

Helaman 5: 50-52; 6:1-8**1** *Dramatic Transformation*

The power and impact of Nephi and Lehi's mission among the Lamanites were dramatic. Following their successful mission, notice the following first-time experiences that occurred in the history of the majority of the Lamanites:

1. The majority of the Lamanites were converted to the gospel (see Helaman 5:50).
2. The Lamanites laid down their weapons and their hatred and false traditions (see Helaman 5:51).
3. They freely yielded up the land that belonged to the Nephites (see Helaman 5:52).
4. The majority of the Lamanites became more righteous than the Nephites (see Helaman 6:1).
5. The Lamanites began to preach the gospel to the Nephites (see Helaman 6:6).
6. There was peace in all the land (see Helaman 6:7).
7. The Lamanites and Nephites had open travel and free trade with one another (see Helaman 6:8).

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Helaman 6:5

2 John Taylor had been converted to the gospel and baptized in Canada in May of 1836 through the inspired teaching of Elder Parley P. Pratt. B. H. Roberts writes of a difficult time in the history of the Church: "In March of the following year [1837], Elder Taylor visited Kirtland, and there met the Prophet Joseph Smith, who entertained him at his house and gave him many items of information pertaining to the work of the Lord in this dispensation. At that time there was a bitter spirit of apostasy rife in Kirtland. A number in the quorum of the Twelve were disaffected towards the Prophet, and the Church seemed on the point of disintegration. Among others, Parley P. Pratt was floundering in darkness, and coming to Elder Taylor told him of some things wherein he considered the Prophet Joseph in error. To his remarks Elder Taylor replied:

"I am surprised to hear you speak so, Brother Parley. Before you left Canada you bore a strong testimony to Joseph Smith being a prophet of God, and to the truth of the work he has inaugurated; and you said you knew these things by revelation, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. You gave to me a strict charge to the effect that though you or an angel from heaven was to declare anything else I was not to believe it. Now Brother Parley, it is not man that I am following, but the Lord. The principles you taught me led me to Him, and I now have the same testimony that you then rejoiced in. If the work was true six months ago, it is true today; if Joseph Smith was then a prophet, he is now a prophet."

To the honor of Parley, be it said, he sought no further to lead Elder Taylor astray; nor did he use much argument in the first place. "He with many others," Says Elder Taylor, "were passing under a dark cloud; he soon made all right with the Prophet Joseph, and was restored to full fellowship."

B. H. Roberts, The Life of John Taylor, pp. 39-40 (Millet & McConkie, BOM Commentary, Vol. 3, p. 362)

Helaman 6:17**3** *Riches*

What went wrong? Why would the people turn again to evil? How could they fall so quickly into decay and perversion? Herein is the key: The lust for riches. The unbridled quest for power and money. Pride. How sickening is the cycle and how nauseating in man's obsession with himself and his worldly possessions!

Millet & McConkie, *BOM Commentary*, Vol 3, p. 365.

4 God is forgotten out of vanity. A little prosperity and peace, or even a turn slightly for the better can bring feelings of self-sufficiency. We can feel quickly that we are in control of our own lives, that the change for the better is our own doing, not that of a God who communicates to us through the still small voice of the Spirit. Pride creates a noise within us which makes the quiet voice of the Spirit hard to hear. And soon, in our vanity, we no longer even listen for it. We can come quickly to think we don't need it.

Henry B. Eyring, in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 16; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 16.

5 The most calamitous effect of wealth, according to the Book of Mormon, is the inequality it begets in any society... Inequality is not only the result of wealth-seeking; it is sometimes actually its purpose.

Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1967], 394.

Helaman 6:18-40**6** *Secret Combinations*

Helaman chapter 6 provides several insights into secret combinations, including how they work, what motivates them, and how they come to power:

1. Their two objectives are to get gain and power; then they glory in it (see Helaman 6:17; Ether 8:22; Moses 5:31).
2. Secret combinations require general wickedness to survive (see Helaman 6:21, 31, 38).
3. Secret combinations thrive on secrecy, violation of which is a capital offense (see Helaman 5:22; 6:22; Moses 5:29, 50).
4. Secret combinations involve formal covenant making (see Helaman 6:22; Moses 5:30-31).
5. They use murder, violence, threat of violence, plunder, vice, whoredoms, and flattery to get gain and power (Helaman 2:4-5; 6:17, 23).
6. Secret combinations operate on laws contrary to the laws of the country (see Helaman 6:23).
7. Satan is the grand conspirator and author (see Helaman 6:26-30).
8. Participants have court trials for their own people—not according to the laws of the land but according to their own set of laws (see Helaman 6:23-24).
9. They seek to take governmental power as rapidly as possible (see Helaman 2:5; 6:39).
10. Participants seek to overthrow freedom for others but seek to maintain freedom for themselves (see Ether 8:25; Moses 5:28-33).

11. Secret combinations cause the destruction of nations (see Alma 37:21, 26, 29; Helaman 2:13; Ether 8:21-22).
12. Secret combinations are abominable in God's sight (see 3 Nephi 9:9; Ether 8:18).
BYU Book of Mormon Student Manual 2003, p. 272.

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It is a well-known truth that the counsel of the First Presidency of the Church, in all cases has been and is against our brethren joining secret organizations for any purpose whatsoever, and that wherever any of them have already joined, they have been counseled to withdraw themselves from such organizations, as soon as circumstances permit and wisdom dictates. In taking this position, there has not been, neither is it intended that there shall be, any controversy with the societies, and with their aims and objects. The merits of the various orders are not considered at all' their aims may be ever so worthy and their objects ever so commendable. That matter does not enter into the discussion, so far as a member of our Church is concerned.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is true, and is a power unto salvation, temporal and spiritual. A man who complies in every respect therewith has everything that any society can offer, with countless truths and consolations added: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The Church is divinely organized, and in that organization there is a provision for the development and practice of every virtue known, every charity revealed. For this reason and for its promise of eternal life and glory, the gospel and the Church divinely established for its promulgation, should be nearer and dearer to a follower of Christ than all other things. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye can not serve God and Mammon."

The members of our Church who have faith to heed the advice of the authorities thereof, will not ally themselves, under any pretense, with any organization not instituted by the Lord for the building up of Zion. Neither will they, for any consideration, allow themselves to imbibe the spirit of the world, or be tempted to lose their faith, which will be the result with those who divide their interests, devoting some to other organizations. This is the testimony of those who have joined and who have later withdrawn. Nothing can be permitted in the members that is calculated to bring division and weakness to the Church, yet those who have been led to join other institutions should not be dealt with harshly, but should be made to understand the position of the Church, and where it is so understood, they should shape their affairs for withdrawal, in humility and repentance, from that which threatens their standing.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, (1939), 1111.

8

I am sorry to see this *murderous influence* prevailing throughout the world, and perhaps this may be a fitting occasion to refer to some of these matters. The manifestation of turbulence and uneasiness which prevail among the nations of the earth are truly lamentable.... These feelings which tend to do away with all right, rule and government, and correct principles are not from God, or many of them are not. This feeling of *communism* and nihilism, aimed at the overthrow

of rulers and men in position and authority, arises from a spirit of diabolism, which is contrary to every principle of the Gospel of the Son of God....

These things are beginning to spread among and permeate the nations of the earth. Do we expect them? Yes. These *secret combinations* were spoken by Joseph Smith, years and years ago. I have heard him time and time again tell about them, and *he stated that when these things began to take place the liberties of this nation would begin to be bartered away.*

President John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, (1831), 22:142-43.

Helaman 6:30

9 *Author of all sin*

Lucifer: Literally the *Shining One*; also *Lightbringer* or *Son of the Morning*. Lucifer is also known as Satan or the devil. The name Lucifer appears only once in the Bible (Isa. 14:12, but cf. Luke 10:18). Apparently Lucifer is the name of the devil before his rebellion and fall. Latter-day revelation clarifies the fall of Lucifer and equates him with Satan (D&C 76:25-38; cf. Rev. 12:1-17; 2 Ne. 9:8; D&C 29:36-38; Moses 4:1-4).

Bible Dictionary

10 All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. The devil has no power over us only as we permit him. The moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 181

Helaman 6:34-41

11 “Thus we see”

Lamanites

Actions and attitudes:	Consequences:
Helaman 6:18, 20, 34, 37	Helaman 6:34, 36-37

Nephites

Actions and attitudes:	Consequences:
Helaman 6:20-24, 31, 33-34, 38	Helaman 6:34-35, 38-40

Helaman 6:36

12 *Lamanites willingness to believe*

[Speaking of the latter-day Lamanites] They do suffer from an inferiority complex that is well-nigh annihilating. Prisoners of war, slaves, and downtrodden people usually develop such a complex. But give them comparable education and opportunity with their non-Indian brother, acceptance and brotherly love by him, and they will emerge a rejuvenated people.... The chasm

between what he is and what he will be is *opportunity*. It is ours to give... The Lamanites have believing blood, as evidenced by the words from the sixth chapter of Helaman [verse 36].

Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1949 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1949], 105-106

- 13 I have asked for increased effort in the missionary work among the Lamanites, and I have been most gratified by the response. The missions in the Lamanite areas are the most active and most productive of all, with many more converts per missionary than in any of the other missions. It is as in the days of old: [Hel. 6:36]. We have many Lamanite missionaries in the field now, and there will be many, many more, I am sure.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, Dec. 1975 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975], 7

- 14 The converted Lamanite is devout. Few ever apostatize. Some lose their way as they partake of the worldliness about them, but generally the children of Lehi of the twentieth century have inherited that grace and ability to believe like their ancestors of the long ago (Hel. 6:36).

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. by Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 178

Helaman 6 – Conclusion

- 15 ... Concerning the United States, the Lord revealed to his prophets that its greatest threat would be a vast, world-wide “secret combination” which would not only threaten the United States but also see to “over-throw the freedom of all lands, nations and countries” (Ether 8:25).

... In connection with attack on the United States, the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith there would be an attempt to overthrow the country by destroying the Constitution. Joseph Smith predicted that the time would come when the Constitution would hang, as it were, by a thread, and at that time, “this people will step forth and save it from the threatening destruction” (*Journal History*, Brigham Young’s Speech, July 4, 1854).

It is my conviction that the elders of Israel, widely spread over the nation, will at that crucial time successfully rally the righteous of our country and provide the necessary balance of strength to save the institutions of constitutional government.

Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Oct. 1961, 70.

- 16 Now the Lord has withdrawn His Spirit from the world. Do not let this thought become confused in your minds. The Spirit He has withdrawn from the world is not the Holy Ghost (for they never had that!), but it is the light of truth, spoken of in our scriptures as the Spirit of Christ, which is given to every man that cometh into the world as you find recorded in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Now because of the wickedness of the world, that Spirit has been withdrawn, and when the Spirit of the Lord is not striving with men, the spirit of Satan is. Therefore, we may be sure that the time has come spoken of in section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants, wherein the Lord says:

For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion. [D&C 1:35].

Peace *has* been taken from the earth. The devil *has* power *his own* dominion. The Spirit of the Lord *has* been withdrawn.

Joseph Fielding Smith, "Predicted Judgments," *Speeches of the Year*, Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah, Mar. 21, 1967.

The Significance of the Secret Combinations

17 Helaman 6 and Ether 8 provide some of the most important insights into secret combinations, including how they worked, what motivated them, and how they came to power. Moroni prophetically warned his latter-day readers that secret combinations were the source of the destruction of both the Jaredite and Nephite societies (see Ether 8:18-21). Moroni then warned us in terms of utmost gravity of the dangers such secret combinations hold for our own day (see vv.22-26). From this chapter and other places in the Book of Mormon we learn the following important characteristics of secret combinations:

1. The devil is the inspiration and source of all such organizations (see Helaman 6:26-30). Mormon clearly pointed to Satan as the grand conspirator, the real organizer of all such organizations.
2. Such organizations are viewed by the Lord as constituting a wickedness "above all the wickedness of the whole earth" (3 Nephi 9:9; see also Ether 8:18). While individuals may rob, steal, plunder, and murder, how much more wickedness occurs when men plunder and kill on a national or an international scale involving millions of lives?
3. Such organizations flourish and thrive when the "more part" (Helaman 6:21) of the people are wicked and seek to benefit from the spoils of such wickedness (see v. 38).
4. Secrecy is one of the basic operating tenets of such organizations (see vv.22, 25-26).
5. Joined with the idea of secrecy is the idea of making covenants (see vv. 22, 25-26). An oath of loyalty to the organization is made which involves a vow to maintain the secret of the conspiracy. After the murder of the chief judge, Kishkumen "went unto those that sent him, and they all entered into a covenant, yea, wearing by their everlasting Maker, that they would tell no man" (Helaman 1:11). Helaman 6:21 refers to "their covenants and their oaths." Moroni described this same covenant making among the Jaredites (see Ether 8:13-14). Ironically, the oaths were sometimes made in the name of God (see Helaman 1:11, Ether 8:14).
6. The objectives of such secret combinations are power or gain, or both (see Helaman 6:38, Ether 8:22, Moses 5:31-33). Since the government is a source of great power, it is not surprising that often the target of action is to take over the reins of government (see Helaman 1:1-4; 2:4-5; 3 Nephi 3:6, 6:30, 7:12, Ether 9:1-6, 13:18).
7. These organizations use immorality, money, and violence to achieve their ends (see Helaman 6:15, 17, Ether 8:10). Assassinating government leaders to bring their own people to power is a common tale found in the Book of Mormon.
8. The only way to lastingly curtail these organizations once they are established and begin to flourish is through conversion of the people to righteousness (see Helaman 6:37, 3 Nephi 5:4-6).

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18 In these times of uncertainty, conflict, chaos and confusion, where there is unprovoked aggression, attempted subjugation, and enslavement, when people are being denied their freedom and their liberties, and especially when whole nations of men, including some of the clergy, pride themselves on their atheism, deny the existence of God, speak of Christ as a myth and of religion as an opiate, when increasing numbers of men are declaring that God is dead and others are asking whether he in fact ever lived—in times like these we must reexamine and reemphasize our faith in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, and conform our lives to his teachings and emulate his matchless example.

Hugh B. Brown, in CR, Apr. 1966, p.117