

Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 209)

LESSON 35: HELAMAN 13-16

Repent and Return unto the Lord

Goal	This is one of those lessons that is as thought provoking as it is inspiring. Class members should come away with an understanding of connections between Book of Mormon narratives and an appreciation for our freedom of choice, and experience an increased resolution to be “steadfast and firm” in living well.
Hook	
Overview	<p>13: Samuel criticizes, condemns, and predicts destructions and curses towards the Nephites (this prophetic genre is called a “judgment oracle” and is common in the Old Testament)</p> <p>14: Samuel gives signs of Jesus’ birth and death</p> <p>15: Samuel contrasts Nephites and Lamanites</p> <p>16: Denouement—a few convert, Samuel escapes, most people disbelieve and argue despite marvelous signs</p>
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intertextuality (see chart below) • Signs of Jesus’ birth and death (close reading of 14) • Riches and wealth (13:17-23) • Steadfastness and Firmness (close reading of 15) • Freedom of Choice (14:30-31) • BUT look at all the passages about God, destruction, and being past choice (13:32-39) Destruction made sure?! Discussion point • Signs? 14:28; 16:4-5, 13-14
Other Comments/ Discussion Starters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13:7 Samuel’s first message was “glad tidings” • What is up with the slippery treasures bit? • Why doesn’t God act like this now, wiping out cities that “deserve” it? (I guess this is Second Coming rhetoric) • The astronomical signs described in 14:3-8 should be verifiable right? (Note the supernova recorded in China; the fact that Jesus was actually born about 5 BC) “A Han dynasty Chinese astronomical notice describing in the eastern portion of the heavens a phenomenon that appeared during March/April of 5 BC” (Raymond Brown, Birth of the Messiah, p. 611) • History of “rejected prophets” (13:24-29)
Concluding Points	

Samuel and intertextuality

Passage	Reference
13:2-3 (rejected prophet about to go home then	Alma 8:14-17

God says try again)	
13:5, 9-10 (destruction in 400 years)	Mormon 8:1-12
13:14-16 (Zarahemla, Gideon, and other cities destroyed)	3 Nephi 8
13:17-18-19, 31 (slippery treasures)	Mormon 1:18; Ether 14:1-2
14:2-8 (Birth of Jesus)	3 Nephi 1:15-21
14:9 (“Repent and prepare the way of the Lord”)	Matthew 3:2-3
14:12: (Jesus Christ, Son of God, Father of heaven and earth creator of all things)	Mosiah 3:8
14:20-27 (signs of Jesus’ death)	3 Nephi 8
14:25 (“And many graves shall be opened, and shall yield up many of their dead; and many saints shall appear unto many”)	Matthew 27:52-53 “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many” ; 3 Nephi 23:6-13
14:31 (good restored to you if good, evil restored to you if evil [“first and second death” in 14:16, 18 might also be an allusion to Alma 42:8-9])	Alma 41:13-14
15:3 (God chastens those he loves)	D&C 95:1
15:8 (firm and steadfast “in the thing wherewith they have been made free”)	Mosiah 23:13; Alma 61:21
15:6 (“he hath a devil”)	Matt. 11:18; John 10:20-21