

August 31-September 6, 2020

Helaman 13–16

“GLAD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY”

Summary: *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.]*

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.]

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.]

The Nephites who believe Samuel are baptized by Nephi—Samuel cannot be slain with the arrows and stones of the unrepentant Nephites—Some harden their hearts, and others see angels—The unbelievers say it is not reasonable to believe in Christ and His coming in Jerusalem. [About 6–1 B.C.]

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What is the parallel of Messianic expectation?

The lesson precedes the coming of the Lord. It is timely because the

second coming of the Lord is imminent. Once again, looking for ancient parallels to today is very valuable. There is a sect of Orthodox Jews, Chabad, that has posted banners all over Israel and in some sections of New York, “We Want Messiah, Now!” This Hassidic group founded in 1775 by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Russia and developed into a movement by a line of Rabbis from the town of Lubavitch, Poland. Since 1951, it was led by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. This Chabad group proclaimed him to be the expected Messiah. He transformed their cause into a widespread Jewish movement in the world. Under his leadership, Chabad established a large network of institutions that seek to satisfy religious, social and humanitarian needs across the world. Rabbi Schneerson’s 1994 death shocked many followers. The movement did not appoint a new leader, and is split between “moderates”, who prefer not to discuss the Messianic question, and “messianics” who claim that he did not truly die – and will reappear. When he died, his

followers refused to bury him for three nights and three days. Their new posters read, “Prepare for the Imminent Arrival of the Messiah!”

Whom can we count on to prepare us for the Messiah’s coming?

In anticipation of the coming of the Messiah, Samuel the Lamanite came from the 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 reaction among some of the Jews. They look at him with about the same unbelief as the Nephites who looked on Samuel the Lamanite. In both instances, the air is crisp with anticipation of the coming of the Messiah.

How is Zarahemla like Jerusalem prior to the Messiah’s arrival?

The thought or question that occurred to me as I read about how Zarahemla was, can it be compared to the great city of Jerusalem? How many similar experiences have they or will they

experience 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 that time. **(Zecharia 11:14 Revelation 16:14-21)**

What is significant about Biblical timing?

Timing of biblical events seem very significant. There are 27-verses in the Old Testament that refer to three nights and/or three days. More than a dozen of them refer to someone or a nation being saved. Could that make us ponder on Jesus repeatedly saying that He would rise-up on the third day, and save us? 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)** "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)**

What did a Jewish Professor say about Jesus?

Although I have mentioned it before, let me repeat the reaction of one of my instructors at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A specialist on the times of Jesus, Dr. David Flusser (1917-2000) was asked if he believed in Jesus as the Messiah, he rubbed his hands and chortled, saying with a smile, "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 an open heart.