

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

Macmillan Publishing Company
New York

Maxwell Macmillan Canada
Toronto

Maxwell Macmillan International
New York Oxford Singapore Sydney



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OF ADOPTION). Through the gospel, one becomes a joint-heir with Christ, a member of the CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, and a partaker of the fulness of God's glory.

N. GAYLON HOPKINS

HELAMAN₁

The first Helaman noted in the Book of Mormon (c. 130 B.C.) was one of the three sons of BENJAMIN, king of the NEPHITES and the people of Zarahemla. He is mentioned only once in connection with his father's efforts to educate him and his brothers, MOSIAH₂ and Helorum. Benjamin taught them both the language of their fathers and the prophecies spoken by their fathers, "that thereby they might become men of understanding" (Mosiah 1:2).

MELVIN J. THORNE

HELAMAN₂

Helaman₂ (c. 100–57 B.C.) was a noted BOOK OF MORMON military commander and PROPHET. The eldest son of ALMA₂, he was brother to Shiblon and Corianton (Alma 31:7) and father to HELAMAN₃. He became a HIGH PRIEST (Alma 46:38) and was known for teaching REPENTANCE to his people.

While a young man, he remained behind during the mission of his father and brothers to the Zoramites (Alma 31:7), apparently to manage domestic and ecclesiastic affairs in Alma's absence. Later, his father gave him a special blessing, which is often quoted among Latter-day Saints, admonishing him to keep the commandments of God and promising that, if he did so, he would prosper in the land (Alma 36:30; 37:13). Helaman's father also instructed him to continue the record of his people and charged him with the sacred custody of the NEPHITE records, the plates of brass, the twenty-four plates of the JAREDITES, the interpreters, and the LIAHONA, that is, the divine compass that led LEHI's family to the new promised land in the western hemisphere (Alma 37:1–47). Before his father's death, Helaman recorded his father's prophecy concerning the final destruction of the Nephite people (45:9–14).

Although Helaman was known simply as one of "the high priests over the church" (Alma 46:6), apparently he was the chief priest because "Helaman and his brethren" (45:22–23; 46:1, 6; 62:45) or "Helaman and the high priests" (46:38) always performed the ecclesiastical functions; no other presiding high priest is named. When Helaman and his brothers attempted "to establish the church again in all the land" (45:22) after a protracted war with the LAMANITES (43–44), their action triggered civil unrest led by Amalickiah, which in turn embroiled the Nephites in one of their most devastating wars.

During Helaman's youth, a large number of Lamanite converts, called Ammonites (*see* BOOK OF MORMON PEOPLES), moved to the Nephite territory of Jershon (Alma 27). They swore an oath that they would never again take anyone's life (Alma 24:17–18). Later, when other Lamanites attacked their Nephite protectors, the Ammonites offered to break their oath in order to help the Nephite army defend their families and land. It was "Helaman and his brethren" who persuaded them not to break their covenant. They did welcome 2,060 Ammonite young men, who were not under their parents' oath, who volunteered to fight in the Nephite cause and chose Helaman to lead them (53:10–22). Accepting their invitation, he became both military leader and spiritual father, an observation found in Helaman's long letter to his commander MORONI₁ (Alma 56–58). While Helaman led these "stripling soldiers" (53:22) into many battles, none was killed, although all received wounds (56:56; 57:25; 58:39). These young men credited God with their protection and paid solemn tribute to their mothers who had trained them in faith (56:47). During Helaman's military campaign as leader of these young men, he won victory after victory, often capturing enemies without shedding blood. Exhibiting extraordinary ingenuity and character, he always acknowledged God's blessings in his successes (56:19; 57:35; 58:33).

After the war, Helaman returned home and spent his remaining years regulating the affairs of the Church, convincing "many people of their wickedness, which did cause them to repent of their sins and to be baptized unto the Lord their God" (Alma 62:45). An era of peace resulted from his final efforts. He died in 57 B.C.

PAUL R. CHEESMAN