

Chapter Ten

“THERE WAS ONE SAMUEL”

Possible Multiple Sources for the Samuel Narrative

Daniel L. Belnap

Daniel L. Belnap is a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University.

During the second day of Christ’s ministry to the New World, a curious event took place. Having taught and commented on a number of biblical texts, Christ then had Nephi₃ present his own record for review.¹ The inspection uncovered a missing event that Christ brought to the attention of the gathered disciples: “Verily I say unto you, I commanded my servant Samuel, the Lamanite, that he should testify unto this people, that at the day that the Father should glorify his name in me that there were many saints who should arise from the dead, and should appear unto many, and should minister unto them. And he said unto them: Was it not so?” (3 Nephi 23:9). The disciples responded that Samuel had indeed uttered that prophecy and that it had come to pass, which in turn led Christ to ask why there was no written confirmation of the prophecy’s fulfillment. The text then states that Nephi₃ “remembered that this thing had not been written” (v. 12) and promptly corrected the gap in the record. The narrative

concludes with Christ expounding “all the scriptures in one, which they had written” (v. 14). This event is intriguing for a number of reasons, not the least of which is Christ’s overt and explicit concern for proper record keeping and his desire for comprehensive harmonization of scripture. Yet perhaps most intriguing is the missing account that lies at the heart of this exchange.

From the text it is not clear whether it was the prophecy itself or the fulfillment of the prophecy that was missing.² A first reading might suggest it is the lack of a record concerning the prophecy’s fulfillment. Such a reading would assume that the prophecy was written down but that in the confusion associated with events surrounding Christ’s arrival the fulfillment of the prophecy had not been recorded. Another reading of the narrative, however, suggests that the prophecy itself was missing. If the latter is the case, it may reflect an even larger issue—namely, uncertainty about what exactly Samuel prophesied. This essay explores the implications of this second possibility, namely that the final form of the Samuel narrative is a construction utilizing a number of different sources and types of sources that led to later confusion in the narrative of 3 Nephi 23 and other narratives associated with Samuel’s prophecies, such as 3 Nephi 1 and Mormon 1–2.

SAMUEL’S TWO MINISTRIES AND NEPHITE MEMORY

According to the opening verses of Helaman 13, at some point in the eighty-sixth year of the reign of the judges a Lamanite named Samuel entered the land of Zarahemla “and began to preach . . . repentance unto the people” for “many days” (v. 2). Mormon recounts that after Samuel was cast out and on his way home, “the voice of the Lord came unto him, that he should return again, and prophesy unto the people whatsoever things should come into his heart” (v. 3). What follows was Samuel’s supposed final ministerial discourse delivered from the walls of Zarahemla and comprising the rest of chapter 13 and all of chapters 14 and 15. The narrative ends in chapter 16 with Samuel leaving the wall and returning to “his own country,” where he “began to preach and to prophesy among his own people” (v. 7).

Chronologically, the narrative fits within the surrounding text of the book of Helaman, yet questions arise as to who exactly provided the narrative. While the text is silent on this matter, the reader is told that following his ministry to Zarahemla, Samuel is “never heard of more among the Nephites” (Helaman 16:8), suggesting that he did not leave a record behind.³ The only source that Mormon mentions explicitly concerning his abridgment is the “record of Nephi,” which included the writings of Nephi₂, who was a contemporary of Samuel; yet it is not clear whether Nephi₂ was even present for Samuel’s teachings.⁴ According to Helaman 16:3–4, the reader is told that those who believed on Samuel’s words “went away unto Nephi to be baptized,” perhaps indicating that Nephi₂ was not in the immediate vicinity of Samuel. Thus if Nephi₂’s record of the eighty-sixth year included Samuel’s ministry, it would likely have been constructed by eyewitnesses to the ministry of Samuel (presumably the same who came to Nephi₂ following their viewing of Samuel), but not by Nephi₂ himself.⁵ It is also possible that other accounts exist outside the record by Nephi₂. Though Mormon states that the record of Nephi was his primary source material, it is clear that he supplemented parts of his abridgment with other sources when he apparently felt it necessary.⁶ Thus it is possible that Samuel’s narrative was cobbled together from multiple sources, including Nephi₂’s or multiple witnesses in Nephi₂’s record. As we will see, this may explain elements in the Samuel narrative such as multiple variations of prophecies, switches in voice and pronoun usage, and even differing details.

The lack of a text authored by Samuel himself may also explain another feature of the narrative: the apparent conflation of some material from Samuel’s first sermon into the second. As noted above, Mormon states that Samuel’s ministry should be understood as two events: his first visit, which ended abruptly with his rejection, and his second, final sermon delivered from the walls of Zarahemla. It appears that even as he focused on the final sermon, Mormon included content of the earlier ministry. According to Helaman 13:7, near the beginning of his sermon Samuel declared: “And behold, an angel of the Lord hath declared it unto me and he did bring glad tidings to my soul. And behold I was sent unto you to declare it unto you also, that ye might have glad tidings; but behold ye would not receive

me.” Mormon had already noted that this first visit had lasted “many days” (v. 2); thus in his first ministry in the land of Zarahemla, Samuel declared “glad tidings” for “many days.” Rejection of those teachings led to the more somber message that characterizes Samuel’s second ministry, reflecting a pattern of prophetic activity found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon.⁷ Yet, as will be seen in greater detail below, those “glad tidings,” which seem to be the teachings constituting the majority of chapter 14 and are situated in the middle of the second sermon, suggest a conflation of both sermons in Mormon’s final version.

HELAMAN 14 AND THE “GLAD TIDINGS” PROPHECIES

Though presented as a continuation of Samuel’s final sermon from chapter 13, the opening of Helaman 14 is the first indication that this may not be the case. In verse 1 Mormon notes, “Now it came to pass that Samuel, the Lamanite, did prophesy a great many more things which cannot be written.” It is unclear whether this means that Samuel prophesied many things that the Lord told Mormon not to record or that Mormon was unable to record them because he lacked the source material to do so. The last possibility is intriguing since it would suggest that Mormon was aware of other literary or oral traditions concerning Samuel but did not have any sources at hand to represent those traditions. Regardless, the insertion of Mormon’s editorial voice effects a hard break between chapter 13 and chapter 14, suggesting that what follows the insertion is not in fact a continuation of Samuel’s final sermon comprising chapter 13.⁸

Following his editorial break, Mormon quotes Samuel’s words concerning signs of Christ’s birth, followed by a doctrinal declaration emphasizing their origin from an angel:

And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall believe on the Son of God, the same shall have everlasting life. And behold, thus hath the Lord commanded me, by his angel, that I should come and tell this thing unto you; yea, he hath commanded that I should prophesy these things unto you; yea, he hath said unto me: Cry unto this people, repent and prepare the way of the Lord. (Helaman 14:8–9)

As these verses suggest, the angel’s commission entailed three themes: the declaration that all who believe on the Son of God will have everlasting life (“this thing”), the prophecies of Christ’s birth (“these things”), and the call to repentance and preparation of the way of the Lord. While not described as “glad tidings,” these three themes fit the context of “glad tidings” found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon.

The phrase “glad tidings” is found nine times in the Book of Mormon and in every instance is associated with a prophecy of Christ’s coming, often followed by a call to repentance so people could experience the salvation that Christ made possible. Several references to these glad tidings explicitly connect this prophecy to angelic ministration, similar to how the angel pronounced glad tidings to Samuel. In Mosiah 3:3, for example, King Benjamin relates that an angel appeared to him and declared “glad tidings of great joy.” And speaking to the people of Ammonihah, Alma₂ cried:

Now is the time to repent, for the day of salvation draweth nigh; yea, and the voice of the Lord, by the mouth of angels, doth declare it unto all nations . . . that they may have glad tidings of great joy. . . . Angels are declaring it unto many at this time in our land; and this is for the purpose of preparing the hearts of the children of men to receive his word at the time of his coming in his glory. And now we only wait to hear the joyful news declared unto us by the mouth of angels, of his coming. (Alma 13:21–22, 24–25)

Later, to his son Corianton, Alma₂ stated that Christ’s coming to take away the sin of the world may be considered part of the glad tidings, while also noting that the sending of angels to declare “these glad tidings” was in fact happening during their day. In Helaman 5:11, Helaman₂ is reported to have said that God sent angels “to declare the tidings of the conditions of repentance, which bringeth unto the power of the Redeemer, unto the salvation of their souls.” In Helaman 16:14, Mormon recounts that in the ninetieth year of the reign of the judges “angels did appear unto men, wise men, and did declare unto them glad tidings of great joy.” If Samuel’s “glad tidings” are similar to those taught elsewhere, then his original sermon prophesied of Christ’s coming and the need for those assembled to repent so they could fully experience his coming.

Indeed, just such a prophecy immediately follows Mormon’s editorial break. Yet, instead of one prophecy, no fewer than six prophecy variants are expressed in verses 2–7, four of which parallel one another. Significantly, while they all generally address the coming of Christ, each one differs from the others. Repetitions, interruptions, inconsistencies, and additions all characterize verses 2–7, where these prophecies are found. The presence of these elements suggests that Mormon incorporated multiple sources and was attempting to smooth out the differences.⁹ The six prophecies are featured below:

Helaman 14:2	Helaman 14:3	Helaman 14:4a	Helaman 14:4b	Helaman 14:5	Helaman 14:6–7
<p>Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name.</p>	<p>And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming; for behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day.</p>	<p>Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign;</p>	<p>And this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know of the rising of the sun and also its setting; therefore, they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; nevertheless the night shall not be darkened; (and it shall be the night before he is born).¹⁰</p>	<p>And behold, there shall a new star arise, such as one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you.</p>	<p>6. And this is not all, there shall be many signs and wonders in heaven. 7. And it shall come to pass that ye shall all be amazed, and wonder, insomuch that ye shall fall to the earth.</p>

As the chart demonstrates, though there are clearly thematic similarities between four of the six passages, they exhibit significant differences as well. The first prophecy in verse 2 simply provides a specific chronological marker to the event of Christ’s birth into the world. As such it belongs to a category of Book of Mormon prophecy characterized by chronological specificity. The first such prophecy is recorded in 1 Nephi 10:4, where Nephi₁ paraphrases his father’s prophecy that six hundred years following the departure of Lehi from Jerusalem “a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews—even a Messiah, or in other words, a Savior of the world.” Nephi₁ himself receives a similar prophecy and places it in his record in 1 Nephi 19:8. Nephi₁ repeats the prophetic theme later in 2 Nephi 25:19: “According to the words of the prophets, the Messiah cometh in six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem.”¹¹ This specific chronological prophecy is not mentioned anywhere else in the Book of Mormon. Other chronological prophecies include what could be termed the four-hundred-year prophecy as recorded in Alma 45:10 and Helaman 13:5, 9 (which will be discussed in greater detail below) and the five-year prophecy of Helaman 14:2.

The second prophecy—Helaman 14:3—is another prophetic text, one announcing another sign. The clause “behold, this will I give unto you for a sign,” following so closely after the initial use of the clause (“behold, I give unto a sign”) in verse 2, is awkward and suggests that a closer look at the relationship between verses 2 and 3 is merited. There are two ways to read the presence of the clausal doublet. One is to see the text of the second sign as a qualifier of the first, indicating the subordination of verse 3 to verse 2. When read this way, the second sign’s purpose is to indicate when the first sign was to take place; that is, one would know when the five years had been fulfilled (the first sign) when great lights in the sky erase darkness during the night (the second sign). Another way to read the second sign is that it indicates another prophetic tradition that Mormon assigned to the prophetic Samuel narrative. The possibility of multiple sources is strengthened by the next set of prophetic texts.

Verse 4 is yet another version of the sign and its attendant prophecy. Unlike verse 3, which begins with the same introductory clause as verse 2, verse 4 begins with the conjunctive adverb *therefore*, suggesting that it was

written as an expansion on the prophecy in verse 3. Yet, subject-wise, verse 4 is concerned with the temporality of the sign, with two different temporal markers. Verse 4a speaks of the separate time periods of day and night (“one day and a night and a day”), while 4b includes the measurement of day and night via the setting and rising of the sun. The two are separated by the clause “and this shall be unto you for a sign,” suggesting that 4a was to be understood as an expansion of the prophecy variant in verse 3, while 4b would be another variant altogether.¹²

More striking is the change between second person to third person following a second *therefore*, which follows the second temporal variant. According to Mormon’s narrative, Samuel’s audience, the Nephites in Zarahemla during the eighty-sixth year of the reign of the judges, would be present for the culmination of the prophecy five years later. Thus Samuel’s audience is associated with the prophecy through the use of second person pronouns—for example, “this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know . . .” Yet, following the second *therefore*, the next pronoun referring to an audience is *they*: “therefore, they shall know of a surety . . .” The change is jarring because it requires the reader to assume that Samuel had a completely different understanding of who would be present for the signs between one line to the next.¹³ Rather than assuming confusion on the part of Samuel, it is likely that the reader is confronting yet another variant of the prophecy, this time drawn from an account that narrates the prophecy in the third person. The verse concludes with the line “and it shall be the night before he is born.” This is the first time any aspect of the prophecy and its variants are tied directly to the birth of Christ. The prior versions had simply indicated that the sign would mark the coming of Christ. In fact, as we shall see, it appears that many believed the sign to mark the imminent arrival of Christ. In terms of its relationship with the rest of the verse, its inclusion seems abrupt and does not completely fit the overall subject matter of the verse. In light of this, it is possible that the conclusion of verse 4 reflects an editorial assertion that will provide continuity between the Samuel narrative and the narrative in 3 Nephi 1 concerning the fulfillment of the prophecy.

The pronouns change back to second person in Helaman 14:5, which introduces the final sign: “And behold, there shall anew star arise, such an

one as ye never have behold; and this also shall be a sign unto you.” The relationship between this sign and the signs in verses 3 and 4 is unclear. The introductory clause “and behold” may suggest a new literary unit, thereby suggesting that this new sign follows consecutively after the others, although the lack of a temporal marker makes this uncertain. One is left wondering whether the star’s appearance would take place at the same time as the night without darkness (suggesting the star was the cause of the light) or if it would follow the night without darkness (the star appearing in the nighttime sky the next night and thereafter). If it is the first alternative, it would contradict the sign given in verse 3 about multiple lights, not one. This possible contradiction may explain the final clause, “and this also shall be a sign unto you.” As in the preceding verses, the clause seems to function as a literary marker indicating another variant. Moreover, like the last clause of verse 4, this one too feels abrupt and may reflect Mormon’s awareness that this last prophecy differs from the others, even contradicting the prophecy in verse 3, thus requiring the addendum clause to demonstrate literary continuity.

The prophetic sequence concludes with the promise that there would be “many signs and wonders in heaven” and that those gathered would be “amazed, and wonder, insomuch that [they would] fall to the earth” (vv. 6–7). Contextually, these last prophecies are grouped with the prophecies associated with Christ’s birth, yet as we will see, they do not need to be explicitly tied to that event. At this point the reader has been introduced to six different prophetic variants:

1. Verse 1 simply notes that in five years Christ would come.
2. Verse 2 provides a sign that at Christ’s coming there would be great lights in heaven that would be so bright that the night in which they would appear would not be dark.
3. Verse 4a states there would one day, one night, and one day appearing as one day.
4. Verse 4b notes that one would know the passing of time because the sun would go down and would rise, even as it remained light.

5. Verse 5 declares that a new star would arise, one that no one had seen before.
6. Verses 6–7 state there would be many signs and wonders and that at some point the gathered people would fall prostrate.

Besides these prophecies, there appears to have been at least one later editorial addition: the end of verse 4 notes that the sign concerning the night of light would take place on the night before Christ was born. Two of them are introduced with the clause “I give unto you a sign,” while one, perhaps two, is concluded with a similar construction, “this shall be a sign unto you.” Only one is explicitly tied to the birth of Christ. The complexity demonstrated appears to be more than is rhetorically necessary in an actual preaching situation. It seems, in other words, more likely that the text was compiled from multiple sources than that Samuel was a confused orator.¹⁴ What’s more, the description of the events preceding Christ’s birth found in 3 Nephi 1 may further indicate that the inconsistencies and repetitions found in Helaman 14:1–5 do, in fact, reflect multiple sources.

3 NEPHI 1 AND THE “WORDS OF THE PROPHETS”

According to Mormon, the events surrounding Christ’s birth took place sometime during the ninety-second year of the reign of the judges. During that year, he writes, “the prophecies of the prophets began to be fulfilled more fully; for there began to be greater signs and greater miracles wrought among the people” (3 Nephi 1:4). Some of the people, however, had begun to believe that “the time was past for the words to be fulfilled, which were spoken by Samuel the Lamanite” (v. 5). The reason for this disbelief is not especially clear. According to Helaman 13:2 and 16:9, both of Samuel’s ministries appear to have taken place in the eighty-sixth year of the reign of the judges, and thus the chronology of the fulfillment (that Christ would come in five years, the ninety-first year), at least, seems fairly straightforward.¹⁵

It is possible that the confusion was the result of multiple calendrical systems. There were at least two dating systems used during the ministries of Samuel and Nephi:² (1) the six-hundred-year calendar that began

with the original Lehiite colonists, based on prophecy concerning Jesus Christ’s arrival in the New World; and (2) the calendar inaugurated following the abolition of the Nephite monarchy and the installation of the judgeship system, ninety one years before the events in 3 Nephi 1. Nothing necessarily indicates that these two calendars were offset from the other, but it is possible that the beginning of the year for each calendar differed from the other, thus rendering confusion as to when to start the five-year countdown.

Another possibility, though, is that the confusion was the result of uncertainty concerning the original utterance of the prophecy. We have already noted that there were at least two ministries by Samuel, the earlier ministry associated with a set of prophecies referred to as “glad tidings” and the later ministry on the wall of Zarahemla. While both took place in the same year, it is clear that some time separated the two ministries (see Helaman 13:2). If the prophecies concerning Christ’s birth were originally given in the first ministry, then confusion might have arisen as to when to count the beginning of the five-year period. More importantly, though, as Mormon notes, it was not just Samuel’s prophecies that were coming to pass; there was also fulfillment of prophecies from “the prophets” more broadly.

Reference to these generic “prophets” is found throughout the entire narrative, including the description of the event itself in 3 Nephi 1:15–16:

At the going down of the sun there was no darkness; and the people began to be astonished because there was no darkness when the night came. And there were many, who had not believed **the words of the prophets**, who fell to the earth and became as if they were dead, for they knew that the great plan of destruction which they had laid for those who believed in **the words of the prophets** had been frustrated; for the sign which had been given was already at hand.

While the description in 3 Nephi 1:16 shows apparent dependence on Helaman 14:3–4, nowhere does it associate the sign with Samuel. Instead it is the more general “words of the prophets” that are associated with the prophecy, and it is the words of these prophets that are not believed by

those now witnessing the fulfillment. Similarly, in the next verse we are told that all people “upon the face of the whole earth from the west to the east, both in the land north and in the land south, were so exceedingly astonished that they fell to the earth. For they knew that **the prophets** had testified of these things for many years” (3 Nephi 1:17–18). The entire event concludes with Mormon noting the fulfillment of the sign concerning a night without darkness in this manner: “And it had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to **the words of the prophets**” (v. 20).

The prevalence of reference to the “prophets” or “the words of the prophets” when referring to the signs and their fulfillment in 3 Nephi 1 suggests that more prophets than Samuel alone had prophesied of these things and that distinguishing Samuel’s prophecies from those of the others was not a simple task. Even when Samuel is mentioned explicitly in the narrative, it is not clear precisely which variant of Samuel’s prophecy is being referenced. For example, in 3 Nephi 1:9 Samuel is associated with a sign (“except the sign should come to pass, which had been given by Samuel the prophet”), but it is not clear which of the signs mentioned in Helaman 14 is being alluded to. It may be inferred that the sign in question is the night without darkness mentioned in Helaman 14:3–4, but that simply is not made explicit.

As noted earlier, none of Samuel’s prophecies (with the possible exception of the one in Helaman 14:4b) associate the sign directly with the birth of Christ. Instead, Helaman 14:2–3 simply notes that the sign would indicate Christ’s coming. In fact, it appears that some people assumed the sign indicated an imminent visit, rather than marking Christ’s birth. According to Mormon, some “began to fear because of their iniquity and their unbelief” (3 Nephi 1:18), believing that “the Son of God must shortly appear” (v. 17). This suggests that not everyone understood the prophecies to reference Christ’s birth. So even though that event’s fulfillment is explicitly associated with Samuel’s prophecy, it is not clear which of the prophetic variants specifically predicted it. Nor is it clear that the event was understood as fulfillment of Samuel’s prophecy even as it happened. Instead, the prophetic fulfillments are recognized as related to the “prophets.”

In light of this, it is possible that confusion had arisen because of uncertainty as to which variant represented Samuel’s original prophecy.

If 3 Nephi 1 is correct, it seems there were other prophets foretelling the same events as Samuel, and assuming that there was no original “Samuel” record (as noted by the number of prophetic variants in Helaman 14), determining what was original Samuel prophecy versus prophecy from his contemporaries may have been an issue when recording the fulfillment of the Samuel prophecies. This same type of confusion concerning authentic Samuel prophecy and variants seems to have been in play with the prophecy concerning the opening of the graves and the raising of the dead that lies at the heart the exchange between Christ and Nephi³, as recorded in 3 Nephi 23.

HELANAN 14 AND THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST’S DEATH

Along with the “glad tidings” prophecies associated with Christ’s coming, Helaman 14 contains a second set of Samuel’s prophecies that focused on Christ’s death: “And behold, again, another sign I give unto you, yea, a sign of his death” (v. 14). Following a brief excursus on the relationship between resurrection and repentance, the sign is provided. In many ways it is a mirror version of the sign concerning Christ’s birth: “In that day that he shall suffer death the sun shall be darkened and refuse to give his light unto you; also the moon and the stars; and there shall be no light upon the face of this land, even from the time that he shall suffer death, for the space of three days, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead” (v. 20). The sign is then followed by a series of prophecies, all addressing events that would take place during the three days of darkness. Verse 21 can be broken in half. While 21a speaks of “thunderings and lightnings for the space of many hours” as well as an earthquake, 21b–22 is its own unit, bookended by mention of “rocks which are upon the face of this earth, which are both above the earth and beneath,” the related prophecy stating that these rocks will be “broken up.” Verse 23 then relates that there will be “great tempests, and . . . many mountains laid low” and valleys that will become mountains. Verse 24 contains a prophecy concerning highways being broken up and cities made desolate. The final prophecy in this sequence is in verse 25 and is the one mentioned in the introduction of this chapter: “Many graves

shall be opened, and shall yield up many of their dead; and many saints shall appear unto many.”

This prophetic sequence is concluded by a repetition of some, but not all, of the prophetic events mentioned above: “And behold, thus hath the angel spoken unto me; for he said, unto me that there should be thunderings and lightnings for the space of many hours. And he said unto me that while the thunder and the lightning lasted, and the tempest, that these things should be, and that darkness should cover the face of the whole earth for the space of three days” (Helaman 14:26–27). This scriptural block (vv. 20–27), like the prophecies concerning Christ’s coming, suggests multiple sources, though unlike the first prophetic sequence in verses 1–7, there is only one prophetic variant, the summative account in verses 26–27. Notably, the summative variation is ascribed to the words of the angel associated with Samuel’s first ministry and mentions only the storm phenomena with the three days of darkness. The other prophetic elements mentioned in 21b–25, such as the earthquakes, destruction of cities, and the opening of graves, are not mentioned. Yet their presence elsewhere in the Book of Mormon may indicate Mormon’s editorial hand at work.

As others have noted, the prophetic sequence in Helaman 14:20–23 shows remarkable similarities to prophecies ascribed to the prophet Zenos. In 1 Nephi 19:10, Nephi₁ referenced the writings of Zenos “which he spake concerning the three days of darkness, which should be a sign given of [Christ’s] death unto those who should inhabit the isles of the sea.” Other phenomena associated with the prophetic sequence in Helaman 14 are found in Zenos’s writings, such as “thunderings and . . . lightnings,” “tempest,” “the opening of the earth,” “mountains which shall be carried up,” and “the rocks of the earth” rending (1 Nephi 19:11–12).¹⁶ Thus it is possible that parts of the prophecies ascribed to Samuel were actually borrowed from Zenos. Moreover, verses 21b–22 in Helaman 14 contain a prophecy that appears to have been imbedded within the larger sequence comprising verses 20–25. Bookended with the clause “above the earth and beneath,” the prophecy beginning in 21b and concluding in 22 exhibits a chiasmic structure that does not engage with the other elements of the larger literary sequence, suggesting that its origin is elsewhere.

The presence of both replications and omissions between the prophetic sequence in verses 20–25 and the summative variant in verses 26–27 makes it difficult to define exactly what the relationship is between the two passages. While the latter does not include any of the prophecies from verses 21b–25, Samuel suggests the angel alluded to them, noting that during the storm phenomena “these things should be” (v. 27).¹⁷ The clause, then, suggests that all of the prophecies mentioned before would take place during the storm and the three days of darkness, including the prophecy concerning the opening of graves. While the clause may provide continuity between the prophecies of verses 20–25 and those of verses 26–27, it creates a theological problem for the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the opening of graves by suggesting that it took place before Christ’s resurrection, an outcome that directly contradicts other Nephite prophecy.¹⁸ As we shall see, it is this discrepancy that lies at the crux of Christ’s and Nephi₃’s discussion. A close reading of both Helaman 14:25 and Christ’s version of the prophecy in 3 Nephi 23:9 will elucidate the discrepancies further.

3 NEPHI 23 AND THE TWO VERSIONS OF THE PROPHECY

As noted in the introduction, the dialogue between Christ and his disciple in 3 Nephi 23 centers on the fulfillment of Samuel’s prophecy about the raising of the dead. While it is understandable that the reader would associate the prophecy with the one in Helaman 14:25, a close reading reveals that the prophecy referenced by Christ differs from the one in Helaman 14. According to the account in 3 Nephi 23, following a sermon grounded in Isaianic prophecy, Christ states that he would like Nephi₃ to write scripture “that ye have not” (v. 6). Christ then says, “Verily I say unto you, I commanded my servant Samuel, the Lamanite, that he should testify unto this people, that at the day that the Father should glorify his name in me that there were many saints who should arise from the dead, and should appear unto many, and should minister unto them” (v. 9). While the gist of the prophecy is the same in both the Helaman version and Christ’s version, a side-by-side comparison may assist us in recognizing some of the differences:

Helaman 14:25

And many graves shall be opened,
and shall yield up many of their dead,
and many saints

shall appear unto many.

3 Nephi 23:9

At the day that the Father should
glorify his name in me

that there were many saints
who should arise from the dead,
and should appear unto many,
and should minister unto them.

One of the key differences is the placement of the prophecy's fulfillment chronologically. As noted above, in Helaman 14 the prophecy anticipates its own fulfillment during the three-day destruction, yet in 3 Nephi 23 Christ states that fulfillment occurred when "the Father should glorify his name" in Christ. Unfortunately, it is not immediately clear to what—or, more to the point, to *when*—this phrase refers, but there are two instances, in 3 Nephi 9 and 11, that mention the Father's name being glorified. The first is in 3 Nephi 9:15, when at some point during the three-day darkness following the death of Christ his voice is heard speaking from heaven. Among the many pronouncements made by this voice is the following theological formula: "I am in the Father and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name" (v. 15b). The past tense would seem to indicate that the glorifying had already taken place, though the text gives no indication as to the precise moment of glorification. At the very least, however, this passage suggests that the glorification event took place during the three-day darkness, thus aligning with the timeline of Helaman 14. Even so, the theological problem remains since the opening of graves would still have taken place before the Resurrection. Fortunately, a more appropriate chronology can be traced through 3 Nephi 11, where Christ's descent was prefaced by an audible experience in which a voice declared, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name" (v. 7). Unlike the earlier reference, 3 Nephi 11 provides an explicit moment following Christ's resurrection when the Father himself was heard declaring that he had glorified Christ.

Another difference between the two texts is that Christ, in using the phrase "arise from the dead," implies that the prophecy addressed

resurrection. While resurrection may be inferred in the Helaman version, the phrases “graves shall be opened” and “yield up many of the dead” found in Helaman 14:25 are not associated with resurrection anywhere else in the Book of Mormon. “Arising/rising from the dead,” on the other hand, is commonly used elsewhere to refer to resurrection.¹⁹ Earlier teachings in the Book of Mormon had informed the people that a general resurrection would take place only after the resurrection of Christ. Lehi taught his son Jacob that Christ would be “the first that should rise,” bringing about the resurrection of all (2 Nephi 2:8). Abinadi declared that “if Christ had not risen from the dead . . . there could have been no resurrection” (Mosiah 16:7). In similar manner, Alma₂ taught the Zoramites that Christ would “rise again from the dead, which shall bring to pass the resurrection” (Alma 33:22). More explicitly, Alma₂ told his son Corianton that “this mortal does not put on immortality, this corruption does not put on incorruption—until after the coming of Christ” (Alma 40:2).²⁰ These references all point to a fulfillment of Samuel’s prophecy after Christ’s resurrection, with the righteous being resurrected, a chronological sequence that works in Christ’s version of the prophecy and does not in the Helaman version.²¹

What the discrepancies above suggest is that Christ’s version appears to fit the narrative better and, more importantly, the theological considerations associated with the prophecy. Moreover, they provide a possible reason for why the prophecy’s fulfillment had not been recorded by Nephi₃. If the textual order of the prophecies had already been arranged in their present order by the time of the prophecy’s fulfillment, it may have been that Nephi₃ was aware of the chronological and theological discrepancies caused by the prophecy’s placement and therefore was unsure how to reconcile the fulfillment and the prophecy. Christ’s version resolved the tension between the fulfillment and the prophecy, suggesting that the Samuel prophecy concerning the dead that Nephi₃ was familiar with was not the one originally given to Samuel. Thus the exchange in 3 Nephi 23 demonstrates that there is a general awareness of Samuel and his ministry before Christ’s arrival, but the discrepancies between the version of the prophecy concerning the dead in Helaman 14 and the version referenced by Christ suggest that at some point before 3 Nephi 23 a prophecy was

ascribed to Samuel that may not have been the actual prophecy delivered by Samuel.

Yet if Christ's version reflects the actual prophecy of Samuel, we are left with the question of where the Helaman 14 variant originated. I have tentatively suggested that, like the prophecies about the signs of Christ's coming, the block of text comprising Helaman 14:20–27 reflects the use of multiple sources. This may include not only versions of Samuel's ministry from different eyewitnesses, but also prophetic traditions from prophets other than Samuel that were ascribed to Samuel because of the difficulty of distinguishing between them and the Samuel tradition. Mormon gives just such tradition in a small summary he placed at the end of the Samuel narrative—one involving Nephi₃'s own father, Nephi₂.

In Helaman 16:1–5, readers learn that those few who believed on Samuel's words sought out Nephi₂ in order to be baptized, apparently doing so while Samuel was still on the wall:

And now, it came to pass that there were many who heard the words of Samuel, the Lamanite, which he spake upon the walls of the city. And as many as believed on his word went forth and sought for Nephi. . . . But as many as there were who did not believe in the words of Samuel were angry with him; and they cast stones at him upon the wall, and also many shot arrows at him. . . . Now when they saw that they could not hit him, there were many more who did believe on his words, insomuch that they went away unto Nephi to be baptized. For behold, Nephi was baptizing, and prophesying, and preaching, crying repentance unto the people, . . . telling them of things which must shortly come, that they might know and remember at the time of their coming that they had been made known unto them beforehand, to the intent that they might believe.

As the excerpt suggests, Nephi₂ was a contemporary of Samuel whose own prophetic ministry consisted of independently exhorting the people to repentance and prophesying of things that would shortly come to pass, the same prophetic themes of Samuel's ministry. Further, it appears that Nephi₂ was responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of "all the records . . . which had been kept sacred from the departure of Lehi out of Jerusalem"

(3 Nephi 1:2), a responsibility that seems to have included writing his own material on the selfsame records. In light of the similarities of prophetic message, the contemporary ministries, Nephi₂'s responsibility as writer of the primary source for Mormon's own version, and the presumed lack of a text by Samuel himself, it is possible that at least one of the other prophetic traditions conflated with Samuel's ministry was that of Nephi₂. Unfortunately, Nephi₂ himself was unavailable to clarify. According to 3 Nephi 1, at some point in the ninety-second year of the reign of the judges, Nephi₂ turned over all the records to his son, Nephi₃, and walked out of the land, never to be heard again.

Whether or not the prophetic texts of Helaman 14:20–25 reflect Nephi₂'s ministry specifically, the uncertainty exhibited in the narratives concerning the fulfillment of Samuel's prophecies (3 Nephi 1 and 23), as presented above, suggests that by the time of Nephi₃'s stewardship there was already difficulty determining what was authentically “Samuel.” Because Samuel does not seem to have written his own record, Nephite reconstruction of his ministry would have relied on the impressions and memories of eyewitnesses to the ministry, which would have differed from one witness to another. Moreover, Mormon demonstrates that there were other prophets, some of them Samuel's contemporaries such as Nephi₂, whose prophecies dealt with the same themes and subjects that Samuel treated. These prophecies may have been confused with Samuel's and included in the reconstruction of his ministry that resulted in the form of Helaman 14 as we have it now.

HELANMAN 13: THE CURSE(S) AND THE INTENDED AUDIENCE(S)

While the discussion above so far has focused on the text of Helaman 14, placed first in this study because of its relationship with the “glad tidings” associated with Samuel's earlier ministry, Helaman 13, which includes prophecies from Samuel's second sermon, is also not without its difficulties. Like Helaman 14, Helaman 13 exhibits features such as duplication, inconsistencies, and additions that suggest multiple sources were used in its construction, as we will see by reviewing two primary prophetic passages, verses 5–11 and 18–38.

The first of the text blocks, verses 5–11, sets a somber tone for the prophecies associated with Samuel’s second sermon. As noted earlier, after the people rejected his earlier ministry and the glad tidings that characterized that first sermon, Samuel returned to Zarahemla, prophesying “unto the people whatsoever things the Lord put into his heart” (v. 4). The sermon begins with a prophecy concerning the eventual destruction of the Nephite people:

5. Behold, I, Samuel, a Lamanite, do speak the words of the Lord which he doth put into my heart; and behold he hath put it into my heart to say unto this people that the sword of justice hangeth over this people; and four hundred years pass not away save the sword of justice falleth upon this people.

6. Yea, heavy destruction awaiteth this people, and it surely cometh unto this people, and nothing can save this people save it be repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ who surely shall come into the world, and shall suffer many things and shall be slain for his people. (Helaman 13:5–6)

Though it may seem a minor matter, the prophecy as that which God “put into [Samuel’s] heart” appears to be a significant marker associated with Samuel’s final sermon. It is mentioned three times in verses 3–5, both as part of Mormon’s summary of the events and, as demonstrated above, as part of Samuel’s actual words. As for the meaning of “put into the heart,” the phrase is found elsewhere and seems to refer to a convincing suggestion or impression that brings about a change of thinking or behavior.²² Intriguingly, it is not used in any other prophetic narrative to denote the reception of revelation and prophecy and thus indicates the unique nature of Samuel’s ministry as compared to that of other Book of Mormon prophets.²³

This becomes significant in the next verse as Samuel then purports to say that an angel—the same angel associated with the glad tidings of Samuel’s first sermon and the prophecies of Helaman 14—“hath declared it unto me” (v. 7). The past tense suggests that one is to read the pronoun *it* as referring to the prophecy just provided. Thus we have two revelatory origins for the same prophecy: inspired impression and direct speech by

an angel. While a second angelic visit to Samuel fits a prophetic narrative form found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, the insistence by Mormon that the prophecy also arose from that which was “put into” Samuel’s heart suggests that we are, again, confronted with multiple sources, the inconsistency perhaps arising from the conflation of both sermons in the minds of witnesses recounting the entire ministry later.

Unfortunately, the scriptural block is not made any easier since the next three verses provide a variant to the original prophecy in verses 5–6:

8. Therefore, thus saith the Lord: Because of the hardness of the hearts of the people of the Nephites, except they repent I will take away my word from them, and I will withdraw my Spirit from them, and I will suffer them no longer, and I will turn the hearts of their brethren against them.

9. And four hundred years shall not pass away before I will cause that they shall be smitten; yea, I will visit them with the sword and with famine and with pestilence.

10. Yea, I will visit them in my fierce anger, and there shall be those of the fourth generation who shall live, of your enemies, to behold your utter destruction; and this shall surely come except ye repent, saith the Lord; and those of the fourth generation shall visit your destruction. (Helaman 13:8–10)

While both prophecy variants, verses 5–6 and 8–10, share elements, such as a call to repentance and a statement that destruction would take place four hundred years later, verses 8–9 are not written as Samuel’s inspired thought or referenced as prophecy received through an angel. Instead, all of the prophecy is presented as direct speech from God himself. It is, of course, possible that the divine direct speech is what the angel is presumed to have said explicitly. The clause “thus saith the Lord” is associated with prophetic discourse elsewhere in which the messenger, either prophet or angel, delivers the message as if he is God himself.²⁴ Yet while this clause often indicates direct, divine speech, it is also used at times to indicate earlier prophetic statements by others. For instance, in 2 Nephi 28:30, Nephi₁ prefaces his paraphrase of Isaiah 28:13 with exactly these words. Similarly, in Jacob 2:23–33 the phrase appears frequently as Jacob

references the words of his father, Lehi.¹ Thus the presence of the clause in Helaman 13:8 may indicate a citation of earlier Nephite prophecy. Regardless, the presence of the clause suggests a break in the text that may indicate another source.

Another indication that the prophecy in Helaman 13:8–10 represents another source is the inclusion of a prophecy concerning the “fourth generation” who would witness this destruction, which is not included in verses 5–6. Thus verses 8–10 contain two prophetic variants that are associated temporally, the first noting destruction four hundred years hence and the second noting that this would take place among the “fourth generation.” Intriguingly, both variants appear together in one other Book of Mormon prophetic text. In Alma 45, before turning stewardship of the plates over to his son Helaman,¹ Alma₂ delivered a similar prophecy to Helaman 13:8–10.

Alma 45:10–12

10. Behold, I perceive that this very **people, the Nephites**, according to the spirit of revelation which is in me, in **four hundred years** from the time that Jesus Christ shall manifest himself unto them, shall dwindle in unbelief.
 11. Yea, and then shall they see wars and **pestilences**, yea, **famines** and bloodshed, even until the people of Nephi shall become extinct—
 12. . . . yea, I say unto you, that from that day, even the **fourth generation** shall pass not all pass away before this great iniquity shall come.

Helaman 13:8–10

8. Therefore, thus saith the Lord: Because of the hardness of the hearts of **the people of the Nephites**, except they repent I will take away my word from them, and I will withdraw my Spirit from them, and I will suffer them no longer, and I will turn the hearts of their brethren against them.
 9. And **four hundred years** shall not pass away before I will cause that they shall be smitten; yea, I will visit them with the sword and with **famine** and with **pestilence**.
 10. Yea, I will visit them in my fierce anger, and there shall be those of the **fourth generation** who shall live, of your enemies, to behold your utter destruction; and this shall surely come except ye repent, saith the Lord; and those of the fourth generation shall visit your destruction.

While it is possible that the texts indicate two separate but identical prophetic traditions, the similarities exhibited above, along with the introductory clause “thus saith the Lord” used to indicate the use of earlier prophets in a sermon and the fact that this specific set of prophecies is found nowhere else in the Book of Mormon, suggest that Helaman 13:8–10 may have been borrowed from the writings of Alma₂. Narratively, the assumption then would be that Samuel was aware of Alma₂’s prophecy and reused it in his own sermon. Yet Alma₂ himself seems to rule that out since he prefaced his prophecy with instruction to keep it private (“what I prophesy unto thee ye shall not make known,” Alma 45:9) until it was fulfilled.

Another possibility is that Mormon was responsible for inserting the allusion to Alma₂’s prophecy into his Samuel narrative. Since the prophecy was not fulfilled in the year of Samuel’s ministry, and therefore would have been unknown by virtue of the injunction, it was fulfilled in Mormon’s day, thus rendering the prophecy available to a larger audience.²⁵ As noted above, Samuel’s words in Helaman 13:5–6, echoed in Mormon’s narrative in verses 3–4, came about through a unique revelatory method unlike any other prophetic message recorded in the Book of Mormon, and that distinguished and separated Samuel from other, earlier prophets.²⁶ In light of this, Mormon may have placed earlier, conventional Nephite prophecy like Alma₂’s after Samuel’s initial prophecy to demonstrate that Samuel’s prophetic legitimacy was on par with the Nephite prophetic tradition, even if it was received in a completely unique manner.²⁷

The prophecy in verses 8–10 is then followed in verse 11 by two more “thus saith the Lord” passages. The first emphasizes a theme that appears at the end of the prophecy in verse 13—namely, that the Lord will turn away his anger if the people repent. While the call for repentance is quite common in Book of Mormon prophetic texts, its association with God’s anger, which is either visited upon or turned away from the people, is not: “But if ye will repent and return unto the Lord your God I will turn away mine anger, saith the Lord” (v. 11a). In fact, this association of repentance with the turning away of divine anger appears only in two other prophetic narratives.²⁸ As with verses 8–10, the clause “thus saith the Lord,” coupled with a prophecy that is rare but attested in earlier Nephite

prophecy, suggests that the material in verse 11a may have come from other, non-Samuel sources.

This claim is even stronger in the case of the second “thus saith” passage in the latter half of Helaman 13:11: “Yea, thus saith the Lord, blessed are they who will repent and turn unto me, but wo unto him that repenteth not.” Unlike verse 11a and verses 5–6 and 8–10, verse 11b does not even appear to be literarily the same form as the prophetic passages that preceded it. Instead it more closely resembles a proverb with a blessing declaration followed by a woe declaration. Thematically, the second passage is even more general than the first, the message simply being that those who repent will be blessed, while those who do not repent receive no such blessing. This theme is too general to trace its prophetic antecedents in the Book of Mormon. Yet the adverb that precedes it, *yea*, may be understood to have the meaning of “also” or “and again,” suggesting that this passage was added or appended to the text in order to complement the theme of that which preceded it (v. 11a, or even vv. 5–6 or 8–10). The function of the adverb *yea* and the use of the literary proverb form alongside the now familiar “thus saith the Lord” clause suggest that this passage, too, may best be understood as a citation of a text deriving from someone other than Samuel.

Thus the first prophetic section of Helaman 13, verses 5–11, appears to comprise the following elements:

1. verses 5–6, which appear to be an original prophecy of Samuel;
2. verse 7, which introduces a variation to the revelatory origin of Samuel’s prophecies by associating the prophecies of Samuel’s final sermon with the angel of his first sermon;
3. verses 8–10, which are a variant of the original prophecy and may be an addition by Mormon paraphrasing prophecy from Alma₂;
4. verse 11, which may be broken into two sections, 11a and 11b, both perhaps citations from other, heretofore unknown Book of Mormon sources.

While similar to Helaman 14’s construction in terms of its indications of multiple sources, this block from Helaman 13 appears to exhibit more redactional changes by Mormon directly, particularly the use of other prophetic traditions instead of variants to the Samuel narrative. Perhaps this is due to the unique revelatory manner in which Samuel received his prophecies for the second sermon and Mormon’s desire to demonstrate continuity between Samuel and earlier Nephite prophets.

The second prophetic sequence in Helaman 13 to be reviewed in this study is verses 17–38. It addresses a curse to be placed on the land and exhibits redactional elements suggestive of multiple sources. The cursing sequence begins in verse 17: “And behold, a curse shall come upon the land, saith the Lord of Hosts, because of the people’s sake who are upon the land, yea, because of their wickedness and their abominations.” A curse against or on the land is not new in the Book of Mormon, and a comparison of the prophecy in verse 17 with other Book of Mormon references to curses against the land indicates that this prophecy was well within keeping of general Book of Mormon prophecy.²⁹ Yet the similarity changes abruptly in verse 18, which goes into greater detail about the nature of the curse.³⁰ Verse 18 reads thus: “And it shall come to pass, saith the Lord of Hosts, . . . that whoso shall hide up treasures in the earth shall find them again no more, because of the great curse of the land, save he be a righteous man and shall hide it up unto the Lord.”³¹ Presented as direct, divine speech, the curse is now associated with treasure, as one’s treasures will not be able to be found because of the curse on the land itself.

While no Nephite curse declaration preceding Samuel’s prophecy had alluded to this type of consequence, the Jaredite record described a similar experience. According to Ether 14:1–2, “there began to be a great curse upon all the land because of the iniquity of the people, in which, if a man should lay his tool or his sword upon his shelf, or upon the place wither he would keep it, behold, upon the morrow, he could not find it, so great was the curse upon the land.” Though laying aside an object is not the same as burying it in the ground, the loss of the object corresponds with the inability to find it again, making it is possible that the curse in Helaman 13:18 was influenced by the Jaredite text. Yet the end of the verse contains a confusing addendum: “save he be a righteous man, and shall hide it up

unto the Lord.” While this caveat may foreshadow the burying of the plates by Ammoron and Moroni, there is no description of this type of activity in the Book of Mormon before then.³²

Curiously, however, it is that very praxis that is the heart of the next verse: “For I will, saith the Lord, that they shall hide up their treasures unto me; and cursed be they who hide not up their treasures unto me; for none hideth up their treasures unto me save it be the righteous; and he that hideth not up his treasures unto me, cursed is he, and also the treasure, and none shall redeem it because of the curse of the land” (Helaman 13:19). Again, the verse is couched as direct speech, but like verse 11b, it does not appear to reflect a prophetic literary structure; instead it reads as instruction, with the Lord specifying that “treasures” ought to be hidden up to him, and those that are not will be cursed, along with their owners. Presumably the curse referenced in verse 19 entails the same experience mentioned in earlier verses: an inability to redeem or relocate the treasure.

Functionally, verse 19 seeks to explain the caveat ending verse 18, but it is more aligned with a second variant of the prophetic curse recorded in verse 20: “And the day shall come that they shall hide up their treasures, because they have set their hearts upon riches; and because they have set their hearts upon their riches, and will hide up their treasures when they shall flee before their enemies; because they will not hide them up unto me, cursed be they and also their treasures; and in that day shall they be smitten, saith the Lord.” Aligning with the instruction that precedes it, the prophecy in verse 20 emphasizes the hiding up of one’s treasure, both the acceptable form (hiding it up unto God) and the unacceptable form (not doing so). The prophecy also specifies the reason for the curse in the first place, namely, that setting one’s heart on riches leads to not hiding up treasures unto God. Intriguingly, nothing is mentioned in verse 20 about the land being cursed; instead the emphasis is on the people and the treasure, similar to the instruction in verse 19. Finally, this curse variant additionally describes the circumstances in which the curse will take place: when the people “shall flee” their homes because of invading armies. Thus the curse variant in verse 20 has less to do with the disappearance of buried items and instead simply reflects a more mundane loss of territory, which would make one unable to return and “find” one’s treasure again.³³ In any

case, the similarities between the instruction in verse 19 and the second prophetic variant in verse 20, both bookended by the words “saith the Lord,” suggest the two are a coherent unit separate from the prophecy in verse 18.

The unit is followed by a prophecy now directed specifically to Samuel’s contemporary audience: “Behold ye, the people of this great city, and hearken unto my words; yea, hearken unto the words which the Lord saith; for behold, he saith that ye are cursed because of your riches, and also are your riches cursed because ye have set your hearts upon them” (Helaman 13:21). Here, too, are signs of later redactional work. For instance, unlike the earlier prophecies predicting a curse upon the Nephites in the future, this last declaration in verse 21 suggests that the curse was *already* in place. In other words, instead of being a prophecy of a future time, verse 21 suggests that the Nephites were already experiencing a curse concerning riches. Moreover, since the reasons for the curse was the Nephite love of riches, this prophecy seems dependent on the verses 19–20 unit, rather than the verses 17–18 unit (which mentions only general wickedness and abominations as the impetus for the curse).³⁴

Intriguingly, though the reasons for the curse described in verse 21 are provided—namely, that Samuel’s contemporaries were under the curse because they had set their hearts upon riches—and presumably going on at the time of Samuel’s sermon, there is no corollary narration of the curse’s effects, unlike the subsequent narratives in 3 Nephi 1 and 23 concerning the fulfillments of the prophetic sequences in Helaman 14. It is not stated explicitly, for instance, that the people were in fact unable to “hide up” and then find their treasures. Thus it is unclear how exactly the curse described in Helaman 13:21 and presumably borne by Samuel’s audience was being experienced. Its proximity to verses 19–20, along with the similarity in terms of the curse conditions, suggests that verses 19–20 inform the actual curse experience described in verse 21. Yet if Samuel is presumably indicating to his audience that they are in fact under the curse already, as verse 21 indicates, then verses 19–20 and the future tense that runs throughout them cannot originate from Samuel. All this—the different literary form of verse 19, the different conditions of the curse contrasting with the curse conditions in verse 18, and the apparent application of this curse variant

in verse 21—suggest that verses 18–19 come from an earlier prophetic text that Samuel was now applying to the Nephites in Zarahemla during the eighty-sixth year of the reign of the judges.

The contemporary cursed state of the Nephites is expanded further in Helaman 13:23–24, where Samuel suggests that the love of riches has led the Nephites to ignore the words of the prophets, including himself. The Nephite willingness to accept false prophets while rejecting true ones has led, according to Samuel, to the Lord’s anger being already kindled against them, resulting in the land being cursed (see v. 30). Again, like verse 21, the curse declared in verse 30 was presumably already being experienced, similar to the prophetic announcement in verse 21. Yet even as this pronouncement is given, it is followed by another prophecy set in the future: “And behold, the time cometh that he curseth your riches, that they become slippery, that ye cannot hold them” (v. 31). This third variant of the future curse introduces a new element—the slipperiness of one’s treasure rather than the burying of it, which corresponds to the general curse of inability to hold or retain one’s riches.

This variant is followed by Samuel uttering a hypothetical lament of the curse’s future victims.³⁵ In that lament, the slipperiness of one’s treasure is associated with its being hidden up: “Behold, we lay a tool here and on the morrow it is gone; and behold, our swords are taken from us in the day we have sought them for battle. Yea, we have hid up our treasures and they have slipped away from us, because of the curse of the land” (vv. 34–35). The lament ends with a denunciation proclaiming that when these things happen the “days of probation are past; ye have procrastinated the day of your salvation until it is everlastingly too late, and your destruction is sure” (v. 38).³⁶ The chapter ends with a return to the current era with Samuel exhorting the people to repent and be saved.

Thus, by the end of chapter 13, the reader is confronted with at least four different curse variations:

1. verses 17–18, which introduce a curse defined by an inability to find one’s treasure after it has been buried, with the curse to be experienced at some point in the future;

2. verses 19–20, which introduce a future curse in which people will not be able to recover their treasures because they are fleeing their enemies;
3. verses 21–23, a curse that is contemporarily being experienced by Samuel’s audience and seems to be the curse variant found in verses 19–20;
4. verses 30–36, which introduce a future curse defined by people’s treasures becoming slippery.

These variants—along with the disparities in the timing of their fulfillment, the presence of a different literary form when describing the curse in verse 19, and the relationship between verses 19–20 and verses 21–23—suggest that, again, multiple sources were used in constructing Helaman 13.

The possibility of other prophetic traditions being used in the formation of the Samuel narrative, specifically here the curse of Helaman 13, is strengthened again by looking beyond the narrative itself to other passages in the Book of Mormon, in particular Mormon’s own book, which shows dependence on the third curse variant in Helaman 13:30–36. Mormon alluded to Samuel and the curse in his own record twice. According to Mormon 2:10, around the time that 330 years had passed since the sign(s) of Christ’s birth, “the Nephites began to repent of their iniquity, and began to cry even as had been prophesied by Samuel the prophet; for behold no man could keep that which was his own.” Though it does not mention the hiding up of treasure explicitly, this description appears to be alluding to the last curse variant found in Helaman 13:31–36 rather than the earlier antecedents in Helaman 13:18 and 20, as one might expect by virtue of their placement earlier in Samuel’s sermon. Similarly, the Helaman 13:31–36 variant lies behind Mormon 1:18–19 and its overt mention of the slipperiness of the treasure and the inability of the Nephites to “hold them”: “And these Gadianton robbers, who were among the Lamanites, did infest the land, insomuch that the inhabitants thereof began to hide up their treasures in the earth; and they became slippery, because the Lord had cursed the land, that they could not hold them, nor retain them again.” In both these instances, the explicit association of Samuel with the third variant of the prophecy (Helaman 13:30–36) suggests that perhaps

only this third version of the prophecy could be identified by Mormon as authentic “Samuel” prophecy.

If this is the case, then the other two variants may indicate either other sources, such as eyewitness accounts similar to what is found in Helaman 14, or perhaps supplemental prophecies used to demonstrate continuity between Samuel and earlier Nephite prophets, similar to the function of Helaman 13:8–11 proposed above. Interestingly, Mormon hints of such a relationship by associating the fulfillment of the curse prophecy with both Samuel and Abinadi: “And it came to pass that there were sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics; and the power of the evil one was wrought upon all the face of the land, even unto the fulfilling of all the words of Abinadi, and also Samuel the Lamanite” (Mormon 1:19). Nowhere in the Abinadi narrative, as we have it now, is there a prophecy concerning either the cursing of the land or of negative magic praxis.³⁷ But the Abinadi narrative does contain warnings against hearts set on riches. Close proximity of *heart(s)* and *riches* is found only fifteen times in the Book of Mormon, eleven of these in the clause “set their heart(s) upon riches.” Of these eleven, seven could be classified as part of a prophetic narrative.³⁸ Two of these are found in the Abinadi narrative, with another two found in Helaman 13. Of the two in the Abinadi narrative, the first is used by Mormon as part of his description of the wickedness of King Noah: “And it came to pass that he placed his heart upon his riches” (Mosiah 11:14). The second is direct speech accorded to Abinadi himself: “Why do ye set your hearts upon riches . . . that the Lord has cause to send me to prophesy against this people, yea, even a great evil against this people?” (12:29). While it may be presumed that Abinadi’s rhetorical question refers to the prophecies uttered in Mosiah 11 (namely, the captivity of those recolonizing the land of Nephi), Mormon’s association of Abinadi with the curse in Mormon 1, the relationship between the curse and hearts set on riches, and Abinadi’s declaration that a negative prophecy was the result of the Nephites setting their hearts on their riches suggest that Helaman 13:19–20 may be dependent on an Abinadi prophecy heretofore not attested in the Book of Mormon.

In any case, like Helaman 14, Helaman 13 exhibits features indicative of multiple sources and editorial redaction, including multiple versions

of at least two primary prophecies, multiple literary forms, and switches in time frame from a current audience to a distant future audience.³⁹ While some of this may be simply rhetorical devices used by Samuel to emphasize the prophetic message he was sent to deliver, at least two blocks (verses 9–11 and 19–20) appear to utilize earlier prophetic traditions. In all, it appears that the Samuel narrative in Helaman 13 was as creatively reconstructed as Helaman 14.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above, it may not be hyperbole to say that the Samuel narrative is one of the (if not *the*) most complex narratives in the Book of Mormon. Its multiple prophetic variants, repetitions, inconsistencies, narrative breaks, and specific terminology suggest that it was pieced together from different sources by Mormon, which would likely have included eyewitnesses of Samuel’s ministry as well as earlier Nephite prophetic traditions. It is significant that Samuel was the only Lamanite prophet that Mormon included in the Book of Mormon, providing a unique prophetic voice. Even if the prophecies in Helaman 14 associated with Christ’s birth represent the recall of eyewitnesses to Samuel’s ministry and are therefore secondhand, they are unparalleled in the prophetic texts chosen by Mormon for his abridgment. Additionally, Mormon took great pains to ensure that readers understand that Samuel’s prophecies actually came to pass, not only narrating their fulfillment but often explicitly referencing Samuel by name as the source of the prophecy. Thus, not only did the inclusion of other prophetic voices, both contemporary to Samuel and earlier, alongside the variants of Samuel’s ministry given by eyewitnesses harmonize Samuel’s unique voice with the earlier Nephite prophetic tradition, but it in fact placed Samuel at the center of Nephite prophecy. In light of this, the question becomes why Mormon felt that he needed to do so.

Perhaps it is was to confirm that Samuel was in fact a prophet. As noted above, 3 Nephi 1 and 23 suggest there was uncertainty as to what exactly Samuel said, possibly leading some to question whether or not Samuel was a prophet. Mormon’s reconstruction of Samuel’s ministries, no doubt influenced by Christ’s interest in the teachings of Samuel, would have stood as a testament to the reality of this singular prophet. It is also

possible that Mormon's interest in Samuel reflects a desire to describe a righteous Lamanite, foreshadowing the future restoration of the Lamanite people to the gospel, a staple of Nephite prophecy. Whatever the reason, the result is a rich, complex narrative of one of the more interesting persons to grace the pages of Mormon's record.

NOTES

1. The subscript number following the name *Nephi* identifies which Nephi is being discussed. The Book of Mormon includes three persons who share the name. Nephi₁ was the son of Lehi₁ and one of the original settlers. Nephi₂ was the Nephite prophet from the fifty-third to the ninety-second year of the reign of the judges. Nephi₃ was the son of Nephi₂ and is the prophet mentioned throughout 3 and 4 Nephi.
2. Brant Gardner explores the different interpretations in his commentary. See Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 5:172–74.
3. Gardner notes the same problem but does not provide a solution other than to say that “it still must have been written somewhere because the record is fairly detailed.” See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 5:174.
4. 3 Nephi 5:9–10: “But behold there are records which do contain all the proceedings of this people; and a shorter but true account was given by Nephi. Therefore I have made my record of these things according to the record of Nephi, which was engraven on the plates which were called the plates of Nephi.” The assumption is that the larger record is the large plates of Nephi used and added to throughout Nephite history to this point. On that record were the writings of both Nephi₂ and Nephi₃.
5. This would be similar to Joseph Smith's later sermons, of which there is no single version but multiple versions. See *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, comp. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1980).
6. For instance, Mormon uses personal correspondence in Alma 54, 56–61 to supplement the account of the Lamanite-Nephite war. Also, 3 Nephi 17–18 appears to indicate that multiple sources were used by Mormon to describe the events of Christ's first-day ministry.

7. As noted by Charles Swift in his essay in this volume, the two ministries of Samuel follow a type-scene of the returning prophet also seen in the prophetic ministries of Abinadi and Alma₂. Not only does the Samuel narrative follow the same type in terms of scene (as I will demonstrate later in this paper), but the prophecies of Abinadi and Alma₂ appear to have been utilized by either Samuel, who would then have been fully aware of the prophecies, or Mormon, who was deliberately establishing a relationship between Samuel and these two earlier Nephite prophets.
8. Pauline A. Viviano, “Source Criticism,” in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 35, 57: “Intrusions into a text—breaks in the sequence of events or interruptions in the progression of thought—are seen as evidence that works by various authors have been combined by later redactors” (p. 37). In the case of Helaman 13–14, I am suggesting that the editorial break signals reliance not on various authors but on various versions of Samuel’s teachings.
9. Viviano, “Source Criticism,” 37: “Multiple versions of the same basic story, as well as repetitions within a story, are taken as further proof that more than one author’s work lies behind the present form of a text.”
10. The separation of this line from the rest of verse will be explained later in this essay.
11. It is unclear to which sources Nephi₁ is alluding, since the only prophetic figures associated with the prophecy directly at this time are Lehi and Nephi₁ himself. Interestingly, Nephi₁ states later that “after the Messiah shall come there shall be signs given unto my people of his birth, and also of his death and resurrection” (2 Nephi 26:3). Samuel and his ministries as written by Mormon would qualify as fulfillment of Nephi₁’s prophecy, yet there is no sign given to foreshadow Christ’s resurrection anywhere in the Book of Mormon record as we have it. Moreover, the verse in question suggests that signs will be given after the birth of Christ in order to testify that Christ had been born (“and after the Messiah shall come there shall be signs given unto my people of his birth”).
12. With this said, it is unclear to which of the two sections the introductory clause is referring, either concluding the first expansion or beginning the second. In light of this, it is possibly a Janus parallelism variant meant to include both phrases. Normally, Janus parallelisms revolve on one word, which can have more than one meaning and thus change the overall meaning of the given construction

- (for more on Janus constructs in the Book of Mormon, see Paul Y. Hoskisson, “Janus Parallelism: Speculation on a Possible Poetic Wordplay in the Book of Mormon,” in *To Seek the Lord: Essays in Honor of John W. Welch*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson (Orem, UT: Interpreter Foundation, 2017), 151–60. Either way, the presence of the introductory clause suggests another prophecy variant; either 4b or 4a (if the latter, than 4b would be an expansion on the 4a variant).
13. Skousen addresses this issue in volume 5 of his series *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2004–2009). He notes that unlike a similar construction in 3 Nephi 3:15, there is no subordinate conjunction preceding that would allow for a shift to an indirect quotation. His conclusion is as follows: “Ultimately, it seems that the original text occasionally had shifts in person. As an example of this, see the discussion under Alma 56:52” (p. 3114). The citation alluded to by Skousen appears to be a redactional comment made by Mormon placed in the middle of his copy of Helaman’s letter. There, though, the switch is apparent, meaning that it is clear to the reader that one is reading a redaction (it is prefaced by “and it came to pass”). In this case, the switch is placed within direct speech by Samuel with no indication of purposeful redaction outside the switch itself.
 14. These narratological and stylistic differences are what one expects to see if multiple sources are in play. Joel S. Baden, in *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), makes the following observation: “The hallmark of a unified composition, one created by a single author, is internal consistency: consistency of language and style, consistency of theme and thought, and above all, consistency of story. Every narrative makes certain claims about the way events transpired—who, what, when, where, how, and why. When these elements are uniform throughout a text, there is no pressing need to inquire as to its unity. In the Pentateuch, however, historical claims made in one passage are undermined or contradicted outright in another. The problems identified by the Reformation scholars are the same as those we struggle with today and can be classified in three major overlapping groups: contradictions, doublets, and discontinuities” (p. 16). With that said, it is worth noting that while “contradictions, doublets, and discontinuities” are the hallmark clues used in source criticism, it is certainly a possibility that the variations reflect a confusing, though unified, sermon by Samuel. As biblical scholar Philip Yoo has noted, “Readings of the biblical text are open

- to contestation, and this certainly applies to the identification of literary problems—contradictions included—that are to some degree a value judgment exercised of each exegete.” Philip Y. Yoo, “The Place of Deuteronomy 34 and Source Criticism: A Response to Serge Frohlov,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 3 (2014), 661–68, esp. 662.
15. Neal Rappleye addresses this same issue in his article “‘The Time Is Past’: A Note on Samuel’s Five-Year Prophecy,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 29 (2018): 21–30. He suggests the uncertainty can be explained by understanding Mesoamerican timekeeping systems, in particular the *ho’tun*, or five-year period. Complicating the counting of the *ho’tun* was the apparent use of two yearly calendars that did not have the same number of days. Thus, for Rappleye, the confusion would have arisen because of uncertainty over which yearly calendar should be counted. This is, of course, possible, though the record itself does not suggest a different year count by day.
 16. See Quinten Barney, “Samuel the Lamanite, Christ, and Zenos: A Study of Intertextuality,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 18 (2016): 159–70. Barney notes the use of Zenos’s words in the Samuel narrative and posits that Samuel would have been well aware of Zenos, as evidenced by the Helaman 15:11 reference. Yet that reference may be problematic in terms of authorship because the pronoun usage (similar to the pronoun change in Helaman 14:4) differs from what one would expect. For the most part, throughout the speeches of Samuel, the pronoun usage is what one expects. Samuel, an outsider, speaks to his audience either addressing them as “this people” or in the second person plural (“you” or “ye”). Yet in two instances the first person possessive pronoun *our* is used. The first instance is in Helaman 13:18, where the pronoun is used to provide commonality between the audience and speaker regarding a particular title of Deity: “saith the Lord of Hosts, yea, our great and true God.” The second instance is in 15:11–12, where *our* is used three times. Again, the pronoun usage indicates commonality between speaker and audience, but in this case the commonality includes common lineage between the two. While “our fathers” can refer to the common heritage between Nephites and Lamanites, the designation of the Lamanites as “our brethren” twice is more challenging because seven verses earlier Samuel refers to the Lamanites as “my brethren” (v. 4). This, of course, may simply be a rhetorical device; it may also indicate a later Nephite gloss associating the prophecies of Samuel with another Nephite prophetic tradition.

17. There is one prophetic element in the 21b–25 sequence that may have been also reflected in the 26–27 sequence. Verse 23 mentions that there would be “great tempests,” while verse 27 includes “tempest” in its list of events. Although the two terms are obviously similar, they are not the same (the former being plural, with the latter being singular). The account of the actuality of these events (3 Nephi 8–10) is also inconsistent in its usage of the terms. In fact, 3 Nephi 8 appears to struggle with reconciling four different terms. The destruction sequence begins in verse 5 with mention of “a great storm.” Verse 6 then notes, “And there was also a great and terrible tempest,” suggesting a distinction between the two phenomena (see Gardner, *Second Witness*, 5:303). Verse 12 mentions the “tempest” again, this time associating it with “whirlwinds.” Verse 16 speaks of “the whirlwind” without any mention of either storm or tempest. Verse 17 then references “tempests,” similar to Helaman 14:23. Finally, verse 19 lists both “the storm, and the tempest.” Interestingly, no meteorological phenomena is mentioned in Christ’s list of cities with their attendant form of destruction, recorded in 3 Nephi 9. But in 3 Nephi 10, such phenomena is repeated again in a summation of all destructive phenomena in verses 13 and 14. Verse 13 notes “the whirlwind,” while verse 14 is another summation, this time mentioning both “tempests” and “whirlwinds.” While the inconsistent use of “tempest” and “tempests” may reflect mistakes in the translation process of the Book of Mormon (see Skousen, *Analysis*, 5:3314), the inconsistent use of “whirlwind,” “whirlwinds,” and “storm” may reflect different sources to the events itself. The mention of “storm” twice—in 3 Nephi 8:5, where it is referenced on its own and associated with a specific date, and in 3 Nephi 8:19, where it is referenced alongside “tempest”—may reflect one tradition, while the references to “whirlwind” and “whirlwinds” (referenced in 3 Nephi 8:12, 16; 10:13–14) reflect at least one other source (possibly two, if the singular and plural versions indicate a difference in the text itself and not just a translation error).
18. *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, Maxwell Institute Study Edition*, ed. Grant Hardy (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2018), 451n25c: “This part of Samuel₂’s prophecy was apparently added in response to the Lord’s command at 3 Ne 23.6–13; nevertheless, it would fit better chronologically if it had been inserted at the end of v. 27.”
19. Many of the references using *rise* or *arise* in association with the dead refer to Christ’s rising (see 1 Nephi 10:11; 2 Nephi 2:8; 25:13–14; Mosiah 3:10; 16:7;

- Alma 33:22). Others, such as 2 Nephi 9:7–8 and Alma 11:41 and 12:8, use the term to refer to the general resurrection.
20. Alma₂ notes to his son later that he personally believed that all who died before Christ were resurrected at the same time. Regardless, even this personal belief demonstrates that he believes none are resurrected, or risen from the dead, before the resurrection of Christ.
 21. Christ’s version also clarifies what the resurrected would do, which may in turn allow for a resolution to the presumed lack of description concerning the prophecy’s fulfillment by Mormon even after relating the conversation between Nephi₃ and Christ. According to Christ, the resurrected would not simply appear but “minister.” While there is no explicit account of a group designated as “saints” who interacted with the living during the proceedings of Christ’s theophany, 3 Nephi 17 does recount an event in which those gathered were ministered to by angels. Whether or not an angel was understood to have been a mortal at one time is not exactly clear in the Book of Mormon, but Jacob does suggest that one could become an angel following death. In 2 Nephi 9:8–9, describing what would happen if there was no Resurrection, Jacob states that one would become “angels to a devil.” This would not be ideal, of course, but it does indicate that the conception of an angel was, at least at some level, associated with being mortal first. Thus it is feasible that the ministering of the angels recorded in 3 Nephi 17 was the promised ministering of the risen Saints promised in Christ’s prophecy. If so, then a description of the fulfillment is not lacking; the fulfillment just had not been recognized, partly because of the difficulties arising in the Samuel narrative.
 22. See Alma 10:30; 50:29; Helaman 6:26; 28–29; Ether 8:17.
 23. John Hilton III, Sunny Hendry Hafen, and Jaron Hansen noticed the same distinction in their study “Samuel and His Nephite Sources,” *BYU Studies* 56, no. 3 (2017): 115–39. A revised version of this study appears in this volume.
 24. See Clause Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, trans. Hugh Clayton White (Cambridge, MA: Lutterworth Press; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1991), 102. See also Donald W. Parry, “‘Thus Saith the Lord’: Prophetic Language in Samuel’s Speech,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (1992): 181–83. Parry notes at least six different prophetic speech forms throughout the Samuel narrative. In “Samuel and His Nephite Sources” (see note 22 above), Hilton III, Hafen, and Hansen note that the clause is used more in Samuel’s narrative than in any other part of the Book of Mormon (p. 137). I would like

- to thank my colleague George Pierce for his insight into the role of this form in Helaman 13.
25. It appears that Mormon and Moroni took seriously the restrictions placed on texts by God or earlier prophets. Throughout 3 Nephi, Mormon states that he was about to write more but was commanded not to. Moroni's version of the Jaredite record appears to have still adhered to the injunctions placed on the record by Alma₂, as recorded in Alma 37.
 26. The phrase "put into the heart" was used to describe the influence of Satan on the Jaredites and on Gadianton concerning the formation and development of secret combinations (see Helaman 6:26, 28–29). If the phrase was used in this negative fashion by Mormon earlier, he may have felt it important to demonstrate that Samuel was still part of the normative Nephite prophetic tradition even though the prophecies of his second ministry came about through a unique means.
 27. In "Samuel and His Nephite Sources," Hilton III, Hafen, and Hansen see in the Samuel narrative borrowings in terms of terminology and phraseology from a number of earlier Nephite prophets. While they presume that Samuel was the author, they acknowledge that these uses may reflect Mormon as redactor. They suggest that Mormon might have done this because (1) it would demonstrate the continuity of prophetic messages across time, and (2) a "striking framework of comparisons, delivered by a Lamanite," highlighted the wickedness of the Nephites and accentuated the contrast between the Nephites and the righteous Lamanites (p. 136).
 28. Alma₂ and Amulek are told to declare that unless the people of Ammonihah repented they would be visited by God's anger (see Alma 8:29; 9:12). Likewise, in the Abinadi narrative the theme of God's anger is found twice; the first reference involves a prophecy warning the people that if they did not repent they would be visited by God in his anger (see Mosiah 11:20), while the second, delivered two years later, informs the people that the earlier, conditional prophecy was no longer conditional: "they have repented not of their evil doings; therefore, I will visit them in my anger, yea, in my fierce anger will I visit them in their iniquities and abominations" (Mosiah 12:1).
 29. The first time a curse on the land is mentioned is in 1 Nephi 17:35, when Nephi₁ explains to his brothers that Syro-Palestine had been cursed against the Canaanite inhabitants, resulting in their destruction and the eventual inheritance of the land by the Israelites. The first mention of a curse on the land in regard to the

New World occurs in 2 Nephi 1:7 when Lehi warns his sons that the land will be cursed “if iniquity shall abound.” Jacob twice references a potential curse on the land, each time noting that it would come about through unrighteousness. Interestingly, the first reference, Jacob 2:29, is presented as a “thus saith” declaration, with God referred to as the “Lord of Hosts,” the same title used in Helaman 13:17. To Jacob’s son, Enos, the Lord mentions a curse in connection with the land: “I have given unto them [the Nephites] this land, and it is a holy land; and I curse it not save it be for the cause of iniquity” (Enos 1:10). No mention of a curse on the land is mentioned again in the text until the last year of Alma₂’s ministry, when he refers to a curse on the land three times. The first two are found in his instructions to his son Helaman₁ and concern the Jaredite record. Alma₂ states that the land was cursed for those who were “workers of darkness” and part of secret combinations (see Alma 37:31). The curse would be experienced through destruction. His last mention is in his final prophetic instruction to Helaman₁, as recorded in Alma 45, in which he declares, “Cursed shall be the land, yea, this land, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people unto destruction, which do wickedly” (v. 16). Similar to the curse in Helaman 13:7, these earlier passages, for the most part, either do not mention the specific consequences of the curse or refer to it generally as “destruction.” Thus Helaman 13:17 fits well within recognized Nephite prophecy.

30. Interestingly, both verses 17 and 18 use a title of God, “the Lord of Hosts,” not used anywhere else in the Samuel narrative, suggesting that they may be from other sources. The use of different nomenclature for God is one of the primary evidences used to suggest multiple sources in the Pentateuch (see Viviano, “Source Criticism,” 44–45). Interestingly, almost all references to the Lord of Hosts in the Book of Mormon are found in citations of biblical passages.
31. This type of consequence was mentioned in Helaman 12:18 as one of the examples of God’s omnipotence. Though it comes before Samuel’s ministry, the entire chapter is commentary by Mormon, which would have been influenced by events or examples that preceded Mormon, such as Samuel’s ministry.
32. The Book of Mormon has only two accounts of burying items of worth. The first were the weapons buried by the Anti-Nephi-Lehies in Alma 24; the second account is in Helaman 11:10, which mentions the burying of the Gadianton robbers’ “secret plans in the earth.” Neither case fits the parameters of hiding up one’s treasure unto the Lord. In the first, the Anti-Nephi-Lehies have no desire to regain the buried weapons, and in the second, it is likely that the Gadianton

robbers did not conceal their secret plans with the understanding that they were doing so “unto the Lord.” Moreover, by Helaman 11:26, the reader is told that later groups did “search out all the secret plans of Gadianton,” meaning the texts were unburied and used later. Thus the caveat does not appear to reflect any actual praxis.

33. The underlying understanding of the curse as a loss or inability to regain something may in fact give insight into the Nephite curse on the land in general. As noted above, Nephi₁ first mentions a curse on the land in regard to the Canaanites, who were destroyed, as opposed to the Israelites, who were “blessed” by obtaining the land. If obtaining the land is the opposite of destruction, then destruction entails the inability to retain. Thus it is possible that the concept of “curse” was understood to be the inability to retain a thing, whether it was land or an object or even the Spirit of God.
34. The reasons provided for the curse in verses 17–18 may have reference to secret combinations. See Daniel L. Belnap, “‘They Are of Ancient Date’: Jaredite Traditions and the Politics of Gadianton’s Dissent,” in *Illuminating the Jaredite Records*, ed. Daniel L. Belnap (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2020), 1–42, specifically 7–12.
35. For more on the Samuel’s use of the lament form in Helaman 13, see S. Kent Brown, “The Prophetic Laments of Samuel the Lamanite,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (1992): 163–80. Brown believes these laments were already known and sung when used by Samuel.
36. The sequence of a contemporary curse on the land in general, followed by the specific lament over slippery treasure, may suggest that Mormon understood that the earlier curse experienced by Samuel’s contemporaries would lead to the more specific curse on people’s treasures.
37. For that matter, there is no prophecy concerning witchcraft or sorcery in the Samuel narrative either. The Samuel narrative does contain one of the few allusions to negative supernatural forces, aside from the adversary. At the end of one of the prophetic laments, the cry is made that “we are surrounded by demons, yea, we are encircled about by the angels of him who hath sought to destroy our souls” (Helaman 13:37). This is the only mention of demons in the Book of Mormon and the only reference that speaks of them as surrounding people. Whether this has anything to do with the practice of negative magic as depicted in Mormon 1 is unclear. It is connected to the curse via the lament and may suggest an apotropaic function to buried treasure.

38. By “prophetic narrative” I mean that it is either part of a prophetic sermon or is used to describe the setting that leads directly to the sermon, rather than merely a descriptor for Nephite society at the given time. Thus, while the phrase “hearts upon riches” is found in Alma 1:30, its presence in Alma 5:53 and 7:6, both of which are prophetic sermons by Alma, may be referred to as “prophetic narrative.” The former reference is editorial description by Mormon. The fifteen references are found in Mosiah 11:14; 12:29; Alma 1:30; 4:8; 5:53; 7:6; 17:14; Helaman 6:17; 7:21, 26; 13:20; 4 Nephi 1:43. The ones that may be associated with prophetic narratives are Mosiah 11:14; 12:19; Alma 5:53; 7:6; Helaman 7:21, 26; 13:20.
39. Grant Hardy recognizes the challenging nature of the narrative in his book *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), though he does not go into depth trying to decipher the difficulties: “These prophecies are something of a chronological jumble, with predictions of events in the next few years mixed with calamities still decades or even centuries away. It is hard to imagine that the Nephites of Zarahemla were overwhelmed by tidings of devastation for their distant posterity” (p. 185).