall wall, which was as close as he could get to entering the city. When the Nephites heard Samuel speak the sacred name from the city wall, they were angry and tried to kill him. That was going too far. It must have struck even them as blasphemous for a Lamanite to be speaking the sacred covenant name to them, the people of Zarahemla.

The Nephites had taken the name upon themselves by way of covenant. They had been carefully instructed by king Benjamin that "there is no other name given whereby salvation cometh" and that they should "know" the name. Otherwise, "whosoever shall not take upon him the name of Christ must be called by some other name; therefore, he findeth himself on the left hand of God" (Mosiah 5:8–10). That is what constituted the covenant that King Benjamin and his people made with God. As Samuel spoke to the Nephites in Zarahemla he was reminding them of King Benjamin's sacred revelation—their heritage—and this was being done by a Lamanite!

### Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why did Samuel Rely So Heavily on the Words of Past Prophets?](#) (Helaman 14:1),” *KnoWhy* 185 (September 12, 2016).

John W. Welch, “[Benjamin’s Speech: A Masterful Oration](#),” in *King Benjamin’s Speech* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 55–88.

John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch, “[Samuel’s Quotation of Benjamin](#),” in *Charting the Book of Mormon*, Chart 105 (FARMS, 1999).

John W. Welch, “[Textual Consistency](#),” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: A Decade of New Research*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 21–23.

### Helaman 14:20–25 — Samuel Prophecies, as Zenos Did, of the Death of Christ

Additionally, Zenos had prophesied about the death of Jesus, and Samuel knew the words of Zenos. “[A] sign given of his death,” “the thunderings, and the lightnings,” “the vapor of darkness,” the rending “of the rocks of the earth,” and “the three days of darkness” — these are all phrases of the prophet Zenos that had been recorded in 1 Nephi 19:10–12. This prophesy would have been available only on the brass plates. Samuel had done his homework and was very familiar with Zenos and his prophecies. It is important to note that Nephi then followed up on Samuel’s prophecies and meticulously tracked fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Christ’s death (see Figure 2).

So, how does the precise dating of the fulfillment of Samuel’s prophecies help us date, in absolute terms, how long Jesus lived (something not known from the New Testament), as well as the dates of his death and birth? The Book of Mormon records the precise day on which the Nephites witnessed the prophesied sign of Christ’s death (3 Nephi 8:5). This exceptional diligence on the part of Nephite record-keepers may help resolve at least two questions that New Testament scholars continue to debate regarding the timing of Christ’s death.

The first question relates to the year when Christ was crucified. What year did Christ die? The New Testament accounts tie Christ’s crucifixion to a Passover festival during the governorship of Pontius Pilate (AD 26–36). Jeffrey R. Chadwick, church scholar and archaeologist, has summarized the findings of biblical scholars who have used astronomical data to calculate the timing of the Passover, and noted that scholars have determined that the three years AD 27, 30, and 33 “are the only years during the administration of Pontius Pilate when the eve of Passover, and the Passover itself, fell within a three-day window of time prior to Sunday,” the day of Christ’s Resurrection.

Of these three years, based on additional factors involved in correlating the Gospel accounts to confirmable historical details, Chadwick notes, “Most scholars . . . believe that Jesus was killed in [AD] 30.” The issue is not definitively settled, however, and some scholars still believe that Christ died in 33.

The detailed texts kept by the Nephite record-keepers give more data points beyond those found in the New Testament text. The Nephite record helps to finely narrow down the length of Christ’s life. Since Christ must have been born ca. 5–4 BC, the year when King Herod died, the Book of Mormon effectively rules out AD 27 as too short and AD 33 as too long to accommodate for Christ’s death, which happened in the first month of the 34<sup>th</sup> year in the Nephite calendar (3 Nephi 8:5). Thus, in the view of Chadwick, combining the Book of Mormon with the additional evidence from the New Testament, archaeology, astronomy, and history makes AD 30 the correct year, “beyond any reasonable doubt.”

The second question that is debated by biblical scholars relates to the day of the week Christ was crucified. Long-standing tradition holds that Christ died on a Friday, and most New Testament scholars support this tradition. However, a few scholars have suggested that Christ actually died on a Thursday. These scholars argue that a Thursday can better account for passages in the New Testament which speak of “three days and three nights” in the tomb (Matthew 12:40), and of the resurrection occurring *after* three days (Matthew 27:63; Mark 8:31), and Sunday being three days *since* the crucifixion (Luke 24:21).

Jeffrey Chadwick points to an important clue to this puzzle—John’s description of the upcoming Sabbath as “an high day” (John 19:31), meaning it was the first day of the Passover. Since certain festival days, such as Passover, were regarded as “Sabbaths,” no matter what day of the week they occurred (Leviticus 23:7-8, 11, 15, 21, 24, 39), this allows for the possibility that the Sabbath after the crucifixion was not Saturday (the regular weekly Sabbath), but the first day of Passover (a special “Sabbath,” or “high day”), which most likely fell on Friday AD 30.

While the New Testament data does not decisively favor Thursday, the Book of Mormon, a “second witness of Christ” adds some important information. Nephite prophets, including Samuel, predicted that there would be three days of darkness coinciding with the time of Christ’s death until his resurrection (1 Nephi 19:10, Helaman 14:20–27). Nephite historians, particularly Nephi, documented the fulfillment of this prophecy (3 Nephi 8:19–23; 10:9).

Due to the time difference between Jerusalem and the New World, Chadwick observes, “a Friday crucifixion leads to only two days of darkness in the New World” before Christ rose on Sunday morning. Chadwick concludes that a Thursday crucifixion “exactly fits

the timing necessary for three days of darkness to have occurred in America prior to Jesus’s resurrection” (See Figure 4).

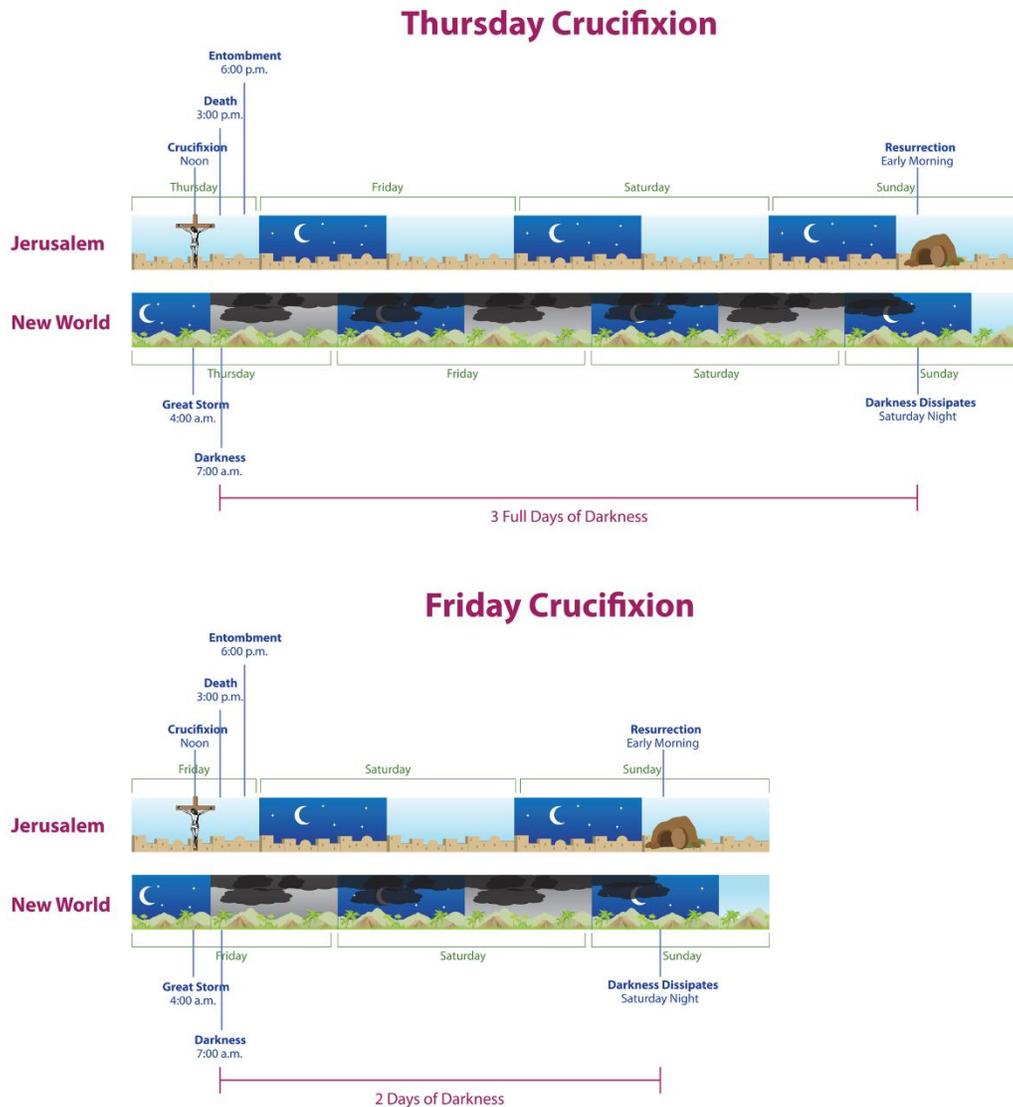


Figure 4 Chart by Book of Mormon Central.

Thanks to Samuel the Lamanite and the Nephite recordkeepers, the Book of Mormon gives crucial information that specifically pinpoints the dating of events that occurred in Jerusalem. Using both records—the New Testament and the Book of Mormon—we are able to state with reasonable certainty that Jesus died on Thursday, April 6, AD 30. His age was 33 years and 4 days at the time of his death. This dating gives profound

significance to the timing of the Restoration of Christ's church through the Prophet Joseph Smith, which occurred exactly 1800 years later.

### Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, "[How Does the Book of Mormon Help Date Christ's Death? \(Helaman 14:20\)](#)," *KnoWhy* 300 (April 14, 2017).

Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "[Dating the Death of Jesus Christ](#)," *BTU Studies*, 54, no. (2015): 136-139.

## Helaman 15

### Overview

Samuel's final remarks end with three sections.

The first section is short and is a pronouncement of yet another wo oracle in verse 3: "Wo unto this people who are called the people of Nephi except they shall repent."

Second, is a long section praising the Lamanites and explaining why their days of probation had been prolonged. It is notable that Samuel referred to the Lamanites, who were mostly "in the path of their duty, and they walk circumspectly before God, and they do observe to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments according to the law of Moses" (15:5), and like the Ammonites had formerly done (Helaman 5:51), these converted Lamanites who had also chosen to bury their weapons of war (15:518–10). He explained the faith-centered motive of these Lamanites by stating, "[Y]e can see that they fear to sin—for behold they will suffer themselves that they be trodden down and slain by their enemies, and will not lift their swords against them, and this because of their faith in Christ" (15:9). One wonders what connections there may have been between Samuel's group and the Ammonites a couple generations earlier. The Ammonite people had left the Lamanites and had gone to live with the Nephites, assuming a new social identity. Samuel's father or grandfather could not have been Ammonites. However, Samuel the Lamanite may have been a member of the Lamanite royal family—a descendant or a relative of King Lamoni—who would have known about the events surrounding the Ammonites first-hand. Perhaps some of Samuel's own ancestors had been on the side of killing the Ammonites.

The third section is Samuel's parting words that there would be utter destruction upon the Nephites if they did not repent.

### **Helaman 15:4 — The Lord Hated the Lamanites Because of Their Wicked Traditions**

Was Samuel generous in his description of his own people the Lamanites? No. He said, “[T]he Lamanites hath [God] hated because their deeds have been evil continually, and this because of the iniquity of the tradition of their fathers.” Some might view this as hate speech, but Samuel was describing his own people and maybe even himself. Samuel essentially was saying, “God hated us because we did not keep the commandments.” That is not hate speech—that is a confession. Samuel wanted the Nephites to look at themselves and realize they were in a similar situation. If they did not shape up, it was not going to be any better for them.

#### **Further Reading**

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why Did Samuel Say the Lord “Hated” the Lamanites? \(Helaman 15:4\),](#)” *KnoWhy* 186 (September 13, 2016).

S. Michael Wilcox, “[Samuel the Lamanite,](#)” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., Macmillan Publishing Company, NY 1992.

### **Helaman 15:5 — The Lamanites Walk Circumspectly Before God**

Samuel’s description of the religious dedication of the Lamanites is an indication of how completely they were living the Law of Moses: “And I would that ye should behold that the more part of them are in the path of their duty, and they do walk *circumspectly* before God, and they do observe to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments according to the law of Moses.”

What does it mean “to walk *circumspectly*”? “Circum” is a Latin preposition meaning “around,” and “specto” means “I look.” The Lamanites were carefully looking around, wisely making sure they were observant in following God’s law.

That exact formulation is yet another precise quote, this time from 2 Nephi 5:10. Nephi had taken his people and left the land of first inheritance. After they had built the temple in the city of Nephi, Nephi stated, “[W]e did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses.” There are other formulae for living righteously, but this happens to be a precise quote of Nephi’s original instruction to the Nephite nation. It was foundational and Samuel knew that. He had been taught that God’s people should be strict and circumspect in living the Law of Moses in all of its different aspects.

For other verbal connections between Samuel’s concluding comments and the words of Alma, Jacob, Nephi and Nephi, compare the following passages:

- Helaman 15:3 = Alma 9:19–20

- Helaman 15:11, 13 = 2 Nephi 10:2
- Helaman 15:11–13, 15 = Jacob 3:6–7; Mosiah 1:5; Alma 9:16–17; Helaman 7:24
- Helaman 15:12 = 2 Nephi 6:11
- Helaman 15:13 = 1 Nephi 22:25
- Helaman 15:14 = Helaman 7:23

## Helaman 16

### **Helaman 16:1–2 — The Spirit of the Lord Protects Samuel**

The book of Helaman ends on several ominous notes. Those Nephites who believed and were converted by Samuel's words went to find Nephi, they repented, and asked to be baptized. However, many were angry at Samuel, not only because he prophesied that their choices would destroy them and the great city of Zarahemla, but because he used the sacred name of the Savior. They shot arrows and threw stones at him as he stood there on the wall. However, the Nephites were unable to hit Samuel because he was protected specifically by the Spirit of the Lord.

### **Helaman 16:3–4 — More Converts**

When people realized that they could not hit Samuel, they could have reacted in several ways. However, because of God's miraculous protection of Samuel, more Nephites accepted his teachings. Nephi was preaching repentance and baptizing the converts, as well as "showing signs and wonders, working miracles among the people, that they might know that the Christ must shortly come." But Samuel was never seen again (16:8).

Elder Henry B. Eyring taught, "When we reject the counsel which comes from God, we do not choose to be independent of outside influence. We choose another influence. We reject the protection of a perfectly loving, all-powerful, all-knowing Father in Heaven, whose whole purpose, as that of His Beloved Son, is to give us eternal life, to give us all that He has, and to bring us home again in families to the arms of His love. In rejecting His counsel, we choose the influence of another power, whose purpose is to make us miserable and whose motive is hatred."

### **Further Reading**

Henry B. Eyring, "Finding Safety in Counsel," *Ensign*, May 1997, 25.

### **Helaman 16:14 — Angels Did Appear unto Wise Men**

Mormon declared that three years after Samuel had borne witness of the birth of Christ, in the ninetieth year of the reign of the judges, "the scriptures began to be fulfilled" as angels began to appear "unto men, wise men, and did declare unto them glad tidings of

great joy” (16:14). This statement may echo Alma 13:26, when Alma the Younger declared in Ammonihah that the coming of Christ “shall be made known unto just and holy men, by the mouth of angels,” just as it had been made known unto their fathers.

Despite these wise prophecies and knowledgeable expositions of scripture, people had their doubts. Their rationalizing portended the even greater problems that would soon surface, five years later. Here, already, people were claiming that Samuel’s prophecies were “not reasonable” (16:18). Their reason: Samuel had only spoken of the birth of Jesus; and from previous statements by Nephi and Alma, it was known that Jesus would manifest himself at Jerusalem. But, while signs of his birth and death would be seen in the New World, nothing had been said about Jesus actually coming to visit any of the Nephites or Lamanites. So, they argued, if Jesus is in fact “the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of [all the] earth” (as his revealed name said he was, 14:12), then he must “show himself in this land” too and not just “in the land of Jerusalem” (16:19). Although this position had a little bit of logic to it, it was wrong. Reason alone is rarely, if ever, enough. Angelic revelation is the Lord’s higher way.

Mormon later summarized the reasons why God sends angels to declare the coming of Christ: “For behold, God ... sent angels to minister unto the children of men, to make manifest concerning the coming of Christ; ... Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ; ... and thus it was until the coming of Christ” (Moroni 7:22, 25).

Mormon knew that our merciful Father in Heaven desires that his children have the ability to recognize the signs of the coming of Christ—whether in the time of father Lehi, the prophet Samuel, Mormon’s own time, or in the days leading up to Christ’s Second Coming. Our unchanging God has, and always will, send angels to visit worthy individuals who have the faith, strength, and wisdom (hence “wise men”) to declare the “glad tidings” and fortify the faith of those who have not had the same eye-witness manifestation.

All of the details discussed in these four Helaman chapters are interesting, but the most important thing for us to get into our heart and soul is that Samuel the Lamanite’s words are true, credible, reliable, and accurate. He was a prophet of God who spoke about the coming of Christ and revealed the timing of his birth five years before it occurred.

### Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, [“Why Does Mormon State that ‘Angels Did Appear unto Wise Men’? \(Helaman 16:14\),”](#) *KnoWhy* 187 (September 14, 2016).