

In chapter 13 of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, Paul states: “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” ([2 Cor. 13:1](#)).

“The scriptural law of witnesses requires that in the mouth of two or three individuals shall every word be established ([Deut. 19:15](#); [2 Cor. 13:1](#); [1 Tim. 5:19](#)). This law applies in divine as well as human relations, for members of the Godhead bear witness of one another ([John 5:31-37](#); [3 Ne. 11:32](#)), and books of holy writ give multiple witness to the work of God in the earth (2 Ne. 29:8-13). The law of witnesses is prominent in the history and practice of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” [Encyclopedia of Mormonism, “Witnesses, Law of” page 1569.](#)

We know that the [Book of Mormon](#) itself is 'Another Testament of Jesus Christ'. In this volume we are presented the history, select stories and journals and witnesses from Nephi through Moroni, in addition to the words of Christ himself as recorded by many of those who witnessed his visits to the Book of Mormon peoples. In the introduction to the Book of Mormon we read the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith himself, of his visions and calling to translate the book in our day and subsequently the testimonies of the Three Witnesses and the additional Eight special witnesses to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Ever since and event in our church leadership today we have the twelve apostles plus the first presidency 12-15 men specifically called as special witnesses of Jesus Christ. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles each bear their [personal testimony](#) about the Savior and Redeemer of the World and of the Book of Mormon's message. In the Church, witnesses are officially present for all baptisms and marriages. Witnesses also confirm proxy baptisms, endowments, marriages, and sealings in the temples on behalf of the dead ([D&C 127:6](#)). Thousands of missionaries are sent out year after year, two by two, preaching the gospel and presenting the message of the Book of Mormon to any willing to listen, in pairs as witnesses for one another ([Mark 6:7](#); [Luke 10:1](#); [D&C 42:6](#); [52:10](#); [61:35](#); [62:5](#)). And today, I have been sent as a speaking companion to Bro Tollestrup of the Stake High Council to speak and witness to you here in the Magrath 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward.

Our family recently read again the story of Samuel the Lamanite as part of our regular scripture studies and I was struck by the concept of an additional witness. In the book of Helaman, we read of another of the prophets named Nephi. This one, Nephi the son of Helaman, lived just 30 or so years before the visit of Christ to the Americas. Nephi gives up the judgement-seat and along with his brother Lehi start preaching full time to the people. ([Helaman 5-12](#)). Their mission lasted a bit more than 2 years, however and chapters 5-12 recount many marvelous experiences: Nephi and Lehi make many converts despite trials and imprisonment and eventually The Lord gives Nephi the sealing power—He is empowered to bind and loose on earth and in heaven—He commands the people to repent or perish—The Spirit carries him from multitude to multitude. Nephi persuades the Lord to replace their war with a famine—Many people perish—They repent, and Nephi then asks the Lord for rain—Nephi and Lehi receive many revelations—The Gadianton robbers entrench themselves in the land. (from chapter heading summaries)

Then in Chapter 13 we read of Samuel the Lamanite and his preaching to Nephites. “And it came to pass that in this year there was one Samuel, a Lamanite, came into the land of Zarahemla, and began to preach unto the people. And it came to pass that he did preach, many days, repentance unto the people, and they did cast him out, and he was about to return to his own land. But behold, 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*. And it came to pass that they would not suffer that he should enter into the city; therefore he went and got upon the wall thereof, and stretched forth his hand and cried with a loud

voice, and prophesied unto the people *whatsoever things the Lord put into his heart.*”

Samuel the Lamanite told them that in 5 years the sign of Christ's birth would be given – a day and a night and a day with no darkness and gave them the sign of his crucifixion – three days of destruction and darkness. The 5 year sign was specific enough that 5 years later to the day the more wicked part of the people were prepared to kill those who believed him, should the sign not come.

“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; and when they had come forth and found him they confessed unto him their sins and denied not, desiring that they might be baptized unto the Lord. 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 as he stood upon the wall; but the Spirit of the Lord was with him, insomuch that they could not hit him with their stones neither with their arrows. 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, showing signs and wonders, working miracles among the people, that they might know that the Christ must shortly come — 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; therefore as many as believed on the words of Samuel went forth unto him to be baptized, for they came repenting and confessing their sins.” ([Helaman 16:1-5](#))

*.. whatsoever things the Lord put into his heart*

I wonder if we, like Samuel the Lamanite, ever feel inspired to say or do something - *whatsoever things the Lord put into your heart* – do it, and then go away or return home and wonder why? Samuel gave his message and then returned home and was never heard of again in the Nephite record, but those who believed on him went and got baptized by Nephi. When Christ did come, he asked: “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? And his disciples answered him and said: Yea, Lord, Samuel did prophesy according to thy words, and they were all fulfilled. And Jesus said unto them: How be it that ye have not written this thing, that many saints did arise and appear unto many and did minister unto them? And it came to pass that Nephi [the son of Nephi the son of Helaman] remembered that this thing had not been written. And it came to pass that Jesus commanded that it should be written; therefore it was written according as he commanded.”

*.. went away unto Nephi to be baptized*

Nephi [the son of Helaman] had preached to the Nephites for decades. He had been given the sealing power – to bind and loose on earth and in heaven. He had persuaded the Lord to replace a war with a famine, and we read: “But behold, the power of God was with him, and they could not take him to cast him into prison, for he was taken by the Spirit and conveyed away out of the midst of them. And it came to pass that thus he did go forth in the Spirit, from multitude to multitude, declaring the word of God, even until he had declared it unto them all, or sent it forth among all the people. And it came to

pass that they would not hearken unto his words; and there began to be contentions, insomuch that they were divided against themselves and began to slay one another with the sword.” Despite the calling and power of Nephi son of Helaman, Samuel the Lamanite was needed to witness to the Nephite people.

*.. what manner of men ought we be – what lack I yet?*

The message of the Book of Mormon, to me, is that we need to choose. If we choose to be humble and teachable rather than being proud and unbelieving, we will be blessed – despite any temporary physical challenges. We need to listen and try to obey the promptings we receive – even if we do not understand exactly why and what is supposed to happen. Trust that He knows the big picture and what is best for us.