

Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 208)

LESSON 34: HELAMAN 6-12

How Could You Have Forgotten Your God?

Goal	
Hook	
Overview	<p>6:1-14: Lamanites righteousness leads to both Lamanite and Nephites prospering</p> <p>6:15-41: Gadianton Robbers reappear, Nephites and Lamanites respond differently; Mormon’s commentary on the devil (sigh I am going to have to get a bit into the history of Satan...)</p> <p>7: Nephi’s distress and preaching</p> <p>8-9: Nephi and the Gadianton judges argue back and forth; Nephi predicts an assassination</p> <p>10: Nephi receives the sealing power (calling and election sure?)</p> <p>11: Nephi sends and stops famine; it helps and then doesn’t.</p> <p>12: Mormon’s lament concerning human nature</p>
Main Points	<p>Lots to wrestle with and discuss in these chapters, sifting through editorial perspective and cultural context to glean the beneficial lessons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons from Lamanites and Nephites (Book of Mormon resists easy “good guy/bad guy” categories even though we sometimes act like it does; how each respond to the Gadianton Robbers (6:18-21, 34-40; Discussion of the pride cycle) Avoiding legitimate consequences is deeply serious on multiple levels • Critique of wealth (discussion point) 6:17; 7:4-5; ; Jacob 2:17-19 balanced summary of Book of Mormon perspective • Portrayal of Satan (he is kind of a main character in these chapters); brief history of the devil in scripture (6:26-30; but see also 7:15-16 • Portrayal of God. Is this a primitive theology? (close reading of Hel. 11) • Nephi receives sealing power (cf. Matt 16:19; 18:18; D&C 132:46. note his mindset when he receives it; discuss expansion of soul, spiritual maturity. Parallel to Enos (as Enos’ prayer is answered his concern expands more and more outward; Enoch (Moses 7:41) • The character of human nature (Discussion of Helaman 12)
Other Comments/ Discussion Starters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are questions raised in 7:16-23. 18: Theologically, this is actually a strong approach to Christianity. Historically, it is challenging. • Ezias: this is merely the Greek form of Isaiah. That is what I thought when I read it, but then I didn’t find “Ezias” so thought maybe I was mistaken. But not necessarily.. it is just spelled differently, sounds exactly the same In the NT Isaiah is also called Esai and Esaias (this form 21 times in NT, Mt, Mk, Lk, Jon, Ac, Ro). this is just a coincidence? There is a parallel issue with Elias/Elijah in D&C 110:12-13 (Elias is the Greek name for Elijah in the NT)

Mulek: Not otherwise known (Orson Scott Card's intriguing thesis. <http://www.nauvoo.com/library/card-bookofmormon.html> under "Speculation on Zarahemlah)

To Mosiah, what he is doing is bearing his testimony and asserting the divine guidance that he receives as the legitimate king of a chosen people. To Zarahemla, what he is doing is claiming that his lineage gives him the right to rule over the people of Zarahemla and displace him from the kingship. So what does Zarahemla do? Well, Mosiah admits that his ancestors were not kings in Israel. So Zarahemla picks his most noble ancestor, Mulek, and then declares him to be the son of that last king of Israel. Thus if anybody has the right to rule over anybody, it's Zarahemla who has the right to rule over Mosiah and his people. But Mosiah kindly points out that if Zarahemla and his people are descended from Israelites, they certainly seem to have forgotten the language and writing, and therefore have obviously degenerated from the high culture of Israel. The Nephites, on the other hand, have preserved a writing system that no one else uses, and which Zarahemla can't read. They have a history accounting for every year since they arrived in America, which Zarahemla of course cannot produce.

In the end, whatever negotiation there was ended up with Zarahemla bowing out of the kingship and his people becoming subject to rule by the Nephites. But the story of Mulek served a very useful purpose even so -- it allowed the people to merge, not with the hostility of conquerors over the conquered, though in fact that is what the relationship fundamentally was, but rather with the idea of brotherhood. They were all Israelites. Thus no one had any reason to question the Mulek story, because, while it failed in its original purpose, to allow Zarahemla to prevail over Mosiah, it still served the valuable function of uniting the newly combined nation as a single tribe. It wasn't completely successful, of course, or there wouldn't have been a later revolt of Kingmen against Nephite Freeman, but considering that the people of Zarahemla outnumbered the people of Mosiah by quite a bit, the Mulek story may well have contributed to the ultimate victory of the judges in that struggle.

- As an interesting aside 7:10 suggests Nephi was very upper class, among the elite. Makes sense, dynastic line of chief judges
- 10:16-17: I was always amused by this because it sounds like teleportation (cf. Luke 4:29-30?)
- 12:14-15: Presupposing historicity of Jericho miracle, the sun stopping!
- "God and the Lamb" Lamb shows up in John and Revelation

Concluding
Points