

Lesson Highlights

- *Internal strife develops among the Nephites.*
- *Thousands join the Church; some Church members are lifted up in pride.*
- *Lamanites and Nephite dissenters defeat the Nephites.*
- *Nephi and Lehi remember their father's counsel. Miracles attend their ministry.*

A study of this lesson will help us build our testimonies on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Next Week:

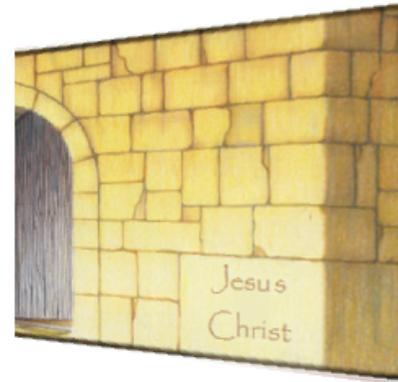
Lesson 34:

"How Could You Have Forgotten Your God?", Helaman 6-12

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Introduction

Today's lesson shows the difference between people who build on weak foundations, such as people who place their trust in wealth or physical strength, and people who build their foundations on "the rock of [their] Redeemer,...which is a sure foundation" (Helaman 5:12).



Internal strife developed among the Nephites.

Helaman 1:1-4 Pahoran, the chief judge, had died, and three of his sons, Pahoran, Paanchi, and Pacumeni, contended for the judgment seat.

Helaman 1:5-7 When Pahoran was chosen to be chief judge, Pacumeni responded rationally and united with the voice of the people. Paanchi, on the other hand, was exceedingly wroth and immediately began to plot a rebellion that would put him on the throne.

Helaman 1:8-13 Because of Paanchi's rebellion, he was captured and tried before the people, who sentenced him to death for rebellion and seeking to destroy the liberty of the people. Paanchi's wicked followers had Kishkumen, a leader of a secret society, murder Pahoran while he sat on the judgment seat. By the voice of the people, Pacumeni was chosen to reign in Pahoran's stead.

Helaman 1:13-17 After Pacumeni became chief judge, the Lamanites came to battle against the Nephites with an innumerable army of well-armed men led by Coriantumr, a large and mighty man.

Thousands joined the Church; some Church members were lifted up in pride.

Helaman 3 covers about 11 years of Nephite history. During those 11 years, the Nephites experienced periods of peace and periods of contention.

Helaman 3:1, 33-34 Pride disturbed the peace of the Nephites during those years.

Helaman 3:36 Exceeding riches and prosperity were the causes of the Nephites' pride.

Helaman 3:27-30; see also Deuteronomy 8:11, 17-18; Alma 62:48-51 Pride disturbs the peace in our lives because it distracts us from helping Christ with his saving mission. To guard against pride, we have to work at retaining humility through sincere prayer, fasting, and scripture study.

Helaman 1:18 The Nephites were unprepared to defend themselves against an outside attack from the Lamanites because their attention had been consumed by internal strife, contention, and disagreement within their own government. Contention weakens nations and communities, wards and stakes, families and individuals by diverting attention and energy from productive, worthwhile concerns to petty and often prideful personal concerns.

Consider what can be done to avoid or overcome contention.

Helaman 2:4 Gadianton, who was "exceedingly expert in many words, and also in his craft," became the leader of the band of Kishkumen and carried on their secret work of murder and robbery.

Helaman 2:5 Gadianton promised the followers of Kishkumen that they would be given power and authority over the people in order to persuade them to follow him.

People are sometimes influenced by flattery and the promise of power when they allow worldly pride to completely overcome humility. We can avoid this influence only by drawing closer to the Spirit through fasting and prayer, scripture study, obedience to the commandments, and remembering who we are and where we came from.

Helaman 3:29 To "lay hold upon the word of God" means that you grasp it with real intent to follow it.

Helaman 3:27-30; see also 1 Nephi 11:25; 1 Nephi 15:24 We will be blessed as we "lay hold upon the word of God".

Blessings include protection against the power of Satan's wiles and guidance on the strait and narrow course to acceptance as immortal souls into the kingdom of heaven where we may sit on the right hand of God and fellowship with the patriarchs forever.

Helaman 3:33-34 In the 51st year, some Church members began to persecute others.

Those who accept the invitation to "*come unto Christ and be perfected in him*" (Moroni 10:32) thus come out of the world, enjoy citizenship with the Saints of the Most High, and erect their houses of faith on "*the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*" (Eph 2:19-20).

Helaman 3:35 The humble followers of Christ responded to the persecution from the proud members of the Church by suffering through the afflictions, being strengthened by frequent fasting and prayer, cultivating humility, strengthening their faith in Christ, and becoming sanctified by yielding their hearts to God.

Lamanites and Nephite dissenters defeated the Nephites.

Helaman 4:5 Nephite dissenters convinced the Lamanites to go to war against the Nephites. The Lamanites defeated the Nephites and obtained many of their lands.

Helaman 4:11-13 Mormon, who abridged the book of Helaman, observed that wickedness and abominations--including abominations among church members--was the cause of the Nephites' weakness. Their pride in their riches; their oppression of the poor; their obvious lack of charity and compassion; their denial of the spirit of prophecy and revelation; their murders, immorality, and other crimes; and their boasting all left them without strength to defend themselves.

Ponder what parallels exist between the Nephites' actions and the actions of some people today as pride continues to seduce members as well as non-members. Also consider how acknowledging your dependence on the Lord can strengthen you.

Nephi and Lehi remembered their father's counsel. Miracles attended their ministry.

Helaman 5:1-4 Nephi gave up the judgment seat to preach the word of God in hopes of preventing his people from fully ripening unto destruction.

Helaman 5:5-7 Nephi and Lehi remembered that their father had told them about their names; that they should remember the righteous forefathers for whom they had been named, the works done by those men, and that they should follow that example and do good. Take a moment to consider how the examples of prophets, other Church leaders, and other righteous people have helped you.

Helaman 5:9-11 Helaman taught his sons about the Atonement of Jesus Christ; that it was the only way to salvation and redemption; that the redemption allowed salvation from sin, not in sin; and that the Savior had power to redeem the repentant.

Helaman 5:12; see also 3 Nephi 14:24-27 To build on the rock of Christ is to have a sure foundation that protects you from Satan's assaults. It is a foundation of truth and power. Some of the mighty winds and storms that Satan sends upon us may include temptations from family, friends and acquaintances, financial difficulties, illness or injury, and afflictions of body, mind, and spirit.

Consider carefully how their example can help you when you face persecution, criticism, or affliction.

D&C 76:41; D&C 88:74-75 Sanctification is the process of becoming clean, pure, and free from sin through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Helaman 4:14 Moronihah, Lehi, and Nephi prophesied "*many things unto the people ...concerning their iniquities, and what should come unto them if they did not repent of their sins*".

Helaman 4:15-16; see also verses 21-26 When the people began to repent, they began to prosper and were led to regain a significant portion of their lands. They also took stock of themselves and their society and recognized their pride, their corruption of their laws, their disregard for the prophets, the decline of the church membership and activity, and they saw their weakness against their enemies and the necessity to depend on God to protect them.

Christ helps us withstand these winds and storms as we fast and pray, obey the commandments, follow personal revelation and the counsel of righteous leaders, and seek to follow the example of the Savior as we endure to the end.

We refer to Christ as our rock because he is the foundation of our lives. Foundations other than Christ are sometimes chosen by the foolish to build their lives upon. Consider how you have been blessed as you have built your life on the rock of Christ.

Helaman 5:17-19 Great miracles occurred in Zarahemla as Nephi and Lehi preached the gospel; many dissenters repented and thousands of Lamanites were converted.

Helaman 5:19, 51; see also Mosiah 1:5 It was very important that the Lamanites rejected "*the wickedness of the traditions of their fathers*" so that they could overcome their hatred and cease their contention with their brethren.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the events discussed in Helaman 1-5.

- What causes the eventual defeat of the Nephites? Does this mean anything for us?
- Why do people seek power and authority? How do they do so?
- How does priestcraft (see 2 Nephi 26:29) differ from Gadianton robbery? How is it the same? Which is more important for us to recognize, the similarity or the difference?
- When do we see people practicing the kind of robbery that the Gadiantons did? When do we see people (including ourselves?) practicing priestcraft?

Elder Richard G. Scott said: *"I testify that you will remove barriers to happiness and find greater peace as you make your first allegiance your membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, and His teachings the foundation of your life. Where family or national traditions or customs conflict with the teachings of God, set them aside. Where traditions and customs are in harmony with His teachings, they should be cherished and followed to preserve your culture and heritage. There is one heritage that you need never change. It is that heritage that comes from your being a daughter or son of Father in Heaven"* (Ensign, May 1998, 87).

Helaman 5:21-32, 43-45 records the memorable, fiery manner in which the Lord demonstrated his protection for and approval of Nephi and Lehi.

Conclusion

Review Helaman 5:12. We can protect ourselves against pride, contention, and Satan's *"mighty storm"* by building our foundation on the rock of Jesus Christ.

"Remember, remember, my sons" (Helaman 5:5-14). In the Book of Mormon there are over 240 instances of the word remember or forms of the word (such as remembered, remembrance, or forget not). Fifteen of these instances are in Helaman 5.

Elder Spencer W. Kimball said: *"When you look in the dictionary for the most important word, do you know what it is? It could be 'remember.' Because all of [us] have made covenants...our greatest need is to remember. That is why everyone goes to sacrament meeting every Sabbath day...to take the sacrament and listen to the priests pray that [we] '...may always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given [us].' ...'Remember' is the word"* (Circles of Exaltation [address to religious educators, Brigham Young University, 28 June 1968], 8).

Explanation:

Helaman, the son of the Helaman who led the stripling Ammonite warriors, served as chief judge for twelve years, from the forty-second to the fifty-third years of the reign of the judges (50–39 B.C.). After an assassination attempt against him in his inaugural year, his reign was the most peaceful of any Nephite chief judge. He saw no wars, and nine of his years were marked as times of peace. He was centrally noted for his "justice and equity" (Helaman 3:20). Most significantly, the forty-ninth and fiftieth years of the reign of the judges appear to have been jubilee years. The forty-ninth year would have been the seventh sabbatical year (a reasonable time for great celebration and rejoicing) and the fiftieth year the jubilee itself (a time of continual peace and great joy). The jubilee laws under the law of Moses are found in Leviticus 25–26. The forty-ninth and fiftieth years are mentioned in Leviticus 25:8–10.

(*Charting the Book of Mormon – Chart 38*; John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch; Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies; 1999, Provo, UT)

Helaman 5:45-47 records how the Holy Ghost testified to the people.

Helaman 5:49-52 Once the people had received a witness of the Savior, they went forth bearing testimony, gave up their weapons of war, set aside their hatred, denied their false traditions, and yielded up the Nephite's lands.

D&C 33:9; D&C 88:81 Think about what your responsibility is once you receive a witness of the divinity and saving power of Jesus Christ.

Helaman as Chief Judge

Years 42–53 of the Reign of the Judges

References	Year	
Helaman 2:1–12	42	Peace achieved with the Lamanites Kishkumen killed attempting to assassinate Helaman Gadianton flees and becomes robber leader
3:1	43	No contention among the Nephites, but a little pride
3:2	44	No contention
3:2	45	No contention
3:3	46	Much contention and many dissensions Many migrate into the land northward
3:19	47	Great contention continues
3:19, 22	48	Contentions eventually diminish
3:23–25	49	Peace, prosperity, very dramatic church growth Continual rejoicing all year long Gadianton robbers secretly infiltrate settled lands
3:32	50	Continual peace and great joy
3:33–35	51	Peace and sanctification Rising pride among church members
3:36	52	Peace prevails despite increasing pride
3:37	53	Helaman ₃ dies in office