

September 12, 2004

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Next Weeks Lesson: Lesson 36 "On the Morrow Come I into the World" ([3 Nephi 1-7](#))

Today's Lesson: Lesson 35 "Repent and Return unto the Lord" ([Helaman 13-16](#))

Imagine a salesman who has only one product to sell: misery.

- What could this salesman do to sell his product?
- Satan has nothing to offer but misery ([2 Nephi 2:17-18](#), [2 Nephi 2:27](#)). How does Satan make misery and sin look desirable? How does he try to persuade people that happiness and righteousness are undesirable?

In this lesson you will discuss the prophecies of Samuel, a Lamanite prophet. Samuel preached to a group of Nephites who had allowed themselves to be overcome by Satan's temptations. They had "sought for happiness in doing iniquity," which is contrary to the nature of God ([Helaman 13:38](#)).

1. **Samuel warns the Nephites that they will be destroyed unless they repent.**
([Helaman 13](#))



A Lamanite prophet named Samuel went to preach in Zarahemla, but the Nephites cast him out of the land. The Lord commanded Samuel to return to Zarahemla and prophesy. When the Nephites did not allow Samuel to enter the city, he stood on the city wall and prophesied to them ([Helaman 13:1-4](#)).

- A. Samuel warned the people that because of the hardness of their hearts, the Lord would take His word from them and withdraw His Spirit from them ([Helaman 13:8](#)). Why do these consequences come to people who harden their hearts? (See [Mosiah 2:36-37](#).) What can we do to soften our hearts?
- B. Through the prophet Samuel, the Lord said, "Blessed are they who will repent and turn unto me"

([Helaman 13:11](#)). How might some people attempt to repent without turning to the Lord? Why is turning to the Lord an essential part of repentance?

President Ezra Taft Benson taught:

“Repentance means more than simply a reformation of behavior. Many men and women in the world demonstrate great will-power and self-discipline in overcoming bad habits and the weaknesses of the flesh. Yet at the same time they give no thought to the Master, sometimes even openly rejecting Him. Such changes of behavior, even if in a positive direction, do not constitute true repentance. ...



“... True repentance is based on and flows from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way. True repentance involves a change of heart and not just a change of behavior (see [Alma 5:13](#))” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 71).

- C. The Nephites had “set their hearts upon riches” ([Helaman 13:20–21](#)). In addition, they had not hearkened to the words of the Lord, who had given them their riches ([Helaman 13:21](#)). Because of this, the Nephites and their riches were cursed ([Helaman 13:17–22](#)). In what ways do people give more time and attention to worldly concerns than to spiritual concerns? How can we assess whether we are giving enough attention to our spiritual welfare?
- D. Samuel said that the Nephites always remembered their riches but did not remember to thank the Lord for them ([Helaman 13:22](#)). Why is it difficult for some people to remain grateful when they are blessed with abundance? How does gratitude counteract pride? In what ways can we show gratitude to the Lord?
- E. The Nephites persecuted and killed the prophets of their day, but they said, “If our days had been in the days of our fathers of old, we would not have slain the prophets” ([Helaman 13:24–25](#); compare with [Matthew 23:29–39](#)). Why do people sometimes praise past prophets and reject living prophets? (See [Helaman 13:26](#).) How do some people allow themselves to “be led by foolish and blind guides”? (See [Helaman 13:27–29](#).)
- F. According to Samuel, the Nephites had “sought for happiness in doing iniquity” ([Helaman 13:38](#)). Why is it impossible to find true happiness in sin? (See [Helaman 13:38](#); see also [Alma 41:10–11](#).) How can we find true happiness? How can we help others find true happiness?

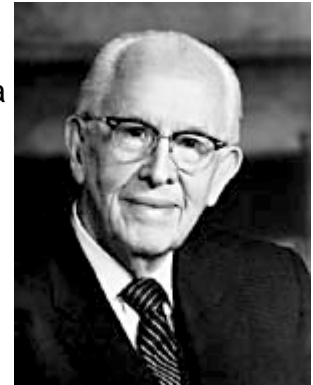
The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 255–56).



2. Samuel prophesies of the signs that will precede the birth and death of the Savior. He continues to call the people to repentance. ([Helaman 14](#))

A. Samuel prophesied of the Savior's birth and death ([Helaman 14:2](#), [Helaman 14:15](#)). What signs did Samuel say would attend the Savior's birth and death? (See [Helaman 14:3–7](#), [Helaman 14:20–28](#).)

B. Samuel said that if the people would repent, they would receive a remission of their sins through the merits of Christ ([Helaman 14:13](#)). Merits are qualities or actions that entitle a person to claim rewards. Why is it only through the Savior's merits that we can be forgiven of our sins? (See [2 Nephi 2:7–9](#); [Alma 22:14](#).)



President Ezra Taft Benson taught, "Even the most just and upright man cannot save himself solely on his own merits" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 71).

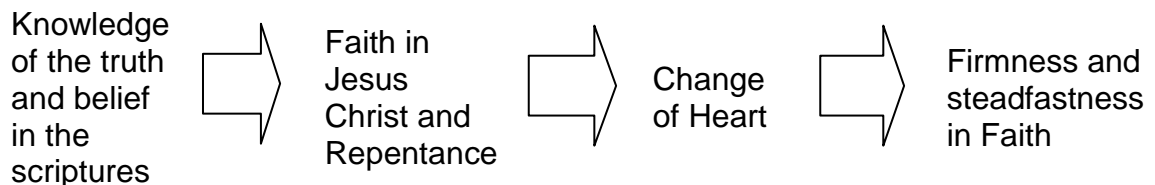
C. According to Samuel, why did Jesus have to die? (See [Helaman 14:15–18](#).) How does knowing of the Savior's sacrifice affect you?

D. Samuel said, "If [people] are condemned they bring upon themselves their own condemnation" ([Helaman 14:29](#)). Why is this so? (See [Helaman 14:30–31](#).) Why is it essential that we be "permitted to act for [our]selves"?

3. Some believe Samuel and are baptized. Others harden their hearts and try to kill Samuel. ([Helaman 15–16](#))

A. Why did the Lord chasten the Nephites? (See [Helaman 15:3](#); see also [Hebrews 12:6](#).) How does the Lord's chastening show His love for us? What can we learn from the Lord's chastening?

Let's read [Helaman 15:7–8](#).



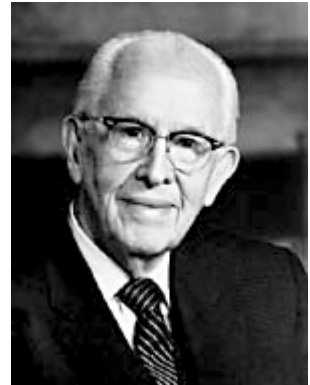
B. In what ways do knowledge of the truth and belief in the scriptures lead to faith and repentance? In what ways do faith and repentance lead to a change of heart?

- C. The Lamanites who experienced a change of heart remained “firm and steadfast in the faith” ([Helaman 15:8](#)). When we experience a change of heart, what must we do to ensure that the change is lasting? (See [2 Nephi 31:19–20](#).)
- D. How did the Nephites respond to Samuel’s prophecies and warning? (See [Helaman 16:1–7](#).) Why do you think many of the people did not believe Samuel even when they saw that he was miraculously protected?
- E. Although they saw that the words of the prophets were being fulfilled, the majority of the Nephites began to harden their hearts and depend on their own strength and wisdom ([Helaman 16:13–15](#)). How did these unbelieving Nephites explain away the signs that they had seen? (See [Helaman 16:16–23](#).) What are the dangers of trying to understand the gospel with only our intellect?

4. Preparing for the Second Coming

Read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The record of the Nephite history just prior to the Savior’s visit reveals many parallels to our own day as we anticipate the Savior’s second coming” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 3; or [Ensign, May 1987, 4](#)).



In this statement, the “record of the Nephite history” referred to by President Benson was the book of 3 Nephi—the account of the Nephites before they were visited by the resurrected Lord.

The chart on the following page applies President Benson’s statement to the book of Helaman—the account of the Nephites before they saw the signs of the Savior’s birth.

This chart shows that [Helaman 13–16](#) contains accounts of prophecies and events that parallel signs and events that will precede the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Prophecies and Events Recorded in Helaman 13–16	Prophecy or Event	Signs and Events that Will Precede the Second Coming
Helaman 16:1, 3, 6, 10	Strong righteous minority	1 Nephi 14:12 ; Jacob 5:70
Helaman 16:13–14	Spiritual outpourings and miracles	Joel 2:28–30 ; D&C 45:39–42
Helaman 13:22 ; 16:12, 22–23	Great wickedness	2 Timothy 3:1–5 ; D&C 45:27
Helaman 13:2, 6, 8, 10–11 ; 14:9, 11 ; 15:1–3, 17 ; 16:2	Rejection of the Lord’s prophets and their call to repentance	D&C 1:14–16

Helaman 15:4–11	Conversion of many Lamanites	D&C 49:24
Helaman 14:3–4	Prophecy of a night with no darkness	Zechariah 14:7 ; see also <i>Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith</i> , sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 287
Helaman 14:5–6 , 20	Prophecies of signs and wonders in the heavens	Joel 2:30–31 ; D&C 45:40
Helaman 16:13–18	Denial of signs, wonders, and Christ’s coming	2 Peter 3:3–4 ; D&C 45:26
Helaman 14:21 , 23 , 26	Prophecies of great storms and other natural destruction	Revelation 16:18 , 21 ; D&C 88:88–90
Helaman 14:24 ; 15:1	Prophecy of the destruction of the wicked	Isaiah 26:21 ; Malachi 4:1 ; D&C 1:9 ; D&C 133:41

A. What similarities exist between people today and the Nephites who lived just before Christ’s birth?

Read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:



“In the Book of Mormon we find a pattern for preparing for the Second Coming. A major portion of the book centers on the few decades just prior to Christ’s coming to America. By careful study of that time period, we can determine why some were destroyed in the terrible judgments that preceded His coming and what brought others to stand at the temple in the land of Bountiful and thrust their hands into the wounds of His hands and feet. ... Can anyone doubt that this book was meant for us and that in it we find great power, great comfort, and great protection?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 5–6; or [Ensign, Nov. 1986, 6–7](#)).

Please share with us any insights and impressions you have received as we have discussed [Helaman 13–16](#). How can these things help you prepare for the Savior’s Second Coming?