

## HELAMAN 4 STUDY GUIDE (37 pts.)

### REVIEW

**2 NEPHI 4:27 to MOSIAH 12:14 – Reign of the Kings** (570 BC to 91 BC)

- from King Nephi in 570 AD to King Mosiah 2 in 91 BC.
- The last three kings were King Mosiah, King Benjamin, King Mosiah 2 (who started the Reign of the Judges).

**MOSIAH 12:14–13:68 – Reign of the Judges** began around 91 BC.

- 1 Nephi 3:4 – “600 years from the time that my father left Jerusalem, a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews, even a Messiah, or, in other words, a Savior of the world.”
- Mosiah 13:67 – “And it came to pass that Mosiah died [reign of the Judges began] . . . *five hundred and nine years* from the time Lehi left Jerusalem.”

### THE BOOK OF HELAMAN

**All five chapters in the book of Helaman are an account of:**

- A spiritual revival started by Nephi and Lehi that rapidly sweeps across the entire Lamanite civilization.
- A massive and unprecedented Lamanite conversion to Christianity in which Lamanite believers outnumber Nephite believers (chapters 1 and 2).
- The corrupt and growing influence of Gadianton judges among the Nephites, and the Nephites’ subsequent decline into wickedness (chapters 3 and 4).
- A group of Gadiantons (Nephite dissenters) that transforms from “a band of robbers” hiding in the wilderness into a mighty army that terrorizes the people and wants to challenge the Nephite army (chapter 4). In fact, you could make a case that the entire book of Helaman is just about this one thing.

For the rest of the Book of Mormon we are waiting for this “spoiler” by Mormon given in Helaman 1:51 to be fulfilled:

“And behold, in the end of this book, ye shall see that this Gadianton did prove the overthrow, yea, almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi.”

## HELAMAN 1

- Verses 1-14 – Kishkumen assassinates Pahoran 2 & the rise of a secret conspiracy
- Verses 15-29 – Coriantumr's blitzkrieg of Zarahemla/Bountiful, his murder of Pacumeni
- Verses 30-36 – Moronihah & Lehi's victory over the Lamanite army, Coriantumr's death
- Verses 37-52 – Helaman 2's election to chief judge, a thwarted attempt to assassinate Helaman 2, Gadianton conspirators flee to the wilderness.

## HELAMAN 2

- As you will recall, Nephi and Lehi were the sons of Helaman 2.
- In chapter 2, these two sons launched such a powerful revival of God's Spirit that it led to an unprecedented role reversal: *most* of the Lamanites had become converts to Christianity and were even assisting in missionary efforts to convert Nephites in Zarahemla and in the land northward.
- This ushered in a time of peace and prosperity.
- The two brothers and several Lamanites then spent six years preaching in the land northward.
- While they are gone, the Nephites descend into wickedness and form alliances with the Gadiantons while the Lamanites grow firmer in their faith and try to destroy the Gadiantons. Nephi and Lehi return at the beginning of chapter 3.

## HELAMAN 3

- Nephi mourns in the garden tower. He delivers a miraculous sign to the skeptical Gadianton judges. Five men are converted and imprisoned.
- At Seezoram's funeral, Nephi delivers another miraculous sign to the skeptical Gadianton judges, which exonerates Nephi and the five men. The crowd argues about whether Nephi is a god or a prophet.
- Because of Nephi's faithfulness, God empowers him to start famines, remove mountains, tear down buildings, etc. Nephi calls various groups of people to repentance over a two-year period.

# HELANAN 4: NEPHITES' CYCLE OF REPENTANCE & REBELLION - A "BAND OF ROBBERS" BECOMES AN "ARMY"

## MAJOR SECTIONS

The 73 verses in chapter 4 have two major sections:

1. Helaman 4:1-47 is a narrative about **a repeating cycle of rebellion and obedience toward God** over a twelve-year period lasting from the 73<sup>rd</sup> to the 85<sup>th</sup> years of the reign of the Judges. During this time, the Gadianton grow from a "band of robbers" into a mighty army.
2. In Helaman 4:48-73, it's hard to say who is speaking. Either Nephi or Mormon spend that entire section contemplating **what we learn from this account about the corrupt and sinful nature of mankind** and expressing the hope that humanity will repent.

## KEY VERSE

We've each known times when organizations or cultures that we are a part of have experienced divisions or strife. When that happens, what are we called to do? In **Helaman 4:28-29**, Nephi and Lehi turned to God to receive revelation and used preaching to subdue this strife:

- 4:28 And in the seventy and ninth year, there began to be much strife.
- 4:29 But it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi, and many of their brethren, who knew concerning the true points of doctrine, having **many revelations daily**, therefore they did **preach** unto the people, insomuch that they did put an end to their strife in that same year.

## NARRATIVE

In the **third chapter** of Helaman, Nephi had given the Nephite people two miraculous signs. He also went among them preaching the word of God. But they hardened their hearts and would not listen. They began to slay one another. There were corrupt Gadianton judges among them. Chapter four reveals that there were fearsome Gadianton robbers who would eventually attack the Nephites continually.



## **I. Verses 1-47: Cycle of Obedience & Rebellion in 73<sup>rd</sup> to 85<sup>th</sup> Yrs.**

### ***The Peoples' Faith Wavers: The Gadianton Robbers Become an Army (v. 1-47)***

Chapter 4 of Helaman begins in the 72<sup>nd</sup> year of the Judges by calling the Gadiantons a "secret band of robbers" who carried out a work of destruction and wickedness.

There was a *civil war* between the Nephites and the Gadianton dissenters which lasted throughout the 72<sup>nd</sup> and 73<sup>rd</sup> years. In Helaman 4:4, Nephi saw that this civil war would result in their utter destruction.

In Helaman 4:5-6, using the power that had been given to him in chapter 3, Nephi initiated "a great famine" among the Nephites that began in the 73<sup>rd</sup> year of the Judges and continued until the 76<sup>th</sup> year. The Nephites repented, but only for three years.

In these first 47 verses the **Nephites** follow a repeated cycle of obedience and then rebellion and then obedience, etc., while the Gadianton robbers who hide in the wilderness grow from a "band of robbers" into a mighty army.

### ***Many Revelations Daily***

The most amazing verse in this section is Helaman 4:29. In the 79<sup>th</sup> year, there was strife among the Nephites. Regarding Nephi, Lehi and "many of their brethren," verse 29 says they:

- Knew concerning the true points of doctrine,
- Having many revelations daily!
- Put an end to strife in that same year.

What would that be like to have "many revelations daily"? I think we find it hard to imagine because we've never experienced that. Surely, nothing could compare to that experience of having God reveal his will to you on a daily basis!

### ***The Gadiantons Grow in Number Starting in Verse 30 in the 80<sup>th</sup> Year***

Verse 30 tells us that in the 80<sup>th</sup> year of the Judges, the Gadiantons (Nephite dissenters) "commenced a war" with the rest of the Nephites. They would "commit murder and plunder" and then "retreat back into the mountains and into the wilderness and secret places." Every day, they added more to their number (v. 33). These robbers wreaked havoc and caused great destruction. Finally, in verse 40 they become so numerous that they are ready to challenge the entire Nephite army.

The Gadianton robbers:

- Destroyed many things.
- Killed many people.

- Carried people away as captives, especially women and children.

## **II. Verses 48-73: The Nature of Man and Goodness/Power of God**

Verses 48 to 73 call us to consider the basic nature of mankind, why we have a strong urge to rebel against God, and what we must do to remedy that situation. It then speaks of God's omnipotence followed by a few words about the need for people to repent.

### ***Whose Words Are These in Verses 48-73?***

The narrative about Nephi, his people and the Gadianton robbers in verses 1 to 47 is written in third-person language. Mormon had to get these facts from Nephi's written account, but what we're reading are Mormon's words. So I would assume that the spiritual reflections in verses 48-73 are Mormon's thoughts, but it is possible that he is merely conveying the original words of Nephi.

### ***Man's Rebellious Nature (verses 48-57)***

In this last half of the chapter, the author asks us what we've learned from the first 47 verses about human nature in general and our relationship to God. Verses 48-57 talk about the nature of humanity.

In verse 48, the author draws a conclusion about **the nature of man**: "And thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men."

According to verses 49-51, in times of ease and prosperity we "forget the Lord" and "trample under our feet the Holy One." In verse 52, it says that unless the Lord chastens us with afflictions such as death, terror and famine (see verses 1-47), we will not remember him.

In verse 53 we read that man is "quick to do iniquity" and "slow to do good." Verse 54: We "set our hearts upon the vain things of the world" and we're "lifted up in pride." Verse 55: We are "slow to remember the Lord." Verse 56: We don't want the Lord to rule over our lives. Verse 57: But we fail to realize just how tiny and insignificant we are, even "less than the dust of the earth."

### ***God's Omnipotence (58-68)***

Verses 58-68 then turn to the subject of **God's unlimited power**. The author tells us about the powerful forces of nature that all bend to the power of God's command.

The dust of the earth moves (v. 58). Mountains and hills tremble and are broken up by the "power of his voice" (v. 59). The whole earth shakes (v. 60). He can stop the motion of the earth (v. 61-62). He can dry up all the water. He can command a mountain to fall upon a city. He can consign us to hell for eternity by his command.

In verses 66-69, we see that the Lord could crush us like a bug. We could be consigned to everlasting misery in an instant. The point here is that God so often *withholds* this power and is so *long suffering* toward us, waiting for years for us to repent and come unto him.

### ***An Invitation to Repent (verses 69-73)***

Before the Lord cuts us off, repentance has been declared that we might be saved (v. 69). Those who repent and hearken will be blessed in this life and saved in the life hereafter (v. 70).

It would be wonderful if all people were ultimately saved, but we know that there are some who refuse to be in the presence of the Lord and will be “consigned to a state of endless misery” and “everlasting damnation.”(v. 71-73)

### ***Note: An Incredible Understanding of Astronomy (verse 62)***

In the midst of the spiritual contemplation that we find in verses 48-73, verse 62 makes a very bold claim about an understanding that the author, and perhaps the entire Nephite civilization, had about the planets. If Nephi is speaking, it's around 6 BC. If Mormon is speaking, it's about 420 AD. Whoever wrote verse 62 tells us:

“For sure it is the earth that moveth, and not the sun.”

Does this mean that the Nephites developed advanced, highly-polished lenses and telescopes that allowed them to calculate planetary movements more than 1,000 years before Kepler or Copernicus?

Well, that might be one possible explanation. When the author says “for sure it is,” he might be talking about a certainty that comes from *science*, but he could also be talking about an assurance that comes from *revelation*.

I tend to think it was the latter. Nephi or Mormon could have had an assurance or certainty about a heliocentric solar system based on simply a revelation from God. In such a case, they would be just as certain as Copernicus was over 1,000 years later, even though they had gained their understanding by different means.



## QUESTIONS

*NOTE: Keep in mind that if a question is worth 2 points, I expect for you to give me two things. If it is worth 3 points, provide three things, etc.*

### ***The Peoples' Faith Wavers: The Gadiantons Become a Mighty Army (v. 1-47)***

1. In the 72<sup>nd</sup> year, Helaman 4:1-3 tells us there was a civil war among the Nephites. Who were the two sides in this war? (2 pts.)
2. In Helaman 3:119, what mighty power had God given to Nephi? (1 pt.)
3. In Helaman 4:4, besides causing them to remember the Lord, why did Nephi say, "Let there be a famine in the land"? (1 pt.)
4. In Helaman 4:9, how hungry did the Nephites have to become before they would repent? (1 pt.)
5. When Nephi appealed to God to end the famine in Helaman 4:12-19, in verse 13 what did Nephi think they had done about the Gadiantons who lived among them? (1pt.)
6. In Helaman 4:18, what three things had caused the Nephites to repent? (3 pts.)
7. According to Helaman 4:20, in the 76<sup>th</sup> years what happened to end this famine? (1 pt.)
8. In Helaman 4:22, Nephi was esteemed as what? (1 pt.)

9. In Helaman 4:23, was Lehi as righteous as his brother? (1 pt.)
10. At the end of the famine in the 76<sup>th</sup> year, the people rejoiced. The people began to prosper and have peace. In Helaman 4:26:
  - a. What happened to the church in the 77<sup>th</sup> year? (1 pt.)
  - b. What percentage of Nephite people and the Lamanite people belonged to the church? (1 pt.)
11. Helaman 4:28 tells us that in the 79<sup>th</sup> year, “there began to be much strife.” If we want to end strife in our day, Nephi and Lehi would be good examples to follow.
  - a. What did Nephi, Lehi and their brothers know? (1 pt.)
  - b. What kind of guidance did they receive from God? (1 pt.)
  - c. What activity was the most effective in putting an end to this strife? (1 pt.)
12. Who does Helaman 4:30-31 say stirred up the Lamanites to enough anger that they started a war against the Nephite people? (1 pt.)



13. In Helaman 4:32-33:

- a. What two kinds of crimes would these marauders commit before they retreated into their hideouts in the wilderness and mountains? (1 pt.)
- b. And now the most dangerous thing that happened in all of chapter four: Verse 32 says they were "receiving daily \_\_\_\_\_ ."  
\_\_\_\_\_ . (1 pt.)
- c. Verse 33 then says, "they became an \_\_\_\_\_ ."  
\_\_\_\_\_ . (1 pt.)
- d. And verse 33 says, they were once again called \_\_\_\_\_ .  
\_\_\_\_\_ . (1 pt.)

14. We read earlier that a majority of Nephites and Lamanites had been members of Christ's Church. Helaman 4:34 tells us that the robbers not only caused great destruction among the Nephites, but who else? (1 pt.)

15. In Helaman 4:35, it says the people sent an army of \_\_\_\_\_ into the wilderness and the mountains to destroy these robbers. (1 pt.)

16. In verse 36, what happened to this army that pursued the robbers? (1 pt.)

17. In Helaman 4:39, the army had some success against the robbers but was forced to return again. Verse 40 then says that "the robbers did still increase and wax strong, insomuch that they did defy the whole \_\_\_\_\_ and also the \_\_\_\_\_." (1 pt.)

18. Helaman 4:40 even implies that these robbers were terrorists in that "they did cause great \_\_\_\_\_ to come unto the people, upon all the face of the land." (1 pt.)
19. Verse 41 tells us how they carried out this terrorism: "They . . . did do great \_\_\_\_\_ unto them; yea, did \_\_\_\_\_ many, and did \_\_\_\_\_ into the wilderness, especially their women and their children." (2 pts.)
20. Helaman 4:1 began in what year of the reign of the Judges? (1 pt.)
21. This story ends in Helaman 4:47 in what year of the Judges? (1 pt.)

### ***The Nature of Man***

Mormon stops to ask the reader, "What do we learn from this story?" He feels that it is time to stop and draw a lesson from the facts of this particular story. Verses 48 to 73 are his spiritual contemplations on the nature of man, the power of God and the need to repent before we are forever cut off from his presence.

22. In Helaman 4:48, Mormon draws this conclusion: "And thus we can behold how \_\_\_\_\_, and also the \_\_\_\_\_ of the hearts of the children of men." (1 pt.)
23. Using Helaman 4:49-51, the Lord says right at the moment that he showers his people with two different blessing is the moment that they "harden their hearts" and forget Him.
- a. Verse 49 says that moment when we betray him is "when he doth \_\_\_\_\_ his people." (1 pt.)

- b. Verse 50 says that moment of betrayal occurs when He is  
"\_\_\_\_\_ them out of the hands of their enemies." (1 pt.)
24. So in Helaman 4:52, Mormon concludes that it is human nature that we will not remember the Lord unless he chastens us with afflictions and "visit them with \_\_\_\_\_, and with \_\_\_\_\_, and with \_\_\_\_\_, and with all manner of \_\_\_\_\_." (1 pt.)
25. In Helaman 4:56, we get to the heart of the matter. Mormon says, "Behold they do not desire that the Lord their God, who hath created the, should \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ over them." (1 pt.)
26. In Helaman 4:57, what does Mormon compare us to in order demonstrate how small and insignificant we actually are in the vast scheme of things? (1 pt.)
27. Helaman 4:58-68 is a commentary on the omnipotence of God. Then in verse 68, Mormon tells us that, based on our works alone, we would be cut off from God's presence forever. But verse 70 tells us there is a way out if we will do two things. It says, "Blessed are they who will \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ unto the voice of the Lord." (1 pt.)