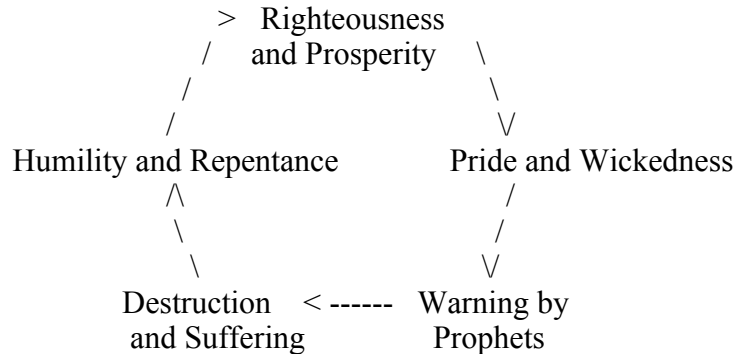


September 2–8: Helaman 7–12, “Remember the Lord”

Overview

The Pride Cycle



As part of our last lesson we discussed the pride cycle. The first part of the Book of Helaman goes thru multiple iterations of the pride cycle in a relative short period of time so we will continue this theme in this lesson

At the end of Helaman 6 we read about the wickedness of the Nephites

Helaman 6:32-35

32 And it came to pass that all these iniquities did come unto them in the space of not many years, insomuch that a more part of it had come unto them in the sixty and seventh year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

33 And they did grow in their iniquities in the sixty and eighth year also, to the great sorrow and lamentation of the righteous.

34 And thus we see that the Nephites did begin to dwindle in unbelief, and grow in wickedness and abominations, while the Lamanites began to grow exceedingly in the knowledge of their God; yea, they did begin to keep his statutes and commandments, and to walk in truth and uprightness before him.

35 And thus we see that the Spirit of the Lord began to withdraw from the Nephites, because of the wickedness and the hardness of their hearts.

In the pride cycle what follows pride and wickedness?

Warning by Prophets

Nephi condemns them because of their sins and commands them to repent

Helaman 7:16-20

16 Yea, how could you have given way to the enticing of him who is seeking to hurl away your souls down to everlasting misery and endless wo?

17 O repent ye, repent ye! Why will ye die? Turn ye, turn ye unto the Lord your God. Why has he forsaken you?

18 It is because you have hardened your hearts; yea, ye will not hearken unto the

voice of the good shepherd; yea, ye have provoked him to anger against you.

19 And behold, instead of gathering you, except ye will repent, behold, he shall scatter you forth that ye shall become meat for dogs and wild beasts.

20 O, how could you have forgotten your God in the very day that he has delivered you?

21 But behold, it is to get gain, to be praised of men, yea, and that ye might get gold and silver. And ye have set your hearts upon the riches and the vain things of this world, for the which ye do murder, and plunder, and steal, and bear false witness against your neighbor, and do all manner of iniquity.

What had the Nephites done to provoke the Lord to anger and to keep them from gathering in righteousness?

(It is because you have hardened your hearts
it is to get gain, to be praised of men
for the which ye do murder, and plunder... and do all manner of iniquity)

Ezra Taft Benson

“The two groups who have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet are the proud who are learned and the proud who are rich. The learned may feel the prophet is only inspired when he agrees with them; otherwise, the prophet is just giving his opinion speaking as a man. The rich may feel they have no need to take counsel of a lowly prophet.” (The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, pg. 138)

During this time of pride and wickedness, Nephi had proven himself to be completely obedient to the Lord

Helaman 10:3-7

3 And it came to pass as he was thus pondering—being much cast down because of the wickedness of the people of the Nephites, their secret works of darkness, and their murderings, and their plunderings, and all manner of iniquities—and it came to pass as he was thus pondering in his heart, behold, a voice came unto him saying:

4 Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with unwearyingness declared the word, which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hast sought my will, and to keep my commandments.

5 And now, because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will.

6 Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels, that ye shall have power over this people, and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people.

7 Behold, I give unto you power, that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;

and thus shall ye have power among this people.

What great power did the Lord entrust to Nephi?

(all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word
ye shall have power over this people
whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven...)

Elijah also received this sealing power. He restored it to Peter, James, and John on the mount of transfiguration and Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple

Henry B. Eyring

"April 3rd. That was the day in 1836 when Elijah, the translated prophet, was sent to the Kirtland Temple to give the sealing power to Joseph Smith and to Oliver Cowdery. Those keys reside in the Church today and will continue to the end of time.

"It is the same divine authorization given by the Lord to Peter, as He had promised: 'And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Matt 16:19)." (CR, April 2012)

Why did the Lord entrust Nephi with such great power?

(thou hast done this with such unwearyingness)
(thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will)

Henry B. Eyring

"Because of Nephi's preparation, God blessed him with power to fulfill his assignment. In His loving and empowering words to Nephi, there is a guide for us....

"That faith did not come in the moment when Nephi needed it, nor did God's trust in Nephi. He earned that great faith and God's confidence by courageous and sustained labor in the Lord's service. You young men are building that faith now for the days ahead when you will need it." (CR, Oct. 2009)

Nephi continues warning the people. And because of the power the lord granted him they could not imprison him or stop him from teaching.

Helaman 10:14-17

14 Therefore Nephi did declare unto them the word of the Lord, saying: Except ye repent, thus saith the Lord, ye shall be smitten even unto destruction.

15 And it came to pass that when Nephi had declared unto them the word, behold,

they did still harden their hearts and would not hearken unto his words; therefore they did revile against him, and did seek to lay their hands upon him that they might cast him into prison.

16 But behold, the power of God was with him, and they could not take him to cast him into prison, for he was taken by the Spirit and conveyed away out of the midst of them.

17 And it came to pass that thus he did go forth in the Spirit, from multitude to multitude, declaring the word of God, even until he had declared it unto them all, or sent it forth among all the people.

How was Nephi able to “send [God’s message and warning] forth among all the people”?

(he was taken by the Spirit and conveyed away
he did go forth in the Spirit, from multitude to multitude)

In the pride cycle what follows pride and wickedness?

Destruction and Suffering

War broke out in the land and continued for about two years but still the people would not member the Lord. So Nephi prays for a famine

Helaman 11:3-6

3 And it came to pass that in this year Nephi did cry unto the Lord, saying:

4 O Lord, do not suffer that this people shall be destroyed by the sword; but O Lord, rather let there be a famine in the land, to stir them up in remembrance of the Lord their God, and perhaps they will repent and turn unto thee.

5 And so it was done, according to the words of Nephi. And there was a great famine upon the land, among all the people of Nephi. And thus in the seventy and fourth year the famine did continue, and the work of destruction did cease by the sword but became sore by famine.

6 And this work of destruction did also continue in the seventy and fifth year. For the earth was smitten that it was dry, and did not yield forth grain in the season of grain; and the whole earth was smitten, even among the Lamanites as well as among the Nephites, so that they were smitten that they did perish by thousands in the more wicked parts of the land.

With the promise that the Lord would grant any request from Nephi, what did he ask the Lord to do?

(let there be a famine in the land)

Why did Nephi ask for the destruction of famine instead of the destruction of war?

(to stir them up in remembrance of the Lord their God, and perhaps they will

repent and turn unto thee)

The war would have caused the destruction of the people but not softened their hearts

In the pride cycle what follows warning by the prophets?

Humility and Repentance

Finally when the people began to believe that they would die from the famine they began to remember the Lord. Nephi asks the Lord to bless them again

Helaman 11:7-13

7 And it came to pass that the people saw that they were about to perish by famine, and they began to remember the Lord their God; and they began to remember the words of Nephi.

8 And the people began to plead with their chief judges and their leaders, that they would say unto Nephi: Behold, we know that thou art a man of God, and therefore cry unto the Lord our God that he turn away from us this famine, lest all the words which thou hast spoken concerning our destruction be fulfilled.

9 And it came to pass that the judges did say unto Nephi, according to the words which had been desired. And it came to pass that when Nephi saw that the people had repented and did humble themselves in sackcloth, he cried again unto the Lord, saying:

10 O Lord, behold this people repenteth; and they have swept away the band of Gadianton from amongst them insomuch that they have become extinct, and they have concealed their secret plans in the earth.

11 Now, O Lord, because of this their humility wilt thou turn away thine anger, and let thine anger be appeased in the destruction of those wicked men whom thou hast already destroyed.

12 O Lord, wilt thou turn away thine anger, yea, thy fierce anger, and cause that this famine may cease in this land.

13 O Lord, wilt thou hearken unto me, and cause that it may be done according to my words, and send forth rain upon the face of the earth, that she may bring forth her fruit, and her grain in the season of grain.

What did it take for the people to finally become humble enough to remember the Lord?

(the people saw that they were about to perish by famine, and they began to remember the Lord their God)

Ezra Taft Benson

“God will have a humble people. Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble. Alma said, ‘Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble.’ (Alma 32:16)...

“We can choose to humble ourselves by conquering enmity toward our brothers and sisters, esteeming them as ourselves, and lifting them as high or higher than we are... by receiving counsel and chastisement... by forgiving those who have offended us... by rendering selfless service... by going on missions and preaching the word that can humble others.... by getting to the temple more frequently... by confessing and forsaking our sins and being born of God... We can choose to humble ourselves by loving God, submitting our will to His, and putting Him first in our lives... Let us choose to be humble. We can do it. I know we can” (CR, April 1989)

What did the people do that caused the Lord’s “fierce anger” to be turned away?

(this people repenteth
they have swept away the band of Gadianton
because of this their humility)

What did Nephi do when he “saw that the people had repented and did humble themselves”?

(he cried again unto the Lord
wilt thou hearken unto me, and cause that it may be done according to my
words)

In the pride cycle what follows humility and repentance?

Righteousness and Prosperity

The Lord did bless them and they began again to prosper

Helaman 11:17-21

17 And it came to pass that in the seventy and sixth year the Lord did turn away his anger from the people, and caused that rain should fall upon the earth, insomuch that it did bring forth her fruit in the season of her fruit. And it came to pass that it did bring forth her grain in the season of her grain.

18 And behold, the people did rejoice and glorify God, and the whole face of the land was filled with rejoicing; and they did no more seek to destroy Nephi, but they did esteem him as a great prophet, and a man of God, having great power and authority given unto him from God.

19 And behold, Lehi, his brother, was not a whit behind him as to things pertaining to righteousness.

20 And thus it did come to pass that the people of Nephi began to prosper again in the land, and began to build up their waste places, and began to multiply and spread, even until they did cover the whole face of the land, both on the northward and on the southward, from the sea west to the sea east.

21 And it came to pass that the seventy and sixth year did end in peace. And the seventy and seventh year began in peace; and the church did spread throughout the

face of all the land; and the more part of the people, both the Nephites and the Lamanites, did belong to the church; and they did have exceedingly great peace in the land; and thus ended the seventy and seventh year.

Why do you think that humility and repentance leads to prosperity?

Humility causes us to put our trust in the Lord
Putting our trust in the Lord brings us the promised blessings?

In the pride cycle what follows righteousness and prosperity?

Pride and Wickedness

Let's read about how the state of the people declined in just five years

Helaman 11:36-37

36 And in the eighty and second year they began again to forget the Lord their God. And in the eighty and third year they began to wax strong in iniquity. And in the eighty and fourth year they did not mend their ways.

37 And it came to pass in the eighty and fifth year they did wax stronger and stronger in their pride, and in their wickedness; and thus they were ripening again for destruction.

What did the people do that caused them to be “ripening again for destruction”?

(they did wax stronger and stronger in their pride, and in their wickedness)

Orson Pratt

"If Zion sins, if her people suffer pride to arise in their hearts, and follow after the foolish fashions of the Gentiles who come into their midst, and are lifted up one above another, the rich and wealthy looking down upon the poor with scorn and derision because they cannot clothe themselves in the same costly apparel as the rich, and begin to make distinctions of classes among themselves, behold the Lord will visit Zion according to all her works, and he will purge her and pour forth his judgments upon her, according to that which he has spoken." (JD 15:329)

The Pride Cycle

Mormon often uses a phrase like “thus we see” to emphasize the lesson they want us to learn.

Helaman 12:1-3

1 And thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men; yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him.

2 Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people, yea, in the

increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind and art; sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity.

3 And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him.

What does the Lord do for “those who put their trust in him”?

(bless and prosper)

But what happens “at the very time... [God does] all things for the welfare and happiness of his people”?

(then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God)

Why do they forget their God?

(because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity)

What does the Lord have to do to get his people to remember him again?

(chasten his people with many afflictions)

Melvin J. Ballard

"We are in the age of self-indulgence. It beats upon our shores from all points. It is a deadly siege in an attempt to destroy... the integrity of this people. I recognize, with my brethren, that the sorest trials that have ever come to the Church in any age of the world are the trials of peace and prosperity.... But we are to do a new thing, a thing that never has before been done- We are to take the Church of Christ not only through the age of persecution and mob violence, but through the age of peace and prosperity. For we must learn to endure faithfully even in peace and prosperity. It is the sorest trial that will come to [us]." (CR, April 1929)

Mormon expounds on the natural man

Helaman 12:4-6

4 O how foolish, and how vain, and how evil, and devilish, and how quick to do iniquity, and how slow to do good, are the children of men; yea, how quick to hearken unto the words of the evil one, and to set their hearts upon the vain things of the world!

5 Yea, how quick to be lifted up in pride; yea, how quick to boast, and do all manner of that which is iniquity; and how slow are they to remember the Lord their God, and to give ear unto his counsels, yea, how slow to walk in wisdom's paths!

6 Behold, they do not desire that the Lord their God, who hath created them, should rule and reign over them; notwithstanding his great goodness and his mercy towards them, they do set at naught his counsels, and they will not that he should be their guide.

What can we do to remain in the “righteousness and prosperity” phase of the cycle and not give in to “pride and wickedness”?

Henry B. Eyring

"There is a simple cure for the terrible malady of forgetting God, His blessings, and His messages to us. Jesus Christ promised it to His disciples when He was about to be crucified, resurrected, and then taken away from them to ascend in glory to His Father. They were concerned to know how they would be able to endure when He was no longer with them.

"Here is the promise.... 'But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' (John 14:26)

"The key to the remembering that brings and maintains testimony is receiving the Holy Ghost as a companion. It is the Holy Ghost who helps us see what God has done for us. It is the Holy Ghost who can help those we serve to see what God has done for them." (CR, Oct. 2007)