

September 9-15, 2024

## Helaman 13–16

“TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY”

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**Summary:** *Helaman 13. Samuel the Lamanite prophesies the destruction of the Nephites unless they repent—They and their riches are cursed—They reject and stone the prophets, are encircled about by demons, and seek for happiness in doing iniquity. [About 6 B.C.]*

*Helaman 14. Samuel predicts light during the night and a new star at Christ’s birth—Christ redeems men from temporal and spiritual death—The signs of his death include three days of darkness, the rending of the rocks, and great upheavals of nature. [About 6 B.C.]*

*Helaman 15. The Lord chastened the Nephites because he loved them—Converted Lamanites are firm and steadfast in the faith—The Lord will be merciful unto the Lamanites in the latter days. [About 6 B.C.]*

*Helaman 16. The Nephites who believe Samuel are baptized by Nephi—Samuel cannot be slain with their arrows and stones—Some harden their hearts, and others see angels—The unbelievers say it is not reasonable to believe in Christ and his coming in Jerusalem. [Between 6 and 1 B.C.]*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

### Among many, what are biblical demons?

The state of being prior to the Savior’s first coming included pride; self-serving gold and silver, self-enamoring costly apparel, self-gratifying flattering words, and allowing “demons” to surround themselves. **(Helaman 13:37)** Demons mentioned biblically include **Satan-Beelzebub** – seducing humans into sin or falsehood; **Python** – squeezing out the breath of life (the Holy Ghost); **Belial**: a feeling of worthlessness, an instrument of iniquity and wrath; **Asmodeus** – Lust, manipulating sexual desires; **Revenge** – injury inflicted in return for one received. Satan is the great imitator of miracles. As in times past, “We will need greater spirituality to perceive all of the forms of evil and greater strength to resist . . . the disappointments and setbacks to the work of God will be temporary, for the work will go forward (see **D&C 65:2**).” **(Elder James E. Faust of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, General-conference, October 1987, The-great-imitator)**

### How are Lamanites be likened to Gentiles?

Even though God placed a responsibility and covenant blessings on the Children of Israel, He promised the Gentiles a future responsibility and blessing. He placed Israel at the epicenter of the Gentile nations as a light to those inside and outside the covenant of Abraham. “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” **(Genesis 12:1–3)** “I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.” **(Isaiah 42:6)** Our Lord also promised a day when the kings of the other nations would bring their resources into His kingdom and render Him service. “And now, I would prophesy somewhat more concerning the Jews and the Gentiles. For after the book of which I have spoken shall come forth, and be

written unto the Gentiles, and sealed up again unto the Lord, there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written; and they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed. And then shall the remnant of our seed know concerning us, how that we came out from Jerusalem, and that they are descendants of the Jews. And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers. And then shall they rejoice; for they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God; and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes; and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a pure and a delightsome people.” (2 Nephi 30:3-6) “. . . behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them.” (3 Nephi 16:10)

### **How was darkness a sign of Satan’s anger?**

The Bible mentions three days of darkness in (Exodus 10:21-23), when Moses stretched out his hand and caused a thick darkness to cover Egypt for three days. During this time, people were unable to see each other or move, yet the Israelites were able to see in their homes. The darkness ended after three days. The Bible also mentions three hours of darkness in (Matthew 27:45), when the land becomes dark from noon until Jesus’ death. These chapters of the Book of Mormon precede the first coming of the Lord. It is timely because the second coming of the Lord is imminent in our times. Once again, looking for parallels to today is very valuable. There is a sect of Orthodox Jews that has posted banners all over Israel and in some sections of New York where the Hassidic Chabad group once led by the Lubavitcher Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-

1994) live. The banners read, “PREPARE FOR THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF THE MESSIAH!” The previous campaign read, “WE WANT MESSIAH, NOW!” In anticipation of the coming of the Messiah, Samuel the Lamanite came from a group of people not usually considered religious. He was an anomaly among the Nephites as well as the Lamanites. Genetically he was one of them, a common descendant from the tribes of Israel. Today, the living prophet is a descendant from the tribes of Israel. He is something of an anomaly among the non-Jews as well as the Jews. The modern prophet comes from the “Gentiles” which causes a surprising reaction among some of the Jews. They look at him with about the same unbelief as the Nephites looked on Samuel the Lamanite. In both instances, the air is crisp with anticipation of the coming of the Messiah.

### **What time frame often points to the Savior?**

The thought or question that occurred to me as I read about Zarahemla was, can it be compared to the great city of Jerusalem? How many similar experiences have they or will they share in common? As we read of the last days, not only will Israel experience a holocaust in which a third of the population will perish and two thirds of Jerusalem’s population will die at the same time. The sign of three days and three nights has been used numerous times throughout scriptural history. Most of the three days and three nights have something to do with being saved. A few examples include the following. “And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” (Exodus 10:22) As

previously discussed, three-days is a great salvation metaphor. “And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.” **(Joshua 2:16)** “Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” **(Jonah 1:17)** “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” **(Matthew 12:40)** “And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.” **(Matthew 26:61)** “And the God of our fathers, who were led out of Egypt, out of bondage, and also were preserved in the wilderness by him, yea, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, yieldeth himself, according to the words of the angel, as a man, into the hands of wicked men, to be lifted up, according to the words of Zenock, and to be crucified, according to the words of Neum, and to be buried in a sepulchre, according to the words of Zenos, which he spake concerning the three days of darkness, which should be a sign given of his death unto those who should inhabit the isles of the sea, more especially given unto those who are of the house of Israel.” **(1 Nephi 19:10)** “And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul.” **(Alma 36:16)** “And it came to pass that I was three days and three nights in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul.” **(Alma 38:8)**

### **Who were some prophets who did not “die?”**

As Samuel could not be killed, there were other prophets including, Melchizedek, Elijah, Enoch, Moses who were changed in such a way that they did not experience an earthly demise. “And men having this faith, coming up unto this order of God, were translated and taken up into heaven. And now, Melchizedek was a priest of this order . . .” **(Genesis 14:32-33, JST)** “And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. **(2 Kings 2:11)** “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” **(Genesis 5:24)**” But behold, the scriptures saith the Lord took Moses unto himself;” **(Alma 45:19)**

### **How reasonable is Jesus’ return?**

Although mentioned before, let me repeat the reaction of one of my instructors at the Hebrew University. When Dr. David Flusser (1917-2000) was asked if he believed in Jesus as the Messiah, he said with a smile, wringing his hands and chortling, “When this Jesus comes, I will ask him, Sir, is this your first or second visit to Israel?” That might be a little late in terms of preparation, yet it showed some sort of open heart, a reasonable expectation. A few hundred meters from where Professor David Flusser made his comment, two angels appeared 2000-years ago on the Mount of Olives to accompany the resurrected Savior to heaven and said: “. . . Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” **(Acts 1:11)**