

**LESSON 31**  
**“Firm In the Faith of Christ”**  
**Alma 43-52**

**OVERVIEW:**

The Nephites fight to defend their families and their liberty. Captain Moroni raises the “title of liberty” to inspire the people. Amalickiah becomes king of the Lamanites and incites them to battle. War continues between the Nephites and the Lamanites.

Since every word written in the Book of Mormon is for us today, there must be a reason for the wars being so detailed. It may be that the strategies used in battle can be the same strategies we can use in battling spiritual wars against Satan and his servants. One tenth of the book covers wars.

There are some key ideas to learn from the war section of the Book of Mormon. (1) The Christian’s attitude toward war. (2) The importance of righteous military leaders. (3) Our attitude toward constituted government. (4) The power and influence of a righteous home. (5) A person’s external circumstances need not determine his attitude or his faithfulness. (6) Why God allows the righteous to be slain. (7) A prophetic pattern of what is to come. (DCBM, 3:321-327.)

A similar pattern of social problems, priestcrafts, materialism, wars, government corruption, and disrupted life is prophesied for the last days leading to the Savior’s second coming. Mormon and his son Moroni saw our day and took from the history and prophecies of the Nephites those events that would best help the readers of their record in the day in which it would come forth. Since Mormon knew of the wars and chaos that would characterize the last days, he abbreviated his account of the missionary efforts of Alma and the sons of Mosiah and emphasized the challenges created by war and social turmoil, along with the reaction of the righteous to those challenges. (H. Dean Garrett, *Studies in Scriptures*, 8:70)

**SCRIPTURES:**

THE BOOK OF ALMA  
THE SON OF ALMA  
CHAPTER 43

*Alma and his sons preach the word—The Zoramites and other Nephite dissenters become Lamanites—The Lamanites come against the Nephites in war—Moroni arms the Nephites with defensive armor—The Lord reveals to Alma the strategy of the Lamanites—The Nephites defend their homes, liberties, families, and religion—The armies of Moroni and Lehi surround the Lamanites. [About 74 B.C.]*

Moroni’s confrontation with Zerahemnah teaches us the value of prophets in times of war and peace. When Zerahemnah’s army changed course after being frightened by the Nephite army, Captain Moroni immediately issued two orders: First, he sent spies to follow the Lamanite army, and second, he sent men to inquire of the prophet Alma where the Lamanites might go. This is faith and works. He did everything in his power, and he called on a power higher than his own. Modern prophets have continually warned that in the latter-days, the adversary will attack marriage and family. More than thirty years ago, President Harold B. Lee stated, “Satan’s greatest threat today, is to destroy the family and make a mockery of the law of chastity and the sanctity of the marriage covenant” (*Church News*, August 19, 1972, 3). In 1995, The Proclamation to the World: The Family was issued. Prophets tell us where the enemy strikes next. The spiritual message is clear: Keep your eyes on the living prophets, they

know where the enemy will attack. John Bytheway, Righteous Warriors: Lessons from the War Chapters in the Book of Mormon.

1 AND now it came to pass that the sons of Alma did go forth among the people, to declare the word unto them. And Alma, also, himself, could not <sup>a</sup>rest, and he also went forth.

2 Now <sup>a</sup>we shall say no more concerning their preaching (Now we change from the missionary work to the wars.), except that they preached the word, and the truth, according to the spirit of prophecy and revelation; and they preached after the <sup>b</sup>holy order of God (Melchizedek Priesthood) by which they were called.

3 And now <sup>a</sup>I return to an <sup>b</sup>account of the wars (Mormon knew that in our day we would be faced with wars and so he includes here how they dealt with wars in their time. Since Mormon dealt with war and remained a disciple of Christ, he is showing how we can live in times of war and remain disciples of Christ.) between the Nephites and the Lamanites, in the \*eighteenth year (74 BC) of the reign of the judges.

4 For behold, it came to pass that the <sup>a</sup>Zoramites became Lamanites; therefore, in the commencement of the eighteenth year the people of the Nephites saw that the Lamanites were coming upon them; therefore they made preparations for war; yea, they gathered together their armies in the land of Jershon.

5 And it came to pass that the Lamanites came with their thousands; and they came into the land of <sup>a</sup>Antionum, which is the land of the Zoramites; and a man by the name of <sup>b</sup>Zerahemnah was their leader.

6 And now, as the <sup>a</sup>Amalekites were of a more wicked and murderous disposition (They had dissented from the Church) than the Lamanites were, in and of themselves, therefore, Zerahemnah appointed chief <sup>b</sup>captains over the Lamanites, and they were all Amalekites and <sup>c</sup>Zoramites.

7 Now this he did that he might preserve their <sup>a</sup>hatred towards the Nephites, that he might bring them into subjection to the accomplishment of his designs.

8 For behold, his <sup>a</sup>designs were to <sup>b</sup>stir up the Lamanites to anger against the Nephites; this he did that he might usurp great power over them, and also that he might gain power over the Nephites by bringing them into <sup>c</sup>bondage.

9 And now the design of the Nephites was to support their lands, and their houses, and their <sup>a</sup>wives, and their children, that they might preserve them from the hands of their enemies; and also that they might preserve their <sup>b</sup>rights and their privileges, yea, and also their <sup>c</sup>liberty, that they might worship God according to their desires. (The reasons the Nephites went to war was to preserve their freedoms. A justifiable reason for going to war.)

10 For they knew that if they should fall into the hands of the Lamanites, that whosoever should <sup>a</sup>worship God in <sup>b</sup>spirit and in truth, the true and the living God, the Lamanites would <sup>c</sup>destroy.

11 Yea, and they also knew the extreme hatred of the Lamanites towards their <sup>a</sup>brethren, who were the <sup>b</sup>people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, who were called the people of Ammon—and they would not take up arms, yea, they had entered into a covenant and they would not break it—therefore, if they should fall into the hands of the Lamanites they would be destroyed.

12 And the Nephites would not suffer that they should be destroyed; therefore they gave them lands for their inheritance.

13 And the people of Ammon did give unto the Nephites a large portion of their substance to <sup>a</sup>support their armies; and thus the Nephites were compelled, alone, to withstand against the Lamanites, who were a compound of Laman and Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael, and all those who had dissented from the Nephites, who were Amalekites and Zoramites, and the <sup>b</sup>descendants of the priests of Noah.

14 Now those descendants were as numerous, nearly, as were the Nephites; and thus the Nephites were obliged to contend with their brethren, even unto bloodshed.

15 And it came to pass as the armies of the Lamanites had gathered together in the land of Antionum, behold, the armies of the Nephites were prepared (Boy Scout motto: Be Prepared) to meet them in the <sup>a</sup>land of Jershon.

16 Now, the leader of the Nephites, or the man who had been <sup>a</sup>appointed to be the <sup>b</sup>chief captain over the Nephites—now the chief captain took the command of all the armies of the Nephites—and his name was Moroni;

17 And Moroni took all the command, and the government of their wars. And he was only twenty and five years old when he was appointed chief captain over the armies of the Nephites. (Daniel H. Ludlow: Moroni may have obtained some of his new ideas on warfare from Mosiah's translation of the twenty-four gold plates of Ether, which contained an account of the wars and contentions of the people of Jared. If so, this may have given him an advantage over the Lamanites, because they did not have access to this record. Unlocking the Book of Mormon, 315.)

18 And it came to pass that he met the Lamanites in the borders of Jershon, and his people were armed with swords, and with cimeters, and all manner of <sup>a</sup>weapons of war.

19 And when the armies of the Lamanites saw that the people of Nephi, or that Moroni, had <sup>a</sup>prepared his people with <sup>b</sup>breastplates and with arm-shields, yea, and also shields to defend their heads, and also they were dressed with thick clothing— (During a time of peace and prosperity, the Nephites prepared themselves both spiritually and with arms. Preparing to defend yourself is wise to preserve your freedom and families.)

20 Now the army of Zerahemnah was not prepared with any such thing; they had only their <sup>a</sup>swords and their cimeters, their bows and their arrows, their <sup>b</sup>stones and their slings; and they were <sup>c</sup>naked, save it were a skin which was girded about their loins; yea, all were naked, save it were the Zoramites and the Amalekites;

21 But they were not armed with breastplates, nor shields—therefore, they were exceedingly afraid of the armies of the Nephites because of their armor, notwithstanding their number being so much greater than the Nephites.

22 Behold, now it came to pass that they durst not come against the Nephites in the borders of Jershon; therefore they departed out of the land of Antionum into the wilderness, and took their journey round about in the wilderness, away by the head of the river Sidon, that they might come into the land of <sup>a</sup>Manti and take possession of the land; for they did not suppose that the armies of Moroni would know whither they had gone.

23 But it came to pass, as soon as they had departed into the wilderness Moroni sent spies into the wilderness to watch their camp; and Moroni, also, knowing of the prophecies of Alma, sent certain men unto him, desiring him that he should <sup>a</sup>inquire of the Lord <sup>b</sup>whither the armies of the Nephites should go to defend themselves against the Lamanites. (Our prophets and apostles are warning us and preparing us for the dangers that surround us. In using spies to find out the movements of the Lamanites, he is not only saving Nephite lives, but Lamanite lives as well.)

24 And it came to pass that the <sup>a</sup>word of the Lord came unto Alma, and Alma informed the messengers of Moroni, that the armies of the Lamanites were marching round about in the wilderness, that they might come over into the land of Manti, that they might commence an attack upon the weaker part of the people. And those messengers went and delivered the message unto Moroni. (Wouldn't it be great if our government officials relied upon the prophet to help against our enemies?)

25 Now Moroni, leaving a part of his army in the land of Jershon, lest by any means a part of the Lamanites should come into that land and take possession of the city, took the remaining part of his army and marched over into the land of Manti.

26 And he caused that all the people in that quarter of the land should gather themselves together to battle against the Lamanites, to defend their lands and their country, their rights and their liberties; therefore they were prepared against the time of the coming of the Lamanites.

27 And it came to pass that Moroni caused that his army should be secreted in the valley which was near the bank of the river Sidon, which was on the west of the river Sidon in the wilderness.

28 And Moroni placed spies round about, that he might know when the camp of the Lamanites should come.

29 And now, as Moroni knew the <sup>a</sup>intention of the Lamanites, that it was their intention to destroy their brethren, or to <sup>b</sup>subject them and bring them into bondage that they might establish a kingdom unto themselves over all the land;

30 And he also knowing that it was the <sup>a</sup>only desire of the Nephites to preserve their lands, and their <sup>b</sup>liberty, and their church, therefore he thought it no sin that he should defend them by <sup>c</sup>stratagem; therefore, he found by his spies which course the Lamanites were to take.

31 Therefore, he divided his army and brought a part over into the valley, and <sup>a</sup>concealed them on the east, and on the south of the hill Riplah;

32 And the remainder he concealed in the west <sup>a</sup>valley, on the west of the river Sidon, and so down into the borders of the land Manti.

33 And thus having placed his army according to his desire, he was prepared to meet them.

34 And it came to pass that the Lamanites came up on the north of the hill, where a part of the army of Moroni was concealed.

35 And as the Lamanites had passed the hill Riplah, and came into the valley, and began to cross the river Sidon, the army which was concealed on the south of the hill, which was led by a man whose name was <sup>a</sup>Lehi, and he led his army forth and encircled the Lamanites about on the east in their rear.

36 And it came to pass that the Lamanites, when they saw the Nephites coming upon them in their rear, turned them about and began to contend with the army of Lehi.

37 And the work of death commenced on both sides, but it was more dreadful on the part of the Lamanites, for their <sup>a</sup>nakedness was exposed to the heavy blows of the Nephites with their swords and their cimeters, which brought death almost at every stroke.

38 While on the other hand, there was now and then a man fell among the Nephites, by their swords and the loss of blood, they being shielded from the more vital parts of the body, or the more vital parts of the body being shielded from the strokes of the Lamanites, by their <sup>a</sup>breastplates, and their armshields, and their head-plates; and thus the Nephites did carry on the work of death among the Lamanites.

39 And it came to pass that the Lamanites became frightened, because of the great destruction among them, even until they began to flee towards the river Sidon.

40 And they were pursued by Lehi and his men; and they were driven by Lehi into the waters of Sidon, and they crossed the waters of Sidon. And Lehi retained his armies upon the bank of the river Sidon that they should not cross.

41 And it came to pass that Moroni and his army met the Lamanites in the <sup>a</sup>valley, on the other side of the river Sidon, and began to fall upon them and to slay them.

42 And the Lamanites did flee again before them, towards the land of Manti; and they were met again by the armies of Moroni.

43 Now in this case the Lamanites did fight exceedingly; yea, never had the Lamanites been known to fight with such exceedingly great strength and courage, no, not even from the beginning.

44 And they were inspired by the <sup>a</sup>Zoramites and the Amalekites, who were their chief captains and leaders, and by Zerahemnah, who was their chief captain, or their chief leader and commander; yea, they did fight like dragons, and many of the Nephites were slain by their hands, yea, for they did smite in two many of their head-plates, and they did pierce many of their breastplates, and they did smite off many of their arms; and thus the Lamanites did smite in their fierce anger.

45 Nevertheless, the Nephites were inspired by a <sup>a</sup>better cause, for they were not <sup>b</sup>fighting for monarchy nor power but they were fighting for their homes and their <sup>c</sup>liberties, their wives and their children, and their all, yea, for their rites of worship and their church. (Sheri L. Dew: Twelve years ago President Ezra Taft Benson taught: ‘Never before on the face of this earth have the forces of evil and the forces of good been as well organized. ... The final outcome is certain—the forces of righteousness will win. But what remains to be seen is *where* each of us ... will stand in the battle—and how tall we will stand. ... Great battles can make great heroes and heroines’ (“In His Steps,” address to Church Educational System personnel, Anaheim, California, 8 Feb. 1987). Are we not like Captain Moroni’s armies who, though

vastly outnumbered, were ‘inspired by a better cause, for they were not fighting for monarchy nor power but they were fighting for their homes and their liberties, ... yea, for their rites of worship and their church’? (Alma 43:45). You and I compose a pivotal battalion in the army of the Lord! May we arise in this, the greatest cause on earth. May we go forward together in the strength of the Lord. More than ever He needs our faith and faithfulness, our vitality and our ingenuity, our unwavering commitment and conviction. This life is a test. It is also a glorious privilege. May we work toward the kind of Big Finish the Apostle Paul described: ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith’ (2 Tim. 4:7-8).” (*Ensign*, July 2000, “This is a Test”)

46 And they were doing that which they felt was the <sup>a</sup>duty which they owed to their God; for the Lord had said unto them, and also unto their fathers, that: <sup>b</sup>Inasmuch as ye are not guilty of the <sup>c</sup>first offense, neither the second (**Or, the Nephites are not the aggressors.**), ye shall not suffer yourselves to be slain by the hands of your enemies. (D&C 98: 23 Now, I speak unto you concerning your families—if men will <sup>a</sup>smite you, or your families, once, and ye <sup>b</sup>bear it patiently and <sup>c</sup>revile not against them, neither seek <sup>d</sup>revenge, ye shall be <sup>e</sup>rewarded; 24 But if ye bear it not patiently, it shall be accounted unto you as being <sup>a</sup>meted out as a just measure unto you. 25 And again, if your enemy shall smite you the second time, and you revile not against your enemy, and bear it patiently, your reward shall be an <sup>a</sup>hundredfold. 26 And again, if he shall smite you the third time, and ye bear it <sup>a</sup>patiently, your reward shall be doubled unto you four-fold; 27 And these three <sup>a</sup>testimonies shall stand against your enemy if he repent not, and shall not be blotted out. 28 And now, verily I say unto you, if that enemy shall escape my vengeance, that he be not brought into judgment before me, then ye shall see to it that ye <sup>a</sup>warn him in my name, that he come no more upon you, neither upon your family, even your children’s children unto the third and fourth generation. 29 And then, if he shall come upon you or your children, or your children’s children unto the third and fourth generation, I have delivered thine <sup>a</sup>enemy into thine hands; 30 And then if thou wilt spare him, thou shalt be rewarded for thy <sup>a</sup>righteousness; and also thy children and thy children’s children unto the third and fourth generation. 31 Nevertheless, thine enemy is in thine hands; and if thou rewardest him according to his works thou art justified; if he has sought thy life, and thy life is endangered by him, thine enemy is in thine hands and thou art justified. 32 Behold, this is the law I gave unto my servant Nephi, and thy <sup>a</sup>fathers, Joseph, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, and all mine ancient prophets and apostles. 33 And again, this is the <sup>a</sup>law that I gave unto mine ancients, that they should not go out unto battle against any nation, kindred, tongue, or people, save I, the Lord, commanded them. 34 And if any nation, tongue, or people should proclaim war against them, they should first lift a standard of <sup>a</sup>peace unto that people, nation, or tongue; 35 And if that people did not accept the offering of peace, neither the second nor the third time, they should bring these testimonies before the Lord; 36 Then I, the Lord, would give unto them a commandment, and justify them in going out to battle against that nation, tongue, or people. 37 And I, the Lord, would <sup>a</sup>fight their battles, and their children’s battles, and their children’s children’s, until they had avenged themselves on all their enemies, to the third and fourth generation. 38 Behold, this is an <sup>a</sup>ensample unto all people, saith the Lord your God, for justification before me. 39 And again, verily I say unto you, if after thine <sup>a</sup>enemy has come upon thee the first time, he repent and come unto thee praying thy forgiveness, thou shalt forgive him, and shalt hold it no more as a testimony against thine enemy— 40 And so on unto the second and third time; and as oft as thine enemy repenteth of the trespass wherewith he has trespassed against thee, thou shalt <sup>a</sup>forgive him, until seventy times seven. 41 And if he trespass against thee and repent not the first time, nevertheless thou shalt forgive him. 42 And if he trespass against thee the second time, and repent not, nevertheless thou shalt forgive him. 43 And if he trespass against thee the third time, and repent not, thou shalt also forgive him. 44 But if he trespass against thee the fourth time thou shalt not forgive him, but shalt bring these testimonies before the Lord; and they shall not be blotted out until he repent and <sup>a</sup>reward thee four-fold in all things wherewith he has trespassed against thee. 45 And if he do this, thou shalt forgive him with all thine heart; and if he do not this, I, the Lord, will <sup>a</sup>avenge thee of thine enemy an hundred-fold; 46 And upon his children, and upon his children’s <sup>a</sup>children of all them



that <sup>b</sup>hate me, unto the <sup>c</sup>third and fourth generation. 47 But if the <sup>a</sup>children shall repent, or the children's children, and <sup>b</sup>turn to the Lord their God, with all their hearts and with all their might, mind, and strength, and <sup>c</sup>restore four-fold for all their trespasses wherewith they have trespassed, or wherewith their fathers have trespassed, or their fathers' fathers, then thine indignation shall be turned away; 48 And vengeance shall <sup>a</sup>no more come upon them, saith the Lord thy God, and their trespasses shall never be brought any more as a testimony before the Lord against them. Amen. President David O. McKay said: I still say that there are conditions when entrance into war is justifiable, and when a Christian nation may, without violation of principles, take up arms against an opposing force. Such a condition, however, is not a real or fancied insult given by one nation to another. When this occurs proper reparation may be made by mutual understanding, apology or by arbitration. Neither is there justifiable cause found in a desire or even a need for territorial expansion. The taking of territory implies the subjugation of the weak to the strong – the application of the jungle law. Nor is war justified in an attempt to enforce a new order of government, or even to impel others to a particular form of worship, however better the government or eternally true the principles of the enforced religion may be. CR, Apr, 1942, p. 72. There are, however, two conditions which may justify a truly Christian man to enter – mind you, I say enter, not begin – a war: (1) An attempt to dominate and to deprive another of his free agency, and (2) Loyalty to his country. Possibly there is a third, viz., Defense of a weak nation that is being unjustly crushed by a strong, ruthless one. CR, Apr 1942, 72.)

47 And again, the Lord has said that: Ye shall <sup>a</sup>defend your families even unto <sup>b</sup>bloodshed. Therefore for this cause were the Nephites contending with the Lamanites, to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion. (Boyd K. Packer: “A message of the First Presidency dated April 6, 1942, states: ‘. . . the Church is and must be against war. . . . It cannot regard war as a righteous means of settling international disputes; these should and could be settled -- the nations agreeing -- by peaceful negotiations and adjustments. But the Church membership are citizens or subjects of sovereignties over which the Church has no control. The Lord himself has told us to ‘befriend that law which is the constitutional law of the land’: . . . When, therefore, constitutional law, obedient to these principles, calls the manhood of the Church into the armed service of any country to which they owe allegiance, their highest civic duty requires that they meet that call. If, harkening to that call and obeying those in command over them, they shall take the lives of those who fight against them, that will not make of them murderers, nor subject them to the penalty that God has prescribed for those who kill.’” (Conference Report, Apr. 1968, p. 34) David O. McKay: “There are, however, two conditions which may justify a truly Christian man to enter—mind you, I say enter, not begin—a war: (1) An attempt to dominate and to deprive another of his free agency, and (2) Loyalty to his country. Possibly there is a third, viz., Defense of a weak nation that is being unjustly crushed by a strong, ruthless one. To deprive an intelligent human being of his free agency is to commit the crime of the ages. So fundamental in man's eternal progress is his inherent right to choose that the Lord would defend it even at the price of war. Without freedom of thought, freedom of choice, freedom of action within lawful bounds, man cannot progress.” (Conference Report, Apr. 1942, p. 72 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 350) Offensive war is offensive to the Lord.)

48 And it came to pass that when the men of Moroni saw the fierceness and the anger of the Lamanites, they were about to shrink and flee from them. And Moroni, perceiving their intent, sent forth and inspired their hearts with these thoughts—yea, the thoughts of their lands, their liberty, yea, their freedom from bondage.

49 And it came to pass that they turned upon the Lamanites, and they <sup>a</sup>cried with one voice <sup>b</sup>unto the Lord their God, for their <sup>c</sup>liberty and their freedom from bondage. (They relied upon the Lord to save them, even after all they could do. So should we.)

50 And they <sup>a</sup>began to stand against the Lamanites with power; and in that selfsame hour that they cried unto the Lord for their freedom, the Lamanites began to flee before them; and they fled even to the

waters of Sidon.

51 Now, the Lamanites were more <sup>a</sup>numerous, yea, by more than double the number of the Nephites; nevertheless, they were driven insomuch that they were gathered together in one body in the valley, upon the bank by the river Sidon.

52 Therefore the armies of Moroni encircled them about, yea, even on both sides of the river, for behold, on the east were the men of Lehi.

53 Therefore when Zerahemnah saw the men of Lehi on the east of the river Sidon, and the armies of Moroni on the west of the river Sidon, that they were encircled about by the Nephites, they were struck with terror. (How could such a ferocious group of men become terrified of Moroni who didn't even want to harm them?)

54 Now Moroni, when he saw their <sup>a</sup>terror, commanded his men that they should stop shedding their blood.

\* Verse 3 [About 74 B.C.].

## CHAPTER 44

*Moroni commands the Lamanites to make a covenant of peace or be destroyed—Zerahemnah rejects the offer, and the battle resumes—Moroni's armies defeat the Lamanites. [About 74—73 B.C.]*

1 AND it came to pass that they did stop and withdrew a pace from them. And Moroni said unto <sup>a</sup>Zerahemnah: Behold, Zerahemnah, that we do <sup>b</sup>not desire to be men of blood. Ye know that ye are in our hands, yet we do not desire to slay you.

2 Behold, we have not come out to battle against you that we might shed your blood for power; neither do we desire to bring any one to the <sup>a</sup>yoke of bondage. But this is the <sup>b</sup>very cause for which ye have come against us; yea, and ye are angry with us because of our religion. (Neal A. Maxwell: "Lest we think that the lot of a disciple is likely to be one in which he comes calmly to the cross and then carries it lightly to his own Calvary, there are the sober words of Moroni, whose efforts to bring about peace illuminated the basic and deep differences between the Lamanites and Nephites so clearly and with such pathos that Moroni finally exclaimed; 'Ye are angry with us because of our religion.' It is a reminder of John's words: 'Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.'" (*For the Power is in Them*, p. 42)

Brigham Young: "The [sectarian] priests are angry because they are afraid that their religion is nothing but a sandy foundation fabric; and whenever they meditate upon the subject and humble themselves, and the Spirit of the Lord finds its way to their hearts and convicts them, the truth then is made manifest before them, and they begin to learn the falsity of their systems; and when that spirit leaves them, they become angry. 'Mormonism' is declared to be true by hosts of witnesses, and this makes the priests angry; for this Gospel bears its own weight and testimony, and they know not how to gainsay it. True, I have aimed to point out their errors; but it is not you or me that they are opposed to, although they throw their darts at us; but it is the spirit of conviction that goes with the report of this work; for wherever it goes it strikes conviction to the heart, and that is what disturbs the priests and the people." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 75))

3 But now, ye behold that the Lord is with us; and ye behold that he has delivered you into our hands. And now I would that ye should understand that this is done unto us <sup>a</sup>because of our religion and our faith in Christ. And now ye see that ye cannot destroy this our faith. (John Taylor: "Many have got angry with us, but that is nothing new; the wicked have always shown anger when the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been upon the earth. Many have tried to stay the progress of the work of God, but it has continued to roll on in spite of all the opposition with which it has had to contend. The prophet saw a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and it continued to roll and smote the feet of the image made of clay, brass, silver, gold, and iron, and it became as the chaff of the summer threshing floor; but the little stone grew and increased until it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

It will be so with this stone which God has hewn out in these last days; and though men may combine to stay its progress and may set themselves in array against the Lord and His anointed, yet He will come out of His hiding place and will vex such people and nations, and He will overturn and overturn until Truth shall prevail the wide world over, and until His kingdom shall reach from the rivers to the ends of the earth; until all men shall bow to the sceptre of Immanuel; until the wicked shall be rooted from the earth, and His kingdom shall be established and given to His Saints to possess for ever and ever.”

(*Journal of Discourses*, 13:19))

4 Now ye see that this is the true faith of God; yea, ye see that God will support, and keep, and preserve us, so long as we are <sup>a</sup>faithful unto him, and unto our faith, and our religion; and never will the Lord suffer that we shall be destroyed except we should fall into transgression and deny our faith.

5 And now, Zerahemnah, I command you, in the name of that all-powerful God, who has strengthened our arms that we have gained power over you, <sup>a</sup>by our faith, by our religion, and by our <sup>b</sup>rites of worship, and by our church, and by the sacred support which we owe to our <sup>c</sup>wives and our children, by that <sup>d</sup>liberty which binds us to our lands and our country; yea, and also by the maintenance of the sacred word of God, to which we owe all our happiness; and by all that is most dear unto us— (Abraham Lincoln said, “This love of liberty which God has planted in us constitutes the bulwark of our liberty and independence. It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling seacoasts, our army, and our navy. Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere. Destroy this spirit, and we have planted the seeds of despotism at our very doors.” From a speech in Edwardsville, Ill. 13 Sep 1858 *Unlocking the Book of Mormon*, 318)

6 Yea, and this is not all; I command you by all the desires which ye have for life, that ye <sup>a</sup>deliver up your weapons of war unto us, and we will seek not your blood, but we will <sup>b</sup>spare your lives, if ye will go your way and come not again to war against us.

7 And now, if ye do not this, behold, ye are in our hands, and I will command my men that they shall fall upon you, and <sup>a</sup>inflict the wounds of death in your bodies, that ye may become extinct; and then we will see who shall have power over this people; yea, we will see who shall be brought into bondage.

8 And now it came to pass that when Zerahemnah had heard these sayings he came forth and delivered up his <sup>a</sup>sword and his cimeter, and his bow into the hands of Moroni, and said unto him: Behold, here are our weapons of war; we will deliver them up unto you, but we will not suffer ourselves to take an <sup>b</sup>oath unto you, which we know that we shall break, and also our children; but take our weapons of war, and suffer that we may depart into the wilderness; otherwise we will retain our swords, and we will perish or conquer.

9 Behold, we are <sup>a</sup>not of your faith; we do not believe that it is God that has delivered us into your hands (Henry B. Eyring: ‘You can best understand how the ‘thus we see’ passages work by looking at an example in which one person could see and one could not. You remember the time: Captain Moroni had an army cornered. He could have slaughtered them, but instead he offered them freedom and their lives if they would surrender their arms and take an oath of peace. Here is what he said: (quotes Alma 44:4-6.) Now, Zerahemnah had solid evidence for the proposition that something beyond human power had him where he faced annihilation. But did he see what Moroni saw, looking at the same set of facts? You remember his response: ‘We are not of your faith; we do not believe that it is God that has delivered us into your hands; but we believe that it is your cunning that has preserved you from our swords. Behold, it is your breastplates and your shields that have preserved you.’ (Alma 44:9.) He could not see the true connection, because his heart was not soft enough, not changed enough, that the Holy Ghost could show it to him.” (*To Draw Closer to God*, p. 148 – 149)); but we believe that it is your cunning that has preserved you from our swords. Behold, it is your <sup>b</sup>breastplates and your shields that have preserved you.

10 And now when Zerahemnah had made an end of speaking these words, Moroni returned the sword and the weapons of war, which he had received, unto Zerahemnah, saying: Behold, we will end the conflict.



11 Now I cannot recall the words which I have spoken, therefore as the Lord liveth, ye shall not depart except ye depart with an oath that ye will not return again against us to war. Now as ye are in our hands we will spill your blood upon the ground, or ye shall submit to the conditions which I have proposed.

12 And now when Moroni had said these words, Zerahemnah retained his sword, and he was angry with Moroni, and he rushed forward that he might slay Moroni; but as he raised his sword, behold, one of Moroni's soldiers smote it even to the earth, and it broke by the hilt; and he also smote Zerahemnah that he took off his scalp and it fell to the earth. ("The question might be raised as to whether or not the 'scalping' of the Lamanite leader, Zerahemnah, might have led to the scalping tradition of the American Indian. (Alma 44:12-14.) However, recent evidence would seem to indicate the American Indian did not have a scalping tradition until after the coming of the white man -- that is, until the seventeenth century A.D. Apparently it was the white man who started the scalping custom, when some of the early colonists offered money for the scalps or hair of dead Indians. In order to get even with the evil white men who killed Indians just for their scalps (in much the same way as they would kill a buffalo for its hide), the Indians started to kill and scalp the whites in return." (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 232)) And Zerahemnah withdrew from before them into the midst of his soldiers.

13 And it came to pass that the soldier who stood by, who smote off the scalp of Zerahemnah, took up the scalp from off the ground by the hair, and laid it upon the point of his sword, and stretched it forth unto them, saying unto them with a loud voice:

14 Even as this scalp has fallen to the earth, which is the scalp of your chief, so shall ye fall to the earth except ye will deliver up your weapons of war and depart with a covenant of peace.

15 Now there were many, when they heard these words and saw the scalp which was upon the sword, that were struck with fear; and many came forth and threw down their weapons of war at the feet of Moroni, and entered into a <sup>a</sup>covenant of peace. And as many as entered into a covenant they suffered to <sup>b</sup>depart into the wilderness.

16 Now it came to pass that Zerahemnah was exceedingly wroth, and he did stir up the remainder of his soldiers to anger, to contend more powerfully against the Nephites.

17 And now Moroni was angry, because of the stubbornness of the Lamanites; therefore he commanded his people that they should fall upon them and slay them. And it came to pass that they began to slay them; yea, and the Lamanites did contend with their swords and their might.

18 But behold, their naked skins and their bare heads were exposed to the sharp swords of the Nephites; yea, behold they were pierced and smitten, yea, and did fall exceedingly fast before the swords of the Nephites; and they began to be swept down, even as the soldier of Moroni had prophesied.

19 Now Zerahemnah, when he saw that they were all about to be destroyed, cried mightily unto Moroni, promising that he would covenant and also his people with them, if they would spare the remainder of their lives, that they <sup>a</sup>never would come to war again against them.

20 And it came to pass that Moroni caused that the work of death should <sup>a</sup>cease again among the people. And he took the weapons of war from the Lamanites; and after they had entered into a <sup>b</sup>covenant with him of peace they were suffered to depart into the wilderness.

21 Now the number of their dead was not numbered because of the greatness of the number; yea, the number of their dead was exceedingly great, both on the Nephites and on the Lamanites.

22 And it came to pass that they did cast their dead into the waters of Sidon, and they have gone forth and are buried in the depths of the <sup>a</sup>sea.

23 And the armies of the Nephites, or of Moroni, returned and came to their houses and their lands.

24 And thus <sup>\*</sup>ended the eighteenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi. And thus ended the record of Alma, which was written upon the plates of Nephi.

<sup>\*</sup> Verse 24 [73 B.C.].

*The account of the people of Nephi, and their wars and dissensions, in the days of Helaman, according to the record of Helaman, which he kept in his days. Comprising chapters 45 to 62 inclusive.*

## CHAPTER 45

*Helaman believes the words of Alma—Alma prophesies the destruction of the Nephites—He blesses and curses the land—Alma is taken up by the Spirit, even as Moses—Dissension grows in the Church. [73 B.C.]*

1 BEHOLD, now it came to pass that the people of Nephi were exceedingly rejoiced, because the Lord had again <sup>a</sup>delivered them out of the hands of their enemies; therefore they gave thanks unto the Lord their God; yea, and they did <sup>b</sup>fast much and pray much, and they did worship God with exceedingly great joy.

2 And it came to pass in the nineteenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, that Alma came unto his son Helaman and said unto him: Believest thou the words which I spake unto thee concerning those <sup>a</sup>records which have been kept?

3 And Helaman said unto him: Yea, I <sup>a</sup>believe.

4 And Alma said again: Believest thou in Jesus Christ, who shall come?

5 And he said: Yea, I believe all the words which thou hast spoken.

6 And Alma said unto him again: Will ye <sup>a</sup>keep my commandments?

7 And he said: Yea, I will keep thy commandments with all my heart.

8 Then Alma said unto him: Blessed art thou; and the Lord shall <sup>a</sup>prosper thee in this land.

9 But behold, I have somewhat to <sup>a</sup>prophesy unto thee; but what I prophesy unto thee ye shall not make known; yea, what I prophesy unto thee shall not be made known, even until the prophecy is fulfilled; therefore write the words which I shall say.

10 And these are the words: Behold, I perceive that this very people, the Nephites, according to the spirit of revelation which is in me, in <sup>a</sup>four hundred years from the time that Jesus Christ shall manifest himself unto them, shall dwindle in <sup>b</sup>unbelief.

11 Yea, and then shall they see wars and pestilences, yea, famines and bloodshed, even until the people of Nephi shall become <sup>a</sup>extinct—

12 Yea, and this because they shall dwindle in unbelief and fall into the works of darkness, and <sup>a</sup>lasciviousness, and all manner of iniquities; yea, I say unto you, that because they shall sin against so great light and knowledge, yea, I say unto you, that from that day, even the <sup>b</sup>fourth generation shall not all pass away before this great iniquity shall come.

13 And when that great day cometh, behold, the time very soon cometh that those who are now, or the seed of those who are now numbered among the people of Nephi, shall <sup>a</sup>no more be numbered among the people of Nephi.

14 But whosoever remaineth, and is not destroyed in that great and dreadful day, shall be <sup>a</sup>numbered among the <sup>b</sup>Lamanites, and shall become like unto them, all, save it be a few who shall be called the disciples of the Lord; and them shall the Lamanites pursue even <sup>c</sup>until they shall become extinct. And now, because of iniquity, this prophecy shall be fulfilled. (Not all the Nephites were killed at Cumorah. There were four groups which survived, at least temporarily: 1) the twenty-four survivors of the final battle, 2) the group who had tried a southward escape (Mormon 6:15), 3) those who had deserted to the Lamanites (Mormon 6:15), and 4) the robbers which may have been of mixed Nephite, Lamanite lineage (Mormon 8:9). Except Moroni, the members of the first and second groups were eventually hunted until they were killed. But the third and fourth groups were never completely exterminated. The Nephite deserters and Gadianton members survived. However, they did not retain their identity but became Lamanites, as Alma prophesied. Hence, the Nephites, as a nation and as a people, had been destroyed.)

15 And now it came to pass that after Alma had said these things to Helaman, he <sup>a</sup>blessed him, and also his other sons; and he also blessed the earth for the <sup>b</sup>'righteous' sake.

16 And he said: Thus saith the Lord God—<sup>a</sup>Cursed shall be the land, yea, this land, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, unto destruction, which do <sup>b</sup>wickedly, when they are fully ripe; and as I

have said so shall it be; for this is the cursing and the <sup>c</sup> blessing of God upon the land, for the Lord cannot look upon sin with the <sup>d</sup> least degree of allowance. (Delbert L. Stapley: "To receive exaltation in the kingdom of God, a person must abide the fulness of celestial law. (See D&C 76:50-70.) Some people erroneously think if they receive all the ordinances of the gospel, regardless of their transgressions, they will inherit the celestial mansions of our God. What a rude awakening awaits such false-thinking individuals, '... for the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.' (Alma 45:16.)" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1974, "The Path to Eternal Life," p. 42) Dallin H. Oaks: "As Nephi foresaw, in the last days 'there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God he will justify in committing a little sin;...there is no harm in this' (2 Nephi 28:8). But according to the prophets of ancient and modern times, 'the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance' (D&C 1:31; see also Leviticus 5:17; Alma 45:16)." (*Morality*, p. 50))

17 And now, when Alma had said these words he blessed the <sup>a</sup> church, yea, all those who should stand fast in the faith from that time henceforth.

18 And when Alma had done this he <sup>a</sup> departed out of the land of Zarahemla, as if to go into the land of <sup>b</sup> Melek. And it came to pass that he was never heard of more; as to his death or burial we know not of. (Alma was translated. Remember that Alma had wished to be an angel so he could preach the gospel like the angel that visited him. Maybe he got his wish. Alma 29: 1 O THAT I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the <sup>a</sup> trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!)

19 Behold, this we know, that he was a righteous man; and the saying went abroad in the church that he was taken up by the <sup>a</sup> Spirit, or <sup>b</sup> buried by the hand of the Lord, even as Moses. But behold, the scriptures saith the Lord took Moses unto himself; and we suppose that he has also received Alma in the spirit, unto himself; therefore, for this cause we know nothing concerning his death and burial. (Bruce R. McConkie: "Moses, Elijah, and Alma the younger, were translated. The Old Testament account that Moses died and was buried by the hand of the Lord in an unknown grave is an error. (Deut. 34:5-7.) It is true that he may have been 'buried by the hand of the Lord,' if that expression is a figure of speech which means that he was translated. But the Book of Mormon account, in recording that Alma 'was taken up by the Spirit,' says, 'the scriptures saith the Lord took Moses unto himself; and we suppose that he has also received Alma in the spirit, unto himself.' (Alma 45:18-19.) It should be remembered that the Nephites had the Brass Plates, and that they were the 'scriptures' which gave the account of Moses being taken by way of translation. As to Elijah, the account of his being taken in 'a chariot of fire . . . by a whirlwind into heaven,' is majestically set out in the Old Testament. (2 Kings 2.)" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:423-4))

20 And now it came to pass in the <sup>\*</sup> commencement of the nineteenth year (73 BC) of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, that Helaman went forth among the people to declare the <sup>a</sup> word unto them.

21 For behold, because of their wars with the Lamanites and the many little dissensions and disturbances which had been among the people, it became expedient that the <sup>a</sup> word of God should be declared among them, yea, and that a <sup>b</sup> regulation should be made throughout the church.

22 Therefore, <sup>a</sup> Helaman and his brethren went forth to establish the church again in all the land, yea, in every city throughout all the land which was possessed by the people of Nephi. And it came to pass that they did appoint <sup>b</sup> priests and <sup>c</sup> teachers throughout all the land, over all the churches.

23 And now it came to pass that after Helaman and his brethren had appointed priests and teachers over the churches that there arose a <sup>a</sup> dissension among them, and they would not give heed to the words of Helaman and his brethren;

24 But they grew proud, being lifted up in their hearts, because of their exceedingly great <sup>a</sup> riches; therefore they grew rich in their own eyes, and would not give heed to their words, to <sup>b</sup> walk uprightly before God. (Looks like the Nephites need to be reminded of their covenants. Maybe the Lamanites

could attack them again to cause them to trust in the Lord.)

\* Verse 20 [73 B.C.].

## CHAPTER 46

*Amalickiah conspires to be king—Moroni raises the title of liberty—He rallies the people to defend their religion—True believers are called Christians—A remnant of Joseph shall be preserved—Amalickiah and the dissenters flee to the land of Nephi—Those who will not support the cause of freedom are put to death. [Between 73 and 72 B.C.]*

1 AND it came to pass that as many as would not hearken to the <sup>a</sup>words of Helaman and his brethren were gathered together against their brethren.

2 And now behold, they were exceedingly wroth, insomuch that they were determined to slay them.

3 Now the leader of those who were wroth against their brethren was a large and a strong man; and his name was <sup>a</sup>Amalickiah.

4 And Amalickiah was desirous to be a <sup>a</sup>king; and those people who were wroth were also desirous that he should be their king; and they were the greater part of them the lower <sup>b</sup>judges of the land, and they were seeking for power.

5 And they had been led by the <sup>a</sup>flatteries of Amalickiah, that if they would support him and establish him to be their king that he would make them rulers over the people.

6 Thus they were led away by Amalickiah to dissensions, notwithstanding the preaching of Helaman and his brethren, yea, notwithstanding their exceedingly great care over the church, for they were <sup>a</sup>high priests over the church.

7 And there were many in the church who believed in the <sup>a</sup>flattering words of Amalickiah, therefore they <sup>b</sup>dissented even from the church; and thus were the affairs of the people of Nephi exceedingly precarious and dangerous, notwithstanding their great <sup>c</sup>victory which they had had over the Lamanites, and their great rejoicings which they had had because of their <sup>d</sup>deliverance by the hand of the Lord.

8 Thus we see how <sup>a</sup>quick the children of men do <sup>b</sup>forget the Lord their God, yea, how quick to do <sup>c</sup>iniquity, and to be led away by the evil one.

9 Yea, and we also see the great <sup>a</sup>wickedness one very wicked man can cause to take place among the children of men.

10 Yea, we see that Amalickiah, because he was a man of cunning device and a man of many flattering words, that he led away the hearts of many people to do wickedly; yea, and to seek to <sup>a</sup>destroy the church of God, and to destroy the foundation of <sup>b</sup>liberty which God had granted unto them, or which blessing God had sent upon the face of the land for the <sup>c</sup>'righteous' sake.

11 And now it came to pass that when Moroni, who was the <sup>a</sup>chief commander of the armies of the Nephites, had heard of these dissensions, he was angry with Amalickiah.

12 And it came to pass that he rent his coat; and he took a piece thereof, and wrote upon it—<sup>a</sup>In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children—and he fastened it upon the end of a pole.

13 And he fastened on his head-plate, and his <sup>a</sup>breastplate, and his shields, and girded on his armor about his loins; and he took the pole, which had on the end thereof his rent coat, (and he called it the <sup>b</sup>title of liberty) and he <sup>c</sup>bowed himself to the earth, and he prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren, so long as there should a band of <sup>d</sup>Christians remain to possess the land— (Ezra Taft Benson: “Of course, the war in heaven over free agency is now being waged here on earth, and there are those today who are saying ‘Look, don't get involved in the fight for freedom. Just live the gospel.’ That counsel is dangerous, self-contradictory, unsound...Now, part of the reason we may not have sufficient priesthood bearers to save the Constitution let alone to shake the powers of hell, is because unlike Moroni, I fear, our souls do not joy in keeping our country free, and we are not firm in



the faith of Christ nor have we sworn with an oath to defend our rights and the liberty of our country. Moroni raised a title of liberty and wrote upon it these words: 'In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children.' Why didn't he write upon it: 'Just live your religion; there's no need to concern yourselves about your freedom, your peace, your wives, or your children'? The reason he didn't do this was because all these things were a part of his religion, as they are of our religion today. Should we counsel people, 'Just live your religion. There's no need to get involved in the fight for freedom'? No, we should not, because our stand for freedom is a most basic part of our religion; this stand helped get us to this earth, and our reaction to freedom in this life will have eternal consequences. Man has many duties, but he has no excuse that can compensate for his loss of liberty." (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1966, p. 122 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 351))

14 For thus were all the true believers of Christ, who belonged to the church of God, called by those who did not belong to the church.

15 And those who did belong to the church were <sup>a</sup>faithful; yea, all those who were true believers in Christ <sup>b</sup>took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or <sup>c</sup>Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ who should come. (Bruce R. McConkie: "Christians is an obvious name for the followers of Christ, for those who believe he is the Son of God and that salvation of all degrees comes because of him and his atoning sacrifice. Since there have been followers of Christ in successive gospel dispensations from Adam to the present, these all would have been known as Christians or some equivalent, synonymous term. By saying the saints were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26) means that for the first time in the meridian dispensation there was a sufficient church membership so that nonmembers recognized the saints as a separate and distinct organization, one severed and apart from the Jewish synagogue and community. As far as the rejectors and detractors of Christ were concerned, the term Christian was probably first used in derision. Such was clearly the case among the Nephites. The Book of Mormon account, recording events in about the year 73 B. C. -- well over a century before the Antioch congregation came into being -- says: 'Christians . . . For thus were all the true believers of Christ, who belonged to the church of God, called by those who did not belong to the church.' (Alma 46:13-16.) A somewhat analogous situation exists in this dispensation with reference to the term Mormons. . . It must be understood that this is not the name of the Church, but in the sense that it is used as a synonym for that name, it is not offensive to those to whom it has been applied. Are Mormons Christians? The answer depends on what is meant by Christians. If Christians are people with the defined view that salvation comes only through the complete gospel of Christ, Mormons are truly Christians in the precise and full meaning of the term. If Christians are people (and this is the standard definition of the clergy of the day) who believe in the holy trinity as defined and set forth in the Nicene, Athanasian, and Apostles creeds, meaning that God is a three-in-one nothingness, a spirit essence filling immensity, an incorporeal and uncreated being incapable of definition or mortal comprehension -- then Mormons, by a clergy-chosen definition, are ruled out of the fold of Christ. But if by Christians is meant the saints of God in Antioch and elsewhere who believe and live as they did; if by Christians is meant those who accept Christ as the literal Son of God; who believe that miracles and signs follow true believers; who believe in kingdoms of glory, revelation, the gathering of Israel, and Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods; who believe there must be apostles and prophets in the Church; and who believe in all respects as did holy men of old -- then Mormons are Christians and they have the only pure and perfect Christianity now on earth. Indeed, Mormonism is pure, unadulterated Christianity, restored anew in all its grandeur and glory." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, pp. 112-3))

16 And therefore, at this time, Moroni prayed that the cause of the Christians, and the <sup>a</sup>freedom of the land might be favored. (Harry Emerson Fosdick once wrote: Some Christians carry their religion on their backs. It is a packet of beliefs and practices which they must bear. At times it grows heavy and they would willingly lay it down, but that would mean a break with old traditions, so they shoulder it again. But real Christians do not carry their religion, their religion carries them. It is not weight; it is wings. It



lifts them up, it seems them over hard places, it makes the universe seem friendly, life purposeful, hope real, sacrifice worthwhile. It sets them free from fear, futility, discouragement, and sin – the great enslavers of men’s souls. You can know a real Christian, when you see him, by his buoyancy. Twelve Tests of Character., 87-88. I hope it is clearly evident when the world looks at us that we are known for our buoyancy – that we live, believe, and practice real Christian ideas and doctrine. L. Tom Perry, Ensign, Nov 1999, 77)

17 And it came to pass that when he had poured out his soul to God, he named all the land which was <sup>a</sup>south of the land <sup>b</sup>Desolation, yea, and in fine, all the land, both on the <sup>c</sup>north and on the south—A chosen land, and the land of <sup>d</sup>liberty.

18 And he said: Surely God shall not <sup>a</sup>suffer that we, who are despised because we take upon us the name of Christ, shall be trodden down and destroyed, until we bring it upon us by our own <sup>b</sup>transgressions.

19 And when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, waving the <sup>a</sup>rent part of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent part, and crying with a loud voice, saying:

20 Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, let them come forth in the strength of the Lord, and <sup>a</sup>enter into a covenant that they will <sup>b</sup>maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them.

21 And it came to pass that when Moroni had proclaimed these words, behold, the people came running <sup>a</sup>together with their armor girded about their loins, <sup>b</sup>rending their garments in token, or as a <sup>c</sup>covenant, that they would not forsake the Lord their God; or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be <sup>d</sup>ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments.

22 Now this was the covenant which they made, and they <sup>a</sup>cast their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying: We <sup>b</sup>covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression. (For the Nephites, righteousness was at the heart of good government; a government was only as good as its people and its leaders. They were convinced that they could enjoy the blessings and protection of the Almighty only in a state of faithfulness and fidelity to their covenants. Thus the people “cast their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying “We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward (the Jaredites), if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression.” Similarly, in the exchange of letters between Moroni and the chief judge Pahoran, even though Moroni is unaware of Pahoran’s plight, we see the nobility of soul and fearlessness of Moroni in his attitude toward upholding the Nephite government and destroying all influences which would seek to rob men and women of their inalienable rights. DCBM, 3:323-34)

23 Moroni said unto them: Behold, we are a <sup>a</sup>remnant of the seed of Jacob; yea, we are a remnant of the seed of <sup>b</sup>Joseph, whose <sup>c</sup>coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces; yea, and now behold, let us remember to keep the commandments of God, or our garments shall be rent by our brethren, and we be cast into prison, or be sold, or be slain. (Joseph’s “coat of many colors” has become legendary. Yet, the language used may not be an accurate description of the garment. In fact the word “garment” may be a better description. A modern Torah commentary gives alternate translations such as “*Ornamental Tunic*. [Although] the meaning is not clear. Others translate as ‘a coat of many colors,’ or ‘a robe with sleeves.’” (W. Gunther Plaut, *Torah: A Modern Commentary*, p. 244) Yet, apocryphal sources indicate that the garment was “the garment of Adam” which had been handed down from one patriarch to the next. This, in part, explains the anger of Joseph’s elder brothers when they learned that he would be the recipient of the garment. In Alma 46:21-24 we read of a particular ceremony associated with the story of Joseph’s garment. Because Jewish tradition indicates that Joseph’s garment was the high priestly garment

of Adam, this passage may have more meaning than previously supposed. In this passage, the desecration of the garment symbolizes being ‘ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ.’” (Donald W. Parry, *Temples of the Ancient World*, p. 695, footnote 50) There is no shortage of traditions in the Old World about this garment of Joseph. Ginzberg recounts various stories about appearances of Gabriel to Joseph. One of these appearances was while Joseph was imprisoned in the pit before his brothers sold him into slavery. Here it is said that Gabriel placed upon him a special garment of protection which he wore throughout all his Egyptian experiences (Ginzberg, Louis. *The Legends of the Jews*. 7 vols. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909., 2:17). Ginzberg also records that after Joseph was reunited with his family in Egypt his father gave him two gifts, the first being the city of Shechem and ‘the second gift was the garments made by God for Adam and passed from hand to hand, until they came into the possession of Jacob’ (Ginzberg, Louis. *The Legends of the Jews*. 7 vols. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909., 2:139). He also notes that ‘according to the view of later authors, Joseph's coat was the holy tunic of the priest’ (Ginzberg, Louis. *The Legends of the Jews*. 7 vols. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909., 5:326).” (Millet & McConkie, *Gospel Symbolism*, p. 140) Hugh Nibley: “Here the survival of Joseph's garment guarantees and typifies the survival of Joseph (Alma 46:24). In the tenth century of our era the greatest antiquarian of the Moslem world, Muhammad ibn-Ibrahim ath-Tha'labi, collected in Persia a great many old tales and legends about the prophets of Israel... Among other things, Tha'labi tells a number of stories, which we have not found anywhere else, about Jacob and the garment of Joseph. In one, Joseph's brethren bring his torn garment to their father as proof that he is dead, but Jacob after examining the garment (‘and there were in the garment of Joseph three marks or tokens when they brought it to his father’) declares that the way the cloth is torn shows him that their story is not true: ‘Behold, if the bear had eaten him he surely would have rent his garment, and since he would (naturally) have fled towards the gate, verily the garment should have been torn behind.’ But since this is not the case it may be that Joseph still lives... Most significant is Tha'labi's discussion of the two remnants of Joseph's garment, from which we quote: “And when Joseph had made himself known unto them [his brethren] he asked them about his father, saying, ‘What did my father after [I left]?’ They answered, ‘He lost his eyesight [from weeping].’ Then he gave them his garment [*qamis*, long outer shirt]. According to ad-Dahak that garment was of the weave [pattern, design] of Paradise, and the breath [spirit, odor] of Paradise was in it, so that it never decayed or in any way deteriorated [and that was] a sign [omen]. And Joseph gave them that garment, and it was the very one that had belonged to Abraham, having already had a long history. And he said to them, ‘Go, take this garment of mine and place it upon the face of my father so he may have sight again, and return [to me] with all your families.’ And when they had put Egypt behind them and come to Canaan their father Jacob said, ‘Behold, I perceive the spirit [breath, odor] of Joseph, if you will not think me wandering in my mind and weakheaded from age.’ . . . [for] he knew that upon all the earth there was no spirit [breath, odor] of Paradise save in that garment alone. . . . And as-Sadi says that Judah said to Joseph, ‘It was I who took the garment bedaubed with blood to Jacob, and reported to him that the wolf had eaten Joseph; so give me this day thy garment that I might tell him that thou art living, that I might cause him to rejoice now as greatly as I caused him to sorrow then.’ And Ibn-Abbas says that Judah took the garment and went forth in great haste, panting with exertion and anxiety . . . and when he brought the garment he laid it upon his face, so that his sight returned to him. And ad-Dahak says that his sight returned after blindness, and his strength after weakness, and youth after age, and joy after sorrow. [Then follows a dialogue between Jacob and the King of Death]. Note here that there were two remnants of Joseph's garment, one sent by Joseph to his father as a sign that he was still alive (since the garment had not decayed), and the other, torn and smeared with blood, brought by Judah to his father as a sign that Joseph was dead. Moroni actually quotes Jacob (‘Now behold, this was the language of Jacob’ [Alma 46:26]) as saying: ‘Now behold, this giveth my soul sorrow; nevertheless, my soul hath joy in my son’ (Alma 46:25)... These interesting little details are typical apocryphal variations on a single theme, and the theme is the one Moroni mentions; the rent garment of

Joseph is the symbol both of his suffering and his deliverance, misfortune and preservation.” (*An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, p. 218-20))

24 Yea, let us preserve our liberty as a <sup>a</sup>remnant of Joseph; yea, let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death, for behold, he saw that a <sup>b</sup>part of the <sup>c</sup>remnant of the coat of Joseph was <sup>d</sup>preserved and had not decayed. And he said—Even as this remnant of garment of my son hath been preserved, so shall a <sup>e</sup>remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God, and be taken unto himself, while the remainder of the seed of Joseph shall perish, even as the remnant of his garment.

25 Now behold, this giveth my soul sorrow; nevertheless, my soul hath joy in my son, because of that part of his seed which shall be taken unto God.

26 Now behold, this was the language of Jacob.

27 And now who knoweth but what the remnant of the seed of Joseph, which shall perish as his garment, are those who have dissented from us? Yea, and even it shall be ourselves if we do not stand fast in the faith of Christ.

28 And now it came to pass that when Moroni had said these words he went forth, and also sent forth in all the parts of the land where there were dissensions, and gathered together all the people who were desirous to maintain their liberty, to stand against Amalickiah and those who had dissented, who were called Amalickiahites.

29 And it came to pass that when Amalickiah saw that the people of Moroni were more numerous than the Amalickiahites—and he also saw that his people were <sup>a</sup>doubtful concerning the justice of the cause in which they had undertaken—therefore, fearing that he should not gain the point, he took those of his people who would and departed into the <sup>b</sup>land of Nephi.

30 Now Moroni thought it was not expedient that the Lamanites should have any more <sup>a</sup>strength; therefore he thought to cut off the people of Amalickiah, or to take them and bring them back, and put Amalickiah to death; yea, for he knew that he would stir up the Lamanites to anger against them, and cause them to come to battle against them; and this he knew that Amalickiah would do that he might obtain his purposes.

31 Therefore Moroni thought it was expedient that he should take his armies, who had gathered themselves together, and armed themselves, and entered into a covenant to keep the peace—and it came to pass that he took his army and marched out with his tents into the wilderness, to cut off the course of Amalickiah in the wilderness.

32 And it came to pass that he did according to his desires, and marched forth into the wilderness, and headed the armies of Amalickiah.

33 And it came to pass that Amalickiah <sup>a</sup>fled with a small number of his men, and the remainder were delivered up into the hands of Moroni and were taken back into the land of Zarahemla.

34 Now, Moroni being a man who was <sup>a</sup>appointed by the chief judges and the voice of the people, therefore he had power according to his will with the armies of the Nephites, to establish and to exercise authority over them.

35 And it came to pass that whomsoever of the Amalickiahites that would not enter into a covenant to support the <sup>a</sup>cause of freedom, that they might maintain a free <sup>b</sup>government, he caused to be put to death; and there were but few who denied the covenant of freedom.

36 And it came to pass also, that he caused the <sup>a</sup>title of liberty to be hoisted upon every tower which was in all the land, which was possessed by the Nephites; and thus Moroni planted the standard of liberty among the Nephites.

37 And they began to have peace again in the land; and thus they did maintain peace in the land until nearly the <sup>\*</sup>end of the nineteenth year (72 BC) of the reign of the judges.

38 And Helaman and the <sup>a</sup>high priests did also maintain order in the church; yea, even for the space of four years did they have much peace and rejoicing in the church.

39 And it came to pass that there were many who died, firmly <sup>a</sup>believing that their souls were redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ; thus they went out of the world rejoicing.

40 And there were some who died with fevers, which at some seasons of the year were very frequent in the land—but not so much so with fevers, because of the excellent qualities of the many <sup>a</sup>plants and roots which God had prepared to remove the cause of <sup>b</sup>diseases, to which men were subject by the nature of the climate— (Hugh Nibley: “They were able to control fevers because of the very good remedies they had from these tropical plants. Quinine wasn't discovered until 1840. Nobody knew that the quinine bark would cure these fevers until then. They didn't know what could cure them. They didn't know about mosquitoes or anything else. Again, here we have a wonderful insight. There are these occasional flashes of background in the Book of Mormon, which for the most part concentrate intently on the issues of salvation. But here it just happens to note in passing (it's good to note) that it was fever country and there were diseases to which men were subject by the nature of the climate, which was tropical and humid. The fevers were held under control by the most excellent quality of the plants.” (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, lecture 62, p. 65) Bruce R. McConkie: “There are two opposite and almost equally unsound views held by many people as to the value and place of physicians in society. Most people rely entirely on doctors and medical science where health is concerned and make no attempt to seek the healing power of the Lord. (2 Chron. 16:12.) Some others reject hospitalization and medicinal aid, supposing that it is only by divine aid that health will or can be restored. Actually, of course, the Lord intends that men should exercise faith in him so as to be healed, but he also intends that men should use the agency and intelligence he has given them, in both preventing and curing sickness. It is proper that the sick should ‘be nourished with all tenderness, with herbs and mild food.’ (D. & C. 42:43.) The Book of Mormon speaks ‘of the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared to remove the cause of diseases.’ (Alma 46:40.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 573))

41 But there were many who died with <sup>a</sup>old age; and those who died in the faith of Christ are <sup>b</sup>happy in him, as we must needs suppose. (Neal A. Maxwell: Clearly there are different individual exit routes from life. Some people go suddenly and quickly, leaving survivors in a state of shock and with almost no time to prepare. Others die only after prolonged suffering. It is best that we leave to the Lord the variations in both the timing and the exit routes. He and He alone can make those decisions, and He does so out of His individualized perfect love and mercy. In any case, uncertainty as to longevity leaves a balance to be struck by us all. We are to salute the Lord for the gift of life, for as long as it lasts, and yet, at the same time, to be spiritually submissive as it ends. This is a delicate balance we do not always fully and gracefully achieve. Several scriptures have proved to be relevant and reassuring in this regard. When these have been shared aloud with many who also suffer from cancer they have been far better than anything I could say, especially to those valiants who reach that point where they are sick of being sick. One More Strain of Praise, 9,12)

\* Verse 37 [72 B.C.].

## CHAPTER 47

*Amalickiah uses treachery, murder, and intrigue to become king of the Lamanites—The Nephite dissenters are more wicked and ferocious than the Lamanites. [72 B.C.]*

1 NOW we will return in our record to Amalickiah and those who had <sup>a</sup>fled with him into the wilderness; for, behold, he had taken those who went with him, and went up in the <sup>b</sup>land of Nephi among the Lamanites, and did <sup>c</sup>stir up the Lamanites to anger against the people of Nephi, insomuch that the king of the Lamanites sent a proclamation throughout all his land, among all his people, that they should gather themselves together again to go to battle against the Nephites.

2 And it came to pass that when the proclamation had gone forth among them they were exceedingly afraid; yea, they <sup>a</sup>feared to displease the king, and they also feared to go to battle against the Nephites lest they should lose their lives. And it came to pass that they would not, or the more part of them would not, obey the commandments of the king.



3 And now it came to pass that the king was wroth because of their disobedience; therefore he gave Amalickiah the command of that part of his army which was obedient unto his commands, and commanded him that he should go forth and <sup>a</sup>compel them to arms.

4 Now behold, this was the desire of Amalickiah; for he being a very <sup>a</sup>subtle man to do evil therefore he laid the plan in his heart to <sup>b</sup>dethrone the king of the Lamanites.

5 And now he had got the command of those parts of the Lamanites who were in favor of the king; and he sought to gain favor of those who were not obedient; therefore he went forward to the place which was called <sup>a</sup>Onidah, for thither had all the Lamanites fled; for they discovered the army coming, and, supposing that they were coming to destroy them, therefore they fled to Onidah, to the place of arms.

6 And they had appointed a man to be a king and a leader over them, being fixed in their minds with a determined resolution that they would <sup>a</sup>not be subjected to go against the Nephites.

7 And it came to pass that they had gathered themselves together upon the top of the mount which was called Antipas, in preparation to battle.

8 Now it was not Amalickiah's intention to give them battle according to the commandments of the king; but behold, it was his intention to gain favor with the armies of the Lamanites, that he might place himself at their head and dethrone the king and take possession of the kingdom.

9 And behold, it came to pass that he caused his army to pitch their tents in the valley which was near the mount Antipas.

10 And it came to pass that when it was night he sent a secret embassy into the mount Antipas, desiring that the leader of those who were upon the mount, whose name was Lehonti, that he should come down to the foot of the mount, for he desired to speak with him.

11 And it came to pass that when Lehonti received the message he durst not go down to the foot of the mount. And it came to pass that Amalickiah sent again the second time, desiring him to come down. And it came to pass that Lehonti would not; and he sent again the third time.

12 And it came to pass that when Amalickiah found that he could not get Lehonti to come down off from the mount, he went up into the mount, nearly to Lehonti's camp; and he sent again the fourth time his message unto Lehonti, desiring that he would come down, and that he would bring his guards with him.

13 And it came to pass that when Lehonti had come down with his guards to Amalickiah, that Amalickiah desired him to come down with his army in the night-time, and surround those men in their camps over whom the king had given him command, and that he would deliver them up into Lehonti's hands, if he would make him (Amalickiah) a second <sup>a</sup>leader over the whole army.

14 And it came to pass that Lehonti came down with his men and surrounded the men of Amalickiah, so that before they awoke at the dawn of day they were surrounded by the armies of Lehonti.

15 And it came to pass that when they saw that they were surrounded, they plead with Amalickiah that he would suffer them to fall in with their brethren, that they might not be destroyed. Now this was the very thing which Amalickiah desired.

16 And it came to pass that he delivered his men, <sup>a</sup>contrary to the commands of the king. Now this was the thing that Amalickiah desired, that he might accomplish his designs in dethroning the king.

17 Now it was the custom among the Lamanites, if their chief leader was killed, to appoint the second leader to be their chief leader.

18 And it came to pass that Amalickiah caused that one of his servants should administer <sup>a</sup>poison by degrees (Satan leads us astray in small degrees, until we are dead spiritually. A person who is active in the Church can be led astray in small degrees until he is inactive and indifferent to the Church.) to Lehonti, that he died. (The scriptures contain many types and shadows of Christ, and my conviction is that the story of Amalickiah provides us with the opposite – a type and shadow of Satan. Think of the parallels! Amalickiah wanted to be king, he was cast out, and he took his followers with him. Similarly, Satan wanted to “exalt [his] throne above the stars of God (2 Nephi 24:13), was cast out, and took his followers with him. Amalickiah is described as cunning, flattering, and a murderer. Satan is



also described as cunning, flattering, and a murderer. Amalickiah poisoned Lehonti “by degrees.” Satan leads us “carefully” or “by degrees” down to hell (2 Nephi 28:21). Amalickiah did “not care for the blood of his people” (Alma 49:10). Satan will “not support his children at the last day (Alma 30:60). Amalickiah succeeded in persuading the king of the Lamanites to attack the Nephites, but a large part of the Lamanite army refused to fight the Nephites. They found refuge on top of the mount Antipas and appointed Lehonti to be their leader. Three different times, Amalickiah invited Lehonti to come down from the mountain. Lehonti refused each time. Eventually, Amalickiah went up, nearly to the camp of Lehonti, and persuaded Lehonti to come down “just a little.” Amalickiah convinced Lehonti that he was not really an enemy, but a friend who only wanted to be second in command. Eventually, Lehonti agreed to Amalickiah’s scheme, and was unknowingly poisoned “by degrees” until he died. As Latter-day Saints, we have gone up to the “mountain of the Lord” and made covenants. Satan continually invites us to come down. We refuse. So he invites us to come down just a little. If we do, we subject ourselves to his power where we will eventually be poisoned by degrees. If we are wounded by a gunshot, or a sword, we know about it! But if we are slowly poisoned, we might not even realize it’s happening. Poison is a perfect metaphor for Satan’s tactics, because a victim of poison may not even realize what’s happening, and may still believe he’s in control up until the moment he dies. The spiritual message is powerful and chilling – Don’t come down from your mountain! Keep your covenants! Satan wants us to come down so he can poison us by degrees. (It’s interesting to note that Jesus was invited to come down three times from the pinnacle of the temple, but he never did. See Matthew 4:1-11). John Bytheway.)

19 Now, when Lehonti was dead, the Lamanites appointed Amalickiah to be their leader and their chief commander.

20 And it came to pass that Amalickiah marched with his armies (for he had gained his desires) to the <sup>a</sup>land of Nephi, to the city of Nephi, which was the chief city.

21 And the king came out to meet him with his guards, for he supposed that Amalickiah had <sup>a</sup>fulfilled his commands, and that Amalickiah had gathered together so great an army to go against the Nephites to battle.

22 But behold, as the king came out to meet him Amalickiah caused that his servants should go forth to meet the king. And they went and <sup>a</sup>bowed themselves before the king, as if to reverence him because of his greatness.

23 And it came to pass that the king put forth his hand to raise them, as was the custom with the Lamanites, as a token of peace, which custom they had taken from the Nephites.

24 And it came to pass that when he had raised the first from the ground, behold he stabbed the king to the heart; and he fell to the earth.

25 Now the servants of the king fled; and the servants of Amalickiah raised a cry, saying:

26 Behold, the servants of the king have stabbed him to the heart, and he has fallen and they have fled; behold, come and see.

27 And it came to pass that Amalickiah commanded that his armies should march forth and see what had happened to the king; and when they had come to the spot, and found the king lying in his gore, Amalickiah pretended to be wroth, and said: Whosoever loved the king, let him go forth, and pursue his servants that they may be slain.

28 And it came to pass that all they who loved the king, when they heard these words, came forth and pursued after the servants of the king.

29 Now when the <sup>a</sup>servants of the king saw an army pursuing after them, they were frightened again, and fled into the wilderness, and came over into the land of Zarahemla and joined the <sup>b</sup>people of Ammon.

30 And the army which pursued after them returned, having pursued after them in vain; and thus Amalickiah, by his <sup>a</sup>fraud, gained the hearts of the people.

31 And it came to pass on the morrow he entered the city Nephi with his armies, and took possession of

the city.

32 And now it came to pass that the queen, when she had heard that the king was slain—for Amalickiah had sent an embassy to the queen informing her that the king had been slain by his servants, that he had pursued them with his army, but it was in vain, and they had made their escape—

33 Therefore, when the queen had received this message she sent unto Amalickiah, desiring him that he would spare the people of the city; and she also desired him that he should come in unto her; and she also desired him that he should bring <sup>a</sup>witnesses with him to testify concerning the death of the king.

34 And it came to pass that Amalickiah took the same servant that slew the king, and all them who were with him, and went in unto the queen, unto the place where she sat; and they all <sup>a</sup>testified unto her that the king was slain by his own servants; and they said also: They have fled; does not this testify against them? And thus they satisfied the queen concerning the death of the king.

35 And it came to pass that Amalickiah sought the <sup>a</sup>favor of the queen, and took her unto him to wife; and thus by his <sup>b</sup>fraud, and by the assistance of his cunning servants, he <sup>c</sup>obtained the kingdom; yea, he was acknowledged king throughout all the land, among all the people of the Lamanites, who were <sup>d</sup>composed of the Lamanites and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites, and all the dissenters of the Nephites, from the reign of Nephi down to the present time.

36 Now these <sup>a</sup>dissenters, having the same instruction and the same information of the Nephites, yea, having been instructed in the same <sup>b</sup>knowledge of the Lord, nevertheless, it is strange to relate, not long after their dissensions they became more hardened and <sup>c</sup>impenitent, and more wild, wicked and ferocious than the Lamanites—drinking in with the <sup>d</sup>traditions of the Lamanites; giving way to <sup>e</sup>indolence, and all manner of lasciviousness; yea, entirely forgetting the Lord their God. (Joseph Smith: “Strange as it may appear at first thought, yet it is no less strange than true, that...apostates after turning from the faith of Christ, unless they have speedily repented, have sooner or later fallen into the snares of the wicked one, and have been left destitute of the Spirit of God, to manifest their wickedness in the eyes of multitudes...When once that light which was in them is taken from them, they become as much darkened as they were previously enlightened, and then, no marvel, if all their power should be enlisted against the truth, and they, Judas like, seek the destruction of those who were their greatest benefactors.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 67) Neal A. Maxwell: “Willful dissent ages ago [among the Nephites] produced yet other symptoms that are worthy of our pondering today as life confronts us with determined dissenters who leave the Church—but who then cannot leave the Church alone.” (*Plain and Precious Things*, p. 72) “Then there are the dissenters who leave the Church, either formally or informally, but who cannot leave it alone. Usually anxious to please worldly galleries, they are critical or at least condescending towards the Brethren. They not only seek to steady the ark but also on occasion give it a hard shove! Often having been taught the same true doctrines as the faithful, they have nevertheless moved in the direction of dissent (see Alma 47:36). They have minds hardened by pride (see Daniel 5:20).” (*Men and Women of Christ*, p. 4))

## CHAPTER 48

*Amalickiah incites the Lamanites against the Nephites—Moroni prepares his people to defend the cause of the Christians—He rejoiced in liberty and freedom and was a mighty man of God. [72 B.C.]*

1 AND now it came to pass that, as soon as <sup>a</sup>Amalickiah had obtained the kingdom he began to <sup>b</sup>inspire the hearts of the Lamanites against the people of Nephi; yea, he did appoint men to speak unto the Lamanites from their <sup>c</sup>towers, against the Nephites.

2 And thus he did inspire their hearts against the Nephites, insomuch that in the <sup>\*</sup>latter end of the <sup>a</sup>nineteenth year (72 BC) of the reign of the judges, he having accomplished his designs thus far, yea, having been made king over the Lamanites, he <sup>b</sup>sought also to <sup>c</sup>reign over all the land, yea, and all the

people who were in the land, the Nephites as well as the Lamanites.

3 Therefore he had accomplished his design, for he had hardened the hearts of the Lamanites and blinded their minds, and stirred them up to anger, insomuch that he had gathered together a numerous host to go to battle against the Nephites.

4 For he was determined, because of the greatness of the number of his people, to <sup>a</sup>overpower the Nephites and to bring them into bondage.

5 And thus he did appoint <sup>a</sup>chief captains of the <sup>b</sup>Zoramites, they being the most acquainted with the strength of the Nephites, and their places of resort, and the weakest parts of their cities; therefore he appointed them to be chief captains over his armies.

6 And it came to pass that they took their camp, and moved forth toward the land of Zarahemla in the wilderness.

7 Now it came to pass that while Amalickiah had thus been obtaining power by fraud and deceit, Moroni, on the other hand, had been <sup>a</sup>preparing the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord their God. (Much of Alma 48 is a stirring tribute to Captain Moroni. At the beginning of the chapter, however, we are reminded of the preeminence of spiritual preparation: “While Amalickiah had thus been obtaining power by fraud and deceit, Moroni, on the other hand, had been preparing...” Preparing what? Sorry to interrupt, but what do you suppose the rest of the verse will say? Had Moroni been preparing more weapons and forts? No. The verse continues, “Moroni, on the other hand, had been preparing *the minds of the people to be faithful* unto the Lord their God” (verse 7, *emphasis added*). Once again, we see the power of faith in Christ, and the priority of putting first things first, especially in times of war. John Bytheway)

8 Yea, he had been strengthening the armies of the Nephites, and erecting small <sup>a</sup>forts, or places of resort; throwing up banks of earth round about to enclose his armies, and also building <sup>b</sup>walls of stone to encircle them about, round about their cities and the borders of their lands; yea, all round about the land. (Hugh Nibley: “Moroni's defenses were based on a series of strong points, being a defense in depth, as modern defense-lines are; beside specially placed ‘small forts, or places of resort,’ towns and cities on the line were also converted into strong points (Alma 48:8). Such an arrangement can take the momentum out of any military steamroller and slow down or stop any attacking force, no matter how formidable, by forcing it to reduce one strong place after another or else bypass the fortifications and thereby leave dangerous enemy forces in its rear to disrupt communications and launch harassing counter-attacks on invading units. With this strictly defensive program (the preparation being to fight if at all only on their own grounds), an early-warning system was all-important. And it was Moroni's idea that God himself would provide such a system if the people were only faithful: ‘If they were faithful in keeping the commandments of God that he would . . . warn them to flee, or to prepare for war, according to their danger; and also, that God would make it known unto them whither they should go to defend themselves’ (Alma 48:15-16). In short, God was their ‘Dew-line,’ their radar, and warning system, and that saved them the need of constant and costly vigilance on all fronts, to say nothing of expensive and wasteful war-plans and war-games. This was Moroni's policy of preparedness, ‘this was the faith of Moroni and his heart did glory in it; not in the shedding of blood but in doing good’ (Alma 48:16).” (Since Cumorah, p. 307))

9 And in their weakest fortifications he did place the greater number of men; and thus he did fortify and strengthen the land which was possessed by the Nephites.

10 And thus he was preparing to <sup>a</sup>support their liberty, their lands, their wives, and their children, and their peace, and that they might live unto the Lord their God, and that they might maintain that which was called by their enemies the cause of <sup>b</sup>Christians.

11 And Moroni was a <sup>a</sup>strong and a mighty man (“Mormon masterfully abridged the scriptural record about Moroni, chief captain of the Nephite armies, demonstrating to his anticipated readers that this was a man most needed not only for his day, but also for our own...In accordance with Mormon's hopes, Captain Moroni endures as a model of courage and righteousness to many Latter-day Saints. His

powerful example is obscured only by ignorance and misunderstanding of the world in which he lived. Brigham Young taught that the scriptures can best be understood by reading them 'as though [we] stood in the place of the men who wrote them' (*Journal of Discourses* 7:333). There is an immense historical and cultural distance separating Moroni from modern comprehension. This distance can be narrowed by striving to view Moroni within the context of his own world." (Thomas R. Valetta, *Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, Alma, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 223); he was a man of a perfect<sup>b</sup> understanding; yea, a man that did not delight in bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country, and his brethren from bondage and slavery;

12 Yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God, for the many privileges and blessings which he bestowed upon his people; a man who did labor exceedingly for the<sup>a</sup> welfare and safety of his people.

13 Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had<sup>a</sup> sworn with an oath to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood.

14 Now the Nephites were taught to defend themselves against their enemies, even to the shedding of blood if it were necessary; yea, and they were also taught<sup>a</sup> never to give an offense, yea, and never to raise the sword except it were against an enemy, except it were to preserve their lives.

15 And this was their<sup>a</sup> faith, that by so doing God would<sup>b</sup> prosper them in the land, or in other words, if they were faithful in keeping the commandments of God that he would prosper them in the land; yea, warn them to flee, or to prepare for war, according to their danger; (The epidemic of pornography was mentioned 372 times in the Ensign between 1970 and 2000. From 1899 to 1969, this plague was only mentioned 9 times in General Conference, and never before 1959 when Elder Benson mentioned it in an October sermon. The prophets have indicated clearly where the danger lies. Like Joseph bolting from Potiphar's house, this is a temptation from which we must flee. Ted Gibbons, LDS Living Lesson 31)

16 And also, that God would make it known unto them<sup>a</sup> whither they should go to defend themselves against their enemies (Spencer W. Kimball: "We are a warlike people, easily distracted from our assignment of preparing for the coming of the Lord. When enemies rise up, we commit vast resources to the fabrication of gods of stone and steel-ships, planes, missiles, fortifications-and depend on them for protection and deliverance. When threatened, we become anti-enemy instead of pro-kingdom of God; we train a man in the art of war and call him a patriot, thus, in the manner of Satan's counterfeit of true patriotism, in the Savior's teaching: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.' (Matthew 5:44-45.) We forget that if we are righteous the Lord will either not suffer our enemies to come upon us-and this is the special promise to the inhabitants of the land of the Americas-or he will fight our battles for us.... What are we to fear when the Lord is with us? Can we not take the Lord at his word and exercise a particle of faith in him?" (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 417)), and by so doing, the Lord would deliver them; and this was the faith of Moroni, and his heart did glory in it; not in the<sup>b</sup> shedding of blood but in doing good, in preserving his people, yea, in keeping the commandments of God, yea, and resisting iniquity.

17 Yea, verily, verily I say unto you, if all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto<sup>a</sup> Moroni, ("Captain Moroni, chief captain of the Nephite armies, is a man Mormon greatly admired. He devotes a large part of his abridgment to the wars fought by Captain Moroni and may even have named his son after this courageous captain. The description of Captain Moroni in the book of Alma gives some insight into Mormon's personality. He admires Moroni for his skill as a general but even more for his faith in God." (*Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, Alma, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 223)) behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the<sup>b</sup> devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men. (Hugh Nibley: "You do not expel evil from 'the hearts of the children of men' by shooting them or blowing them up or torturing them—the Inquisition operated on that theory. Nor can 'the powers of hell be shaken' by heavy artillery or nuclear warheads...Nobody knows that better than Moroni, whose efforts to avoid conflict far exceed his labors



in battle. When he sees trouble ahead, he gets ready for it by ‘preparing the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord their God’ (Alma 48:7).” (*The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, p. 492) Moroni remained righteous, strong, and powerful even in an environment where death, suffering, pain, and hatred became the norm. The question can then be asked, “Can a Latter-day Saint be righteous in a military environment?” The answer, based on Moroni’s experience, is yes. H. Dean Garrett, *Studies in Scripture*, 8:77-78. General Omar Bradley said: We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount...Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living. The Life of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 349. President Dwight D. Eisenhower observed: Every gun made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children...This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron. *Peace with Justice*, p. 37-38.)

18 Behold, he was a man like unto <sup>a</sup>Ammon, the son of Mosiah, yea, and even the other sons of Mosiah, yea, and also Alma and his sons, for they were all men of God. (Hugh Nibley: “Mormon tells us that Moroni ‘was a man like unto Ammon . . . and also Alma’ (Alma 48:18). Alma, it will be recalled, after ably functioning as commander of the armies, high priest of the church, and chief judge of the land, laid down all his high offices to go out and try to save things by ‘bearing down in pure testimony’ among a stiffnecked people (Alma 4:19). They gave him a bad time when he came before them without any official clout, but he knew that the gospel was the only solution. Ammon, the mightiest fighting man in the Book of Mormon, laid aside his invincible sword to go tractating from door to door among a bloody-minded enemy nation. His friends and fellow church members laughed at the deed.” (*The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, p. 355))

19 Now behold, Helaman and his brethren were no less <sup>a</sup>serviceable unto the people than was Moroni; for they did preach the word of God, and they did baptize unto repentance all men whosoever would hearken unto their words.

20 And thus they went forth, and the people did <sup>a</sup>humble themselves because of their <sup>b</sup>words, insomuch that they were highly <sup>c</sup>favored of the Lord, and thus they were free from wars and contentions among themselves, yea, even for the space of four years.

21 But, as I have said, in the <sup>a</sup>latter end of the nineteenth year, yea, notwithstanding their peace amongst themselves, they were compelled reluctantly to contend with their brethren, the Lamanites. (Our attitude toward war should be to be reluctant to fight, but realize in some cases it is absolutely necessary to fight when required.)

22 Yea, and in fine, their wars never did cease for the space of many years with the Lamanites, notwithstanding their much reluctance.

23 Now, they were <sup>a</sup>sorry to take up arms against the Lamanites, because they did not delight in the shedding of blood (David was not allowed to build the Temple in Jerusalem because he was a man of blood.); yea, and this was not all—they were <sup>b</sup>sorry to be the means of sending so many of their brethren out of this world into an eternal world, <sup>c</sup>unprepared to meet their God. (Hugh Nibley: “[Moroni’s] magnanimous nature as a lover of peace and fair play always prevailed. He always calls the enemy his brothers, with whom he is loathe to contend. You cannot ask for a less warlike spirit than that of an army who ‘were compelled reluctantly to contend with their brethren, the Lamanites,’ who waged war ‘for the space of many years, . . . notwithstanding their much reluctance’; who were ‘sorry to take up arms against the Lamanites, because they did not delight in the shedding of blood; yea . . . they were sorry to be the means of sending so many of their brethren out of this world’ (Alma 48:21-23). In battle Moroni always calls an end to the fighting and proposes a settlement the moment the enemy shows signs of weakening (Alma 43:54; 44:1, 20); and though surprise and deception are the essence of strategy, he refused to take advantage of an enemy who was too drunk to fight—that would be an ‘injustice’ (Alma



55:19). He even made special excuses for sending spies behind enemy lines (Alma 43:27-30). With never a thought of punishing a beaten foe, Moroni sought no reprisals even after the gravest provocations. He was satisfied to take his defeated adversaries at their word and trust them to return to their homes or settle among the Nephites as they chose (Alma 44:6, 11, 19-20), even granting them Nephite lands for their rehabilitation (Alma 62:16-17). His attitude is well expressed in an exchange of letters with his friend Pahoran, who writes: ‘We would not shed the blood of the Lamanites if they would stay in their own land. We would not shed the blood of our [Nephite] brethren if they would not rise up in rebellion and take the sword against us. We would subject ourselves to the yoke of if it were requisite with the justice of God’” (*The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, p. 353))

24 Nevertheless, they could not suffer to lay down their lives, that their <sup>a</sup>wives and their children should be <sup>b</sup>massacred by the barbarous <sup>c</sup>cruelty of those who were once their brethren, yea, and had <sup>d</sup>dissented from their church, and had left them and had gone to destroy them by joining the Lamanites.

25 Yea, they could not bear that their brethren should rejoice over the blood of the Nephites, so long as there were any who should keep the commandments of God, for the promise of the Lord was, if they should keep his commandments they should <sup>a</sup>prosper in the land.

\* Verse 2 [72 B.C.].

## CHAPTER 49

*The invading Lamanites are unable to take the fortified cities of Ammonihah and Noah—Amalickiah curses God and swears to drink the blood of Moroni—Helaman and his brethren continue to strengthen the Church. [72 B.C.]*

1 AND now it came to pass in the \*eleventh month of the nineteenth year (72 BC), on the tenth day of the month, the armies of the Lamanites were seen approaching towards the land of <sup>a</sup>Ammonihah.

2 And behold, the city had been rebuilt, and Moroni had stationed an army by the borders of the city, and they had <sup>a</sup>cast up dirt round about to shield them from the arrows and the <sup>b</sup>stones of the Lamanites; for behold, they fought with stones and with arrows.

3 Behold, I said that the city of <sup>a</sup>Ammonihah had been rebuilt. I say unto you, yea, that it was in part rebuilt; and because the Lamanites had destroyed it once because of the iniquity of the people, they supposed that it would again become an easy prey for them.

4 But behold, how great was their disappointment; for behold, the Nephites had dug up a <sup>a</sup>ridge of earth round about them, which was so high that the Lamanites could not cast their stones and their arrows at them that they might take effect, neither could they come upon them save it was by their place of <sup>b</sup>entrance.

5 Now at this time the chief <sup>a</sup>captains of the Lamanites were astonished exceedingly, because of the wisdom of the Nephites in preparing their places of security.

6 Now the leaders of the Lamanites had supposed, because of the greatness of their numbers, yea, they supposed that they should be privileged to come upon them as they had hitherto done; yea, and they had also prepared themselves with shields, and with <sup>a</sup>breastplates; and they had also prepared themselves with garments of skins, yea, very thick garments to cover their nakedness. (Hugh Nilbey: “Turn to Alma 49:6. There's no better known maxim than that generals always plan the next war in terms of the last war. They always fight the last war because that's where their experience is. That's where they can correct their mistakes. They talk it over and endlessly argue what they would have done, what this person should have done and that person should have done. The English are great on that. That's exactly what happened here. Notice this neat touch here in the verse 6: ‘...they supposed that they should be privileged to come upon them as they had hitherto done; yea, and they had also prepared themselves with shields, and with breastplates [they were getting ready for the other war, the war that they had hitherto been victorious in]; and they had also prepared themselves with garments of skins, yea, very

thick garments to cover their nakedness.' Notice, they had matched the Nephites' armor (see Alma 43:19-21). All the things they had hitherto done they were doing now, but that wasn't enough because Moroni was ahead of them. Moroni was a real military genius.'" (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Lecture 68, p. 138))

7 And being thus prepared they supposed that they should easily overpower and <sup>a</sup>subject their brethren to the yoke of bondage, or slay and massacre them according to their pleasure.

8 But behold, to their uttermost astonishment, they were <sup>a</sup>prepared (We can tell from these scriptures that Moroni had been a Boy Scout in his youth. He lived the Scout motto: Be prepared.) for them, in a manner which never had been known among the children of Lehi. Now they were prepared for the Lamanites, to battle after the manner of the instructions of Moroni.

9 And it came to pass that the Lamanites, or the Amalickiahites, were exceedingly astonished at their manner of preparation for war.

10 Now, if king Amalickiah had come down out of the <sup>a</sup>land of Nephi, at the head of his army, perhaps he would have caused the Lamanites to have attacked the Nephites at the city of Ammonihah; for behold, he did care not for the blood of his people.

11 But behold, Amalickiah did not come down himself to battle. And behold, his chief captains durst not attack the Nephites at the city of Ammonihah, for Moroni had altered the management of affairs among the Nephites, insomuch that the Lamanites were disappointed in their places of retreat and they could not come upon them.

12 Therefore they retreated into the wilderness, and took their camp and marched towards the land of <sup>a</sup>Noah, supposing that to be the next best place for them to come against the Nephites.

13 For they knew not that Moroni had fortified, or had built <sup>a</sup>forts of security, for every city in all the land round about; therefore, they marched forward to the land of Noah with a firm determination; yea, their chief captains came forward and took an <sup>b</sup>oath that they would destroy the people of that city.

14 But behold, to their astonishment, the city of Noah, which had hitherto been a weak place, had now, by the means of Moroni, become strong, yea, even to exceed the strength of the city Ammonihah.

15 And now, behold, this was wisdom in Moroni; for he had supposed that they would be frightened at the city Ammonihah; and as the city of Noah had hitherto been the weakest part of the land, therefore they would march thither to battle; and thus it was according to his desires.

16 And behold, Moroni had appointed Lehi to be chief captain over the men of that city; and it was that <sup>a</sup>same Lehi who fought with the Lamanites in the valley on the east of the river Sidon.

17 And now behold it came to pass, that when the Lamanites had found that Lehi commanded the city they were again disappointed, for they feared Lehi exceedingly; nevertheless their chief captains had <sup>a</sup>sworn with an oath to attack the city; therefore, they brought up their armies.

18 Now behold, the Lamanites could not get into their forts of security by any other way save by the entrance, because of the highness of the bank which had been thrown up, and the depth of the ditch which had been dug round about, save it were by the entrance.

19 And thus were the Nephites prepared to destroy all such as should attempt to climb up to enter the fort by any other way, by casting over stones and arrows at them.

20 Thus they were prepared, yea, a body of their strongest men, with their swords and their slings, to smite down all who should attempt to come into their place of security by the place of <sup>a</sup>entrance; and thus were they prepared to defend themselves against the Lamanites.

21 And it came to pass that the captains of the Lamanites brought up their armies before the place of entrance, and began to contend with the Nephites, to get into their place of security; but behold, they were driven back from time to time, insomuch that they were slain with an immense slaughter.

22 Now when they found that they could not obtain power over the Nephites by the pass, they began to dig down their banks of earth that they might obtain a pass to their armies, that they might have an equal chance to fight; but behold, in these attempts they were swept off by the stones and arrows which were thrown at them; and instead of filling up their ditches by pulling down the banks of earth, they were

filled up in a measure with their dead and wounded bodies.

23 Thus the Nephites had all power over their enemies; and thus the Lamanites did attempt to destroy the Nephites until their <sup>a</sup>chief captains were all slain; yea, and more than a thousand of the Lamanites were slain; while, on the other hand, there was not a single soul of the Nephites which was slain.

24 There were about fifty who were wounded, who had been exposed to the arrows of the Lamanites through the pass, but they were shielded by their <sup>a</sup>shields, and their breastplates, and their head-plates, insomuch that their wounds were upon their legs, many of which were very severe.

25 And it came to pass, that when the Lamanites saw that their chief captains were all slain they fled into the wilderness. And it came to pass that they returned to the land of Nephi, to inform their king, Amalickiah, who was a <sup>a</sup>Nephite by birth, concerning their great <sup>b</sup>loss. (Moroni had reinforced the cities of Ammonihah and Noah to such an astonishing degree that the Battle at the City of Noah was over before it started. Moroni's diligent preparations, in a manner which had never been known among the children of Lehi (v. 8), had outwitted the enemy again. In our personal fight against evil, the same principle applies. We, too, can win the battle before it even starts by preparing ourselves spiritually and making certain decisions before we are ever confronted with the opposition. How many times have our youth been taught that it is much easier to make the decision not to use drugs or alcohol long before the opportunity presents itself? So it is with the Word of Wisdom, the Law of Chastity, and many other principles. Figuratively speaking, to win the battle before it even starts, we must build forts of security (v. 13). We must strengthen our weakest areas, knowing as the Lord has said, if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them (Ether 12:27). We must dig deeper ditches, build taller banks, and reinforce them with our strongest defenses. "The Lamanite attack on the city of Ammonihah reminds us that, like an enemy army, Satan will quietly try to dig down our defenses when he is not allowed direct access to our hearts." (Kathleen S. McConkie, *Ensign*, Jan. 1992, "Defending Against Evil") But if we arm ourselves with the armor of righteousness, preparing ourselves as Moroni did, we will be able to slay the devil and his angels with an immense slaughter (v. 21). There will still be a battle, for Satan will do all he can to tempt, destroy, and seduce. Inevitably, there will still be battle wounds, many of which [are] very severe (v. 24). But if the vital decisions and preparations have been made beforehand, we will not be slain by the fiery darts of the wicked one (D&C 27:17). Instead we will thank the Lord [our] God, because of his matchless power in delivering [us] from the hands of [our] enemies (v. 28).)

26 And it came to pass that he was exceedingly angry with his people, because he had not obtained his desire over the Nephites; he had not subjected them to the yoke of bondage.

27 Yea, he was exceedingly wroth, and he did <sup>a</sup>curse God, and also Moroni, swearing with an <sup>b</sup>oath that he would drink his blood; and this because Moroni had kept the commandments of God in preparing for the safety of his people.

28 And it came to pass, that on the other hand, the people of Nephi did <sup>a</sup>thank the Lord their God, because of his matchless power in delivering them from the hands of their enemies.

29 And thus ended the nineteenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

30 Yea, and there was continual peace among them, and exceedingly great prosperity in the church because of their heed and diligence which they gave unto the word of God, which was declared unto them by Helaman, and Shiblon, and Corianton, ("Tucked in the ongoing story of the Nephite wars we find a reference to the change that Corianton made in his personal life. Peace was in the land again and the people prospered 'because of their heed and diligence which they gave unto the word of God, which was declared unto them by Helaman, and Shiblon, and Corianton, and Ammon and his brethren' (Alma 49:30). Notice who was back on his mission again. Hurrah! Through a parent-child interview, Alma brought about a transformation in the life of his beloved son, and this united family of missionaries and Nephite ministers made an incredible difference in the society in which they lived. It was as if they first 'taped together' the home and then the world began to take care of itself." (Douglas E. Brinley & Daniel K Judd, *Eternal Families*, "The Parent's Role") Corianton's sins were grievous. And yet we have every

reason to believe that Alma's preaching touched the soul of his errant son, that Corianton 'crossed himself' (see Alma 39:9), repented, and returned to the ministry... "Elder Orson F. Whitney held out this hope for the parents of wandering or wayward children: 'You parents of the wilful and the wayward: Don't give them up. Don't cast them off. They are not utterly lost. The shepherd will find his sheep. They were his before they were yours- long before he entrusted them to your care; and you cannot begin to love them as he loves them. They have but strayed in ignorance from the Path of Right, and God is merciful to ignorance. Only the fulness of knowledge brings the fulness of accountability. Our Heavenly Father is far more merciful, infinitely more charitable, than even the best of his servants, and the Everlasting Gospel is mightier in power to save than our narrow finite minds can comprehend.' (CR, April 1929, p. 110.)" (McConkie & Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 320)) and Ammon and his brethren, yea, and by all those who had been ordained by the <sup>a</sup>holy order of God, being baptized unto repentance, and sent forth to preach among the people.

\* Verse 1 [72 B.C.].

## CHAPTER 50

*Moroni fortifies the lands of the Nephites—They build many new cities—Wars and destructions befell the Nephites in the days of their wickedness and abominations—Morianton and his dissenters are defeated by Teancum—Nephihah dies and his son Pahoran fills the judgment-seat. [About 72—67 B.C.]*

1 AND now it came to pass that Moroni did not stop making preparations for war, or to defend his people against the Lamanites; for he caused that his armies should commence in the \*commencement of the twentieth year (72 BC) of the reign of the judges, that they should commence in digging up <sup>a</sup>heaps of earth round about all the cities, throughout all the land which was possessed by the Nephites.

2 And upon the top of these ridges of earth he caused that there should be <sup>a</sup>timbers, yea, works of timbers built up to the height of a man, round about the cities.

3 And he caused that upon those works of timbers there should be a frame of pickets built upon the timbers round about; and they were strong and high.

4 And he caused towers to be erected that overlooked those works of pickets, and he caused places of security to be built upon those <sup>a</sup>towers, that the stones and the arrows of the Lamanites could not hurt them.

5 And they were prepared that they could cast stones from the top thereof, according to their pleasure and their strength, and slay him who should attempt to approach near the walls of the city.

6 Thus Moroni did prepare strongholds against the coming of their enemies, round about every city in all the land.

7 And it came to pass that Moroni caused that his armies should go forth into the east wilderness; yea, and they went forth and drove all the Lamanites who were in the east wilderness into their own lands, which were <sup>a</sup>south of the land of Zarahemla.

8 And the land of <sup>a</sup>Nephi did run in a straight course from the east sea to the west.

9 And it came to pass that when Moroni had driven all the Lamanites out of the east wilderness, which was north of the lands of their own possessions, he caused that the inhabitants who were in the land of Zarahemla and in the land round about should go forth into the east wilderness, even to the borders by the seashore, and possess the land.

10 And he also placed armies on the south, in the borders of their possessions, and caused them to erect <sup>a</sup>fortifications that they might secure their armies and their people from the hands of their enemies.

11 And thus he cut off all the strongholds of the Lamanites in the east wilderness, yea, and also on the west, fortifying the line between the Nephites and the Lamanites, between the land of Zarahemla and the land of Nephi, from the west sea, running by the head of the <sup>a</sup>river Sidon—the Nephites possessing all the land <sup>b</sup>northward, yea, even all the land which was northward of the land Bountiful, according to their



pleasure.

12 Thus Moroni, with his armies, which did increase daily because of the assurance of protection which his works did bring forth unto them, did seek to cut off the strength and the power of the Lamanites from off the lands of their possessions, that they should have no power upon the lands of their possession.

13 And it came to pass that the Nephites began the foundation of a city, and they called the name of the city <sup>a</sup>Moroni; and it was by the east sea; and it was on the south by the line of the possessions of the Lamanites.

14 And they also began a foundation for a city between the city of Moroni and the city of Aaron, joining the borders of Aaron and Moroni; and they called the name of the city, or the land, <sup>a</sup>Nephihah.

15 And they also began in that same year to build many cities on the north, one in a particular manner which they called <sup>a</sup>Lehi, which was in the north by the borders of the seashore.

16 And thus ended the twentieth year.

17 And in these prosperous circumstances were the people of Nephi in the \*commencement of the twenty and first year (71 BC) of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

18 And they did prosper <sup>a</sup>exceedingly, and they became exceedingly rich; yea, and they did multiply and wax strong in the land.

19 And thus we see how merciful and just are all the dealings of the Lord, to the fulfilling of all his words unto the children of men; yea, we can behold that his words are verified, even at this time, which he spake unto Lehi, saying:

20 Blessed art thou and thy children; and they shall be blessed, inasmuch as they shall keep my <sup>a</sup>commandments they shall prosper in the land. But remember, inasmuch as they will not keep my commandments they shall be <sup>b</sup>cut off from the presence of the Lord.

21 And we see that these promises have been verified to the people of Nephi; for it has been their quarrelings and their contentions, yea, their murderings, and their plunderings, their idolatry, their whoredoms, and their abominations, which were among themselves, which <sup>a</sup>brought upon them their wars and their destructions.

22 And those who were faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord were delivered at all times, (“In the last section of Alma, the lengthy description of war could, at first glance, seem to contradict the assertion that the theme of the book of Alma is the word of God. However, a careful reading of the war chapters reveals just the opposite. Mormon uses the drama of war to verify the old promise of prosperity if the Nephites keep God's word—and of adversity and affliction if they do not. His purpose is to show that the Nephites as a whole brought their own problems upon themselves through iniquity and dissension, but God protected and delivered the faithful among them (Alma 50:20-22). The irony of the wars in the book of Alma is that *the Nephites were righteous enough to win the wars, but not righteous enough to prevent them from taking place.* According to President Spencer W. Kimball, God had given a special promise to the Nephites which is valid to all the peoples of America: if they would stay sufficiently righteous, they would not have to fight.” (Gerald Hansen, Jr., *Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, Alma, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 277-78, italics added)) whilst thousands of their wicked brethren have been consigned to bondage, or to perish by the sword, or to dwindle in unbelief, and mingle with the Lamanites.

23 But behold there never was a <sup>a</sup>happier time among the people of Nephi, (Joseph Smith: “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness and keeping all the commandments of God.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 255.) Neal A. Maxwell: “First Questioner: How much real happiness is possible in this vale of tears? The Disciple: That depends directly on our righteousness. The saints of the first century A.D. in the Americas were described as follows: ‘. . . surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.’ (4 Nephi 16.) Even in the period around 70 B.C. (which saw much intergroup warfare), the righteous and faithful were happy. Indeed, Alma wrote, ‘But behold there never was a happier time among all the people of Nephi, since

the days of Nephi, than in the days of Moroni.' (Alma 50:23.) Fortunately happiness is not totally dependent on what those around us do, therefore. Second Questioner: Even so, I see some sad-faced members of the Church, don't you? The Disciple: Too many, of course, but not among those who have received 'his image' in their 'countenances.' (Alma 5:14.) None among those who've gotten outside their confining circle of selfishness. Indeed, the Brethren are happy while they cope with serious and somber problems. Someone said it is too bad we don't preserve the small talk of great men; so, too, the humor of holy men who serve as special witnesses." (*Deposition of a Disciple*, p. 18 – 19)) since the days of Nephi, than in the days of Moroni, yea, even at this time, in the twenty and first year of the reign of the judges.

24 And it came to pass that the twenty and second year of the reign of the judges also ended in peace; yea, and also the twenty and third year.

25 And it came to pass that in the \*commencement of the twenty and fourth year (68 BC) of the reign of the judges, there would also have been peace among the people of Nephi had it not been for a <sup>a</sup>contention which took place among them concerning the land of <sup>b</sup>Lehi, and the land of <sup>c</sup>Morianton, which joined upon the borders of Lehi; both of which were on the borders by the seashore.

26 For behold, the people who possessed the land of Morianton did claim a part of the land of Lehi; therefore there began to be a warm <sup>a</sup>contention between them, insomuch that the people of Morianton took up arms against their brethren, and they were determined by the sword to slay them.

27 But behold, the people who possessed the land of Lehi fled to the camp of Moroni, and appealed unto him for assistance; for behold they were not in the wrong.

28 And it came to pass that when the people of Morianton, who were led by a man whose name was Morianton, found that the people of Lehi had fled to the camp of Moroni, they were exceedingly fearful lest the army of Moroni should come upon them and destroy them.

29 Therefore, Morianton put it into their hearts that they should flee to the land which was northward, which was covered with <sup>a</sup>large bodies of water, and take possession of the land which was <sup>b</sup>northward.

30 And behold, they would have carried this plan into effect, (which would have been a cause to have been lamented) but behold, Morianton being a man of much passion, therefore he was angry with one of his maid servants, and he fell upon her and beat her much.

31 And it came to pass that she fled, and came over to the camp of Moroni, and told Moroni all things concerning the matter, and also concerning their intentions to flee into the land northward.

32 Now behold, the people who were in the land Bountiful, or rather Moroni, feared that they would hearken to the words of Morianton and unite with his people, and thus he would obtain possession of those parts of the land, which would lay a foundation for serious consequences among the people of Nephi, yea, which <sup>a</sup>consequences would lead to the overthrow of their <sup>b</sup>liberty.

33 Therefore Moroni sent an army, with their camp, to head the people of Morianton, to stop their flight into the land northward.

34 And it came to pass that they did not <sup>a</sup>head them until they had come to the borders of the land <sup>b</sup>Desolation; and there they did head them, by the narrow pass which led by the sea into the land northward, yea, by the sea, on the west and on the east.

35 And it came to pass that the army which was sent by Moroni, which was led by a man whose name was Teancum, did meet the people of Morianton; and so stubborn were the people of Morianton, (being inspired by his wickedness and his <sup>a</sup>flattering words) that a battle commenced between them, in the which Teancum did <sup>b</sup>slay Morianton and defeat his army, and took them prisoners, and returned to the camp of Moroni. And thus ended the twenty and fourth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

36 And thus were the people of Morianton brought back. And upon their <sup>a</sup>covenanting to keep the peace they were restored to the land of Morianton, and a union took place between them and the people of Lehi; and they were also restored to their lands.

37 And it came to pass that in the same year that the people of Nephi had peace restored unto them, that

Nephihah, the <sup>a</sup>second chief judge, died, having filled the judgment-seat with <sup>b</sup>perfect uprightness before God.

38 Nevertheless, he had refused Alma to take possession of those <sup>a</sup>records and those things which were esteemed by Alma and his fathers to be most sacred; therefore Alma had conferred <sup>b</sup>them upon his son, Helaman.

39 Behold, it came to pass that the son of Nephihah was appointed to fill the judgment-seat, in the stead of his father; yea, he was appointed chief judge and <sup>a</sup>governor over the people, with an <sup>b</sup>oath and sacred ordinance to judge righteously, and to keep the peace and the <sup>c</sup>freedom of the people, and to grant unto them their sacred privileges to worship the Lord their God, yea, to support and maintain the cause of God all his days, and to bring the wicked to justice according to their crime. (John K. Carmack: “We notice the explicit and direct obligations Pahoran undertook as chief judge and governor. No modern official has a similar charge. His responsibilities were akin to those given judges and kings in ancient Israel. The oath administered to the chief judge obligated him to: - Judge righteously - Keep peace and freedom intact - Guard the privilege of worshipping God - Support and maintain the cause of God - Bring the wicked to justice according to their crimes. “As in ancient Israel, spiritual and temporal duties intermingled. We don’t know who administered the sacred ordinance or of what it consisted, but likely the high priest of the Church officiated in some kind of formal anointing as prophets did for kings in Israel. Pahoran took office at the end of the twenty-fourth year of the reign of judges instituted by King Mosiah. Little did he realize what he would face, and almost immediately. Perhaps for most of us it is well that we don’t know much in advance about the trials we must face.” (*Heroes From the Book of Mormon*, pp. 136-7))

40 Now behold, his name was <sup>a</sup>Pahoran. And Pahoran did fill the seat of his father, and did commence his reign in the end of the twenty and fourth year, over the people of Nephi.

\* Verse 1 [72 B.C.]; Verse 17 [71 B.C.]; Verse 25 [68 B.C.].

## CHAPTER 51

*The king-men seek to change the law and set up a king—Pahoran and the freemen are supported by the voice of the people—Moroni compels the king-men to defend their liberty or be put to death—Amalickiah and the Lamanites capture many fortified cities—Teancum repels the Lamanite invasion and slays Amalickiah in his tent. [About 67 B.C.]*

1 AND now it came to pass in the \*commencement of the twenty and fifth year (67 BC) of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, they having established peace between the people of Lehi and the people of Morianton concerning their lands, and having commenced the twenty and fifth year in <sup>a</sup>peace;

2 Nevertheless, they did not long maintain an entire peace in the land, for there began to be a contention among the people concerning the chief judge Pahoran; for behold, there were a part of the people who desired that a few particular points of the <sup>a</sup>law should be altered.

3 But behold, Pahoran would not alter nor suffer the law to be altered; therefore, he did not hearken to those who had sent in their voices with their petitions concerning the altering of the law.

4 Therefore, those who were desirous that the law should be altered were angry with him, and desired that he should no longer be chief judge over the land; therefore there arose a warm <sup>a</sup>dispute concerning the matter, but not unto bloodshed.

5 And it came to pass that those who were desirous that Pahoran should be dethroned from the judgment-seat were called <sup>a</sup>king-men, for they were desirous that the law should be altered in a manner to overthrow the free government (Orson F. Whitney: “It is Lucifer...who seeks the overthrow of free institutions, free churches, free government, and who saps wherever he can the foundation of the rights of man. That same fallen being, once called the Morning Star, presented himself before the Father, at the beginning, and offered himself as a candidate for the saviorship of this world. He declared--had the

audacity to declare--that his purpose was to save man in his sins. 'Not one soul shall be lost.' He proposed to compel all to be saved, and sought to destroy the free agency of man." (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1906, p. 71)) and to establish a <sup>b</sup>king over the land.

6 And those who were desirous that Pahoran should remain chief judge over the land took upon them the name of <sup>a</sup>freemen; and thus was the <sup>b</sup>division among them, for the freemen had sworn or <sup>c</sup>covenanted to maintain their rights and the privileges of their religion by a free government. (Ezra Taft Benson: "The only real peace—the one most of us think about when we use the term—is a peace with freedom. A nation that is not willing, if necessary, to face the rigors of war to defend its real peace-in-freedom is doomed to lose both its freedom and its peace! These are the hard facts of life. We may not like them, but until we live in a far better world than exists today, we must face up to them squarely and courageously." (*An Enemy Hath Done this*, pp. 161-2 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 355))

7 And it came to pass that this matter of their contention was settled by the <sup>a</sup>voice of the people. ("Even though these are political examples, they reflect a theological principle. Our Father himself recognized the principle of consent, and Brigham Young, in discussing celestial government, maintained that 'the eternal laws by which he and all others exist in the eternities of the Gods, decree that the consent of the creature must be obtained before the Creator can rule perfectly.' (JD, 15:134.)" (Edwin Brown Firmage, *Ensign*, June 1976, 11)) And it came to pass that the voice of the people came in favor of the freemen, and Pahoran retained the judgment-seat, which caused much rejoicing among the brethren of Pahoran and also many of the people of liberty, who also put the king-men to silence, that they durst not oppose but were obliged to maintain the cause of freedom.

8 Now those who were in favor of kings were those of <sup>a</sup>high birth, and they sought to be <sup>b</sup>kings; and they were supported by those who sought power and authority over the people.

9 But behold, this was a critical time for such contentions to be among the people of Nephi; for behold, Amalickiah had again <sup>a</sup>stirred up the hearts of the people of the Lamanites against the people of the Nephites, and he was gathering together soldiers from all parts of his land, and arming them, and preparing for war with all diligence; for he had <sup>b</sup>sworn to drink the blood of Moroni.

10 But behold, we shall see that his promise which he made was <sup>a</sup>rash; nevertheless, he did prepare himself and his armies to come to battle against the Nephites.

11 Now his armies were not so great as they had hitherto been, because of the many thousands who had been <sup>a</sup>slain by the hand of the Nephites; but notwithstanding their great loss, Amalickiah had gathered together a wonderfully great army, insomuch that he feared not to come down to the land of Zarahemla.

12 Yea, even Amalickiah did himself come down, at the head of the Lamanites. And it was in the twenty and fifth year of the reign of the judges; and it was at the same time that they had begun to settle the affairs of their contentions concerning the chief judge, Pahoran.

13 And it came to pass that when the men who were called king-men had heard that the Lamanites were coming down to battle against them, they were glad in their hearts; and they refused to take up arms, for they were so wroth with the chief judge, and also with the <sup>a</sup>people of <sup>b</sup>liberty, that they would not take up arms to defend their country.

14 And it came to pass that when Moroni saw this, and also saw that the Lamanites were coming into the borders of the land, he was exceedingly wroth because of the <sup>a</sup>stubbornness of those people whom he had labored with so much diligence to preserve; yea, he was exceedingly wroth; his soul was filled with anger against them.

15 And it came to pass that he sent a petition, with the voice of the people, unto the governor of the land, desiring that he should read it, and give him (Moroni) power to compel those dissenters to defend their country or to put them to death.

16 For it was his first care to put an end to such contentions and dissensions among the people; for behold, this had been hitherto a cause of all their destruction. And it came to pass that it was granted according to the voice of the people.



17 And it came to pass that Moroni commanded that his army should go against those king-men, to pull down their pride and their nobility and level them with the earth, or they should take up arms and support the cause of liberty. (“Moroni and his sword led the fight against pride, nobility and dissension (Alma 51:17-20); combated iniquity and evil (46:9-11); supported the ‘cause of freedom’ (35); and ‘delighted in the saving of his people from destruction’ (55:19). It is likely that Mormon included so much material on Moroni for more substantial reasons than a fascination with military history. Moroni was a man needed in his day to counter the pride, dissension, iniquity and covenant-breaking which abounded. The term ‘dissension’ or its derivative appears over 26 times in these chapters, more than in any other book... Moroni's views concerning dissension and disunity can be best understood within his covenantal perspective. He coupled a love of freedom and liberty with the knowledge that these could only be secured by faithfulness and obedience to covenants. Dissidents, in his view, were covenant-breakers. Their lack of trust in God or concern for the community of the saints put the whole people in jeopardy. Their alliances with Nephite enemies only compounded the problem. Both Moroni and Mormon saw dissension as a root cause of Nephite problems.” (Thomas R. Valetta, *Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, Alma, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 244))

18 And it came to pass that the armies did march forth against them; and they did pull down their pride and their nobility, insomuch that as they did lift their weapons of war to fight against the men of Moroni they were hewn down and leveled to the earth.

19 And it came to pass that there were four thousand of those <sup>a</sup>dissenters who were hewn down by the sword; and those of their leaders who were not slain in battle were taken and <sup>b</sup>cast into prison, for there was no time for their trials at this period.

20 And the remainder of those dissenters, rather than be smitten down to the earth by the sword, yielded to the standard of liberty, and were compelled to hoist the <sup>a</sup>title of liberty upon their towers, and in their cities, and to take up arms in defence of their country.

21 And thus Moroni put an end to those king-men (Hugh Nibley: “[Moroni] gave the rebels the opportunity to support the common cause without punishment or prejudice, and used his special powers to deal summarily with those who held out, four thousand of them, ‘for there was no time for their trials at this period’ (Alma 51:19). ‘And thus Moroni put an end to those king-men . . . to the stubbornness and the pride of those people who professed the blood of nobility; but they were brought down to humble themselves like unto their brethren’ (Alma 51:21). There is no talk of humbling in the dust, but simply the restoration of equality, in which Moroni emerges as the champion of popular government, ‘beloved of all the people of Nephi’ (Alma 53:2). His methods had been admittedly severe, and all that justified them was an extreme national emergency. But the emergency was very real, for even at that time Amalickiah, made wise in the ways of war, was leading his greatest army yet into the weakest parts of the land and sweeping all before him. Bypassing the strongest places, he flanked the Nephites along the coast in a lightning move that knocked out the weaker fortified places one after another and sent the occupants fleeing like sheep from one collapsing fortification to the next as he ‘went on, taking possession of many cities’ (Alma 51:26-28). It was a well-executed operation that spread panic and converted many of Moroni's strong places into Lamanite bases (Alma 51:27). “ (*Since Cumorah*, p. 312-13)), that there were not any known by the appellation of king-men; and thus he put an end to the stubbornness and the pride of those people who professed the blood of nobility; but they were brought down to humble themselves like unto their brethren, and to fight <sup>a</sup>valiantly for their freedom from bondage. (William E. Berrett: *The right to a world where the individual is recognized, the right to protect our loved ones, our liberties and our religion is more important than the keeping of peace. Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 178)

22 Behold, it came to pass that while <sup>a</sup>Moroni was thus breaking down the wars and contentions among his own people, and subjecting them to peace and civilization, and making regulations to prepare for war against the Lamanites, behold, the Lamanites had come into the land of Moroni, which was in the borders by the seashore.

23 And it came to pass that the Nephites were not sufficiently strong in the city of Moroni; therefore Amalickiah did drive them, slaying many. And it came to pass that Amalickiah took possession of the city, yea, possession of all their fortifications.

24 And those who fled out of the <sup>a</sup>city of Moroni came to the city of Nephihah; and also the people of the city of Lehi gathered themselves together, and made preparations and were ready to receive the Lamanites to battle.

25 But it came to pass that Amalickiah would not suffer the Lamanites to go against the city of Nephihah to battle, but kept them down by the seashore, leaving men in every city to maintain and defend it.

26 And thus he went on, taking possession of <sup>a</sup>many cities, the city of <sup>b</sup>Nephihah, and the city of <sup>c</sup>Lehi, and the city of <sup>d</sup>Morianton, and the city of Omner, and the city of <sup>e</sup>Gid, and the city of <sup>f</sup>Mulek, all of which were on the east borders by the seashore.

27 And thus had the Lamanites obtained, by the cunning of Amalickiah, so many cities, by their numberless hosts, all of which were strongly fortified after the manner of the <sup>a</sup>fortifications of Moroni; all of which afforded strongholds for the Lamanites.

28 And it came to pass that they marched to the <sup>a</sup>borders of the land Bountiful, driving the Nephites before them and slaying many.

29 But it came to pass that they were met by Teancum, who had <sup>a</sup>slain Morianton and had <sup>b</sup>headed his people in his flight.

30 And it came to pass that he headed Amalickiah also, as he was marching forth with his numerous army that he might take possession of the land Bountiful, and also the land <sup>a</sup>northward.

31 But behold he met with a disappointment by being repulsed by Teancum and his men, for they were great warriors; for every man of Teancum did exceed the Lamanites in their strength and in their skill of war, insomuch that they did gain advantage over the Lamanites.

32 And it came to pass that they did harass them, insomuch that they did slay them even until it was dark. And it came to pass that Teancum and his men did pitch their tents in the borders of the land Bountiful; and Amalickiah did pitch his tents in the borders on the beach by the seashore, and after this manner were they driven.

33 And it came to pass that when the night had come, Teancum and his servant stole forth and went out by night, and went into the camp of Amalickiah; and behold, sleep had overpowered them because of their much fatigue, which was caused by the labors and heat of the day.

34 And it came to pass that Teancum stole privily into the tent of the king, and <sup>a</sup>put a javelin to his heart; and he did cause the <sup>b</sup>death of the king immediately that he did not awake his servants.

35 And he returned again privily to his own camp, and behold, his men were asleep, and he awoke them and told them all the things that he had done.

36 And he caused that his armies should stand in <sup>a</sup>readiness, lest the Lamanites had awakened and should come upon them.

37 And thus endeth the twenty and fifth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi; and thus endeth the days of Amalickiah.

\* Verse 1 [67 B.C.].

## CHAPTER 52

*Ammoron succeeds Amalickiah as king of the Lamanites—Moroni, Teancum, and Lehi lead the Nephites in a victorious war against the Lamanites—The city of Mulek is retaken, and Jacob the Lamanite is slain. [About 66—64 B.C.]*

1 AND now, it came to pass in the \*twenty and sixth year (66 BC) of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, behold, when the Lamanites awoke on the first morning of the first month (“With

remarkable consistency, the Nephite record reports a pattern of seasonality in Nephite warfare. Since wars in pretechnical societies are usually launched at opportune times of the year, the Nephite pattern of warfare tells us something about the seasons and their calendar. The beginning and ending of the Nephite year frequently falls around the time of major battles. For example, Alma 44 ends with the defeat of a Lamanite army and the return of Moroni's forces to their houses and their lands: 'Thus ended the eighteenth year of the reign of the judges' (Alma 44:24). When all such dates are tabulated, the distinct pattern emerges that most wars were fought in the eleventh through second months of the year...But virtually no battling took place in months six through ten. Instead, that period was when the mass of part-time soldiers were required to till the ground, 'delivering their women and their children from famine and affliction, and providing food for their armies' (Alma 53:7). When the seasons for cultivation and warring in Mesoamerica before the time of Columbus are studied, an equally sharp division is seen. (The schedule is essentially the same anywhere in tropical America, in fact.) The preparation and cultivation of farmlands and other domestic chores went on from about March through October, which constituted the rainy season. Wars began after the harvest and mainly went on during the hot, dry months, November through February. Of course, camping in the field was sensible at this time, and movement was least hampered by the swollen streams or boggy ground common in the other part of the year. Putting these two sets of information together, we see that the fighting season referred to in the annals of the wars in the books of Mosiah through Helaman—their months eleven through two—likely coincided approximately with November through February in our calendar. Moreover their new year's day is likely to have fallen near winter solstice (December 21/22), as with many other peoples of the ancient world. Interestingly, December was a hot season both in Mesoamerica and in the Book of Mormon, as we read in Alma 51:32-37 and 52:1. Recall that Teancum slew Amalickiah on the Nephite/Lamanite new year's eve as he slept deeply from fatigue 'caused by the labors and heat of the day' (Alma 51:33). In Joseph Smith's New England, of course, New Year's Eve would have been icy. If our equation is correct, the Nephite [calendar]...began near our December 22..." (John W. Welch, *Reexploring The Book of Mormon*, pp. 173-5)), behold, they found Amalickiah was dead in his own tent; and they also saw that Teancum was <sup>a</sup>ready to give them battle on that day.

2 And now, when the Lamanites saw this they were affrighted (**Why would these brave and ferocious Lamanites be terrified at the sight of their dead king?**); and they abandoned their design in marching into the land northward, and retreated with all their army into the city of <sup>a</sup>Mulek, and sought protection in their fortifications. ("There is evidence that the Lamanites also recognized the importance of the New Year in the renewal of kingship. To the Lamanites, the Nephites in the land to the north would have been considered evil adversaries, ripe for destruction. Divinely sanctioned wars were a prominent part of Mayan theology and were often tied to astronomical events or appropriate dates on the ancient calendar...It is therefore no accident that the Lamanite king Amalickiah chose New Year's to engage the Nephites in battle (Alma 51:32-52:1). The Nephite general Teancum took advantage of the situation by slaying Amalickiah on New Year's Eve, precisely when the underworld lords would have been believed to be their strongest. When the Lamanites awoke the following morning, expecting a divinely sanctioned victory, they found instead their king and protector dead. It is no wonder, then, that they fled in terror." (Allen J. Christenson, *FARMS: Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 3, 1991, p. 30))

3 And it came to pass that the <sup>a</sup>brother of Amalickiah was appointed king over the people; and his name was <sup>b</sup>Ammoron; thus king Ammoron, the brother of king Amalickiah, was appointed to reign in his stead.

4 And it came to pass that he did command that his people should maintain those cities, which they had taken by the shedding of blood; for they had not taken any cities save they had lost much blood.

5 And now, Teancum saw that the Lamanites were determined to maintain those cities which they had taken, and those parts of the land which they had obtained possession of; and also seeing the enormity of their number, Teancum thought it was not expedient that he should attempt to attack them in their forts.

6 But he kept his men round about, as if making preparations for war; yea, and truly he was preparing to

defend himself against them, by <sup>a</sup>casting up walls round about and preparing places of resort.

7 And it came to pass that he kept thus preparing for war until Moroni had sent a large number of men to strengthen his army.

8 And Moroni also sent orders unto him that he should retain all the prisoners who fell into his hands; for as the Lamanites had taken many prisoners, that he should retain all the prisoners of the Lamanites as a <sup>a</sup>ransom for those whom the Lamanites had taken.

9 And he also sent orders unto him that he should fortify the land <sup>a</sup>Bountiful, and secure the <sup>b</sup>narrow pass which led into the land <sup>c</sup>northward, lest the Lamanites should obtain that point and should have power to harass them on every side.

10 And Moroni also sent unto him, desiring him that he would be <sup>a</sup>faithful in maintaining that quarter of the land, and that he would seek every opportunity to scourge the Lamanites in that quarter, as much as was in his power, that perhaps he might take again by stratagem or some other way those cities which had been taken out of their hands; and that he also would fortify and strengthen the cities round about, which had not fallen into the hands of the Lamanites.

11 And he also said unto him, I would come unto you, but behold, the Lamanites are upon us in the borders of the land by the west sea; and behold, I go against them, therefore I cannot come unto you.

12 Now, the king (Ammoron) had <sup>a</sup>departed out of the land of Zarahemla, and had made known unto the queen concerning the death of his brother, and had gathered together a large number of men, and had marched forth against the Nephites on the borders by the west sea.

13 And thus he was endeavoring to harass the Nephites, and to draw away a part of their forces to that part of the land, while he had commanded those whom he had left to possess the cities which he had taken, that they should also harass the Nephites on the borders by the east sea, and should take possession of their lands as much as it was in their power, according to the power of their armies.

14 And thus were the Nephites in those dangerous circumstances in the ending of the twenty and sixth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

15 But behold, it came to pass in the \*twenty and seventh year (65 BC) of the reign of the judges, that Teancum, by the command of Moroni—who had established armies to protect the south and the west borders of the land, and had begun his march towards the land Bountiful, that he might assist Teancum with his men in retaking the cities which they had lost—

16 And it came to pass that Teancum had received orders to make an attack upon the city of Mulek, and retake it if it were possible.

17 And it came to pass that Teancum made preparations to make an attack upon the city of Mulek, and march forth with his army against the Lamanites; but he saw that it was impossible that he could overpower them while they were in their fortifications; therefore he abandoned his designs and returned again to the city Bountiful, to wait for the coming of Moroni, that he might receive strength to his army.

18 And it came to pass that Moroni did arrive with his army at the land of Bountiful, in the latter end of the twenty and seventh year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

19 And in the \*commencement of the twenty and eighth year (64 BC), Moroni and Teancum and many of the chief <sup>a</sup>captains held a council of war—what they should do to cause the Lamanites to come out against them to battle; or that they might by some means flatter them out of their strongholds, that they might gain advantage over them and take again the city of Mulek.

20 And it came to pass they sent embassies to the army of the Lamanites, which protected the city of Mulek, to their leader, whose name was Jacob, desiring him that he would come out with his armies to meet them upon the plains between the two cities. But behold, Jacob, who was a <sup>a</sup>Zoramite, would not come out with his army to meet them upon the plains.

21 And it came to pass that Moroni, having no hopes of meeting them upon fair grounds, therefore, he resolved upon a plan that he might <sup>a</sup>decoy the Lamanites out of their strongholds.

22 Therefore he caused that Teancum should take a small number of men and march down near the seashore; and Moroni and his army, by night, marched in the wilderness, on the west of the city <sup>a</sup>Mulek;



and thus, on the morrow, when the guards of the Lamanites had discovered Teancum, they ran and told it unto Jacob, their leader.

23 And it came to pass that the armies of the Lamanites did march forth against Teancum, supposing by their numbers to overpower Teancum because of the smallness of his numbers. And as Teancum saw the armies of the Lamanites coming out against him he began to retreat down by the seashore, northward.

24 And it came to pass that when the Lamanites saw that he began to flee, they took courage and pursued them with vigor. And while Teancum was thus leading away the Lamanites who were pursuing them in vain, behold, Moroni commanded that a part of his army who were with him should march forth into the city, and take possession of it.

25 And thus they did, and slew all those who had been left to protect the city, yea, all those who would not <sup>a</sup>yield up their weapons of war.

26 And thus Moroni had obtained possession of the city Mulek with a part of his army, while he marched with the remainder to meet the Lamanites when they should return from the pursuit of Teancum.

27 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did pursue Teancum until they came near the city Bountiful, and then they were met by Lehi and a small army, which had been left to protect the city Bountiful.

28 And now behold, when the chief captains of the Lamanites had beheld Lehi with his army coming against them, they fled in much confusion, lest perhaps they should not obtain the city Mulek before Lehi should overtake them; for they were wearied because of their march, and the men of Lehi were fresh.

29 Now the Lamanites did not know that Moroni had been in their rear with his army; and all they feared was Lehi and his men.

30 Now Lehi was not desirous to overtake them till they should meet Moroni and his army.

31 And it came to pass that before the Lamanites had retreated far they were surrounded by the Nephites, by the men of Moroni on one hand, and the men of Lehi on the other, all of whom were fresh and full of strength; but the Lamanites were wearied because of their long march.

32 And Moroni commanded his men that they should fall upon them until they had given up their weapons of war.

33 And it came to pass that Jacob, being their leader, being also a <sup>a</sup>Zoramite, and having an unconquerable spirit, he led the Lamanites forth to battle with exceeding fury against Moroni.

34 Moroni being in their course of march, therefore Jacob was determined to slay them and cut his way through to the city of Mulek. But behold, Moroni and his men were more powerful; therefore they did not give way before the Lamanites.

35 And it came to pass that they fought on both hands with exceeding fury; and there were many slain on both sides; yea, and Moroni was wounded and Jacob was killed.

36 And Lehi pressed upon their rear with such fury with his strong men, that the Lamanites in the rear delivered up their weapons of war; and the remainder of them, being much confused, knew not whither to go or to strike.

37 Now Moroni seeing their confusion, he said unto them: If ye will bring forth your weapons of war and deliver them up, behold we will forbear shedding your blood.

38 And it came to pass that when the Lamanites had heard these words, their chief captains, all those who were not slain, came forth and threw down their weapons of war <sup>a</sup>at the feet of Moroni, and also commanded their men that they should do the same.

39 But behold, there were many that would not; and those who would not deliver up their swords were taken and bound, and their weapons of war were taken from them, and they were compelled to march with their brethren forth into the land Bountiful.

40 And now the number of prisoners who were taken exceeded more than the number of those who had been slain, yea, more than those who had been slain on both sides. (President Joseph F. Smith taught this about war: God is the greatest man of war of all, and His Son is next unto Him, and their warfare is for

the salvation of the souls of men. It would not be necessary for them to use or force, nor to permit their children to use nor force in order to conquer if they would but humble themselves, and obey the truth. For, after all, nothing will conquer nothing will win but the truth; and so far as the wars that are going on in the world are concerned, we not only want to see peace established among the children of men, but also justice, but above all things, truth, that justice, peace and righteousness may be built upon this foundation and not depend upon the covetousness, pride, vanity, evil desire, and for power in men. (Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, October 1914, p.129))

\* Verse 1 [66 B.C.]; Verse 15 [65 B.C.]; Verse 19 [64 B.C.].

Additional Reading:

---

### Defending against Evil

By Kathleen S. McConkie

*Why did Mormon use so much valuable space on the plates to record military intrigue and battle strategy?*

Kathleen S. McConkie, "Defending against Evil," *Ensign*, Jan. 1992, 19

The morning was dark and cold, the children were half-asleep, and our reading in the Book of Mormon seemed endless. We were mired somewhere in the last half of the book of Alma and, frankly, we weren't getting much out of it.

Whenever we got into those detailed accounts of the wars between the Nephites and the Lamanites, our enthusiasm for daily scripture study waned. Mormon's extensive treatment of the subject of war, though informative and even inspiring at times, just did not seem to apply to us personally. Even in the remote event that *our* family was charged with planning the defensive strategy against an enemy invasion, of what value would the knowledge of pre-Columbian defenses be in an age of nuclear weapons?

And so, as the sleepy voices droned on, my mind began to wander. Why? Why did Mormon include so much detail about the wars? With all the wonderful spiritual events that must have taken place, why would he use so much valuable space on the plates to record military intrigue and battle strategy?

The day's reading session finally ended, but my search for an answer had just begun. After a few weeks of research, I learned that others had suggested a number of reasons for the war accounts in the Book of Mormon. Among them were verification of Lehi's prophecies concerning the conditions for occupying the promised land; 1 warnings about the painful futility of war; 2 provision of a background against which to understand Book of Mormon teachings and messages; 3 and expressions of Mormon's personal interest in military matters. 4

These explanations were all supported by solid reasoning, yet I wanted something more—something compelling enough to justify Mormon's devoting nearly one-third of the Book of Mormon to the subject. We know that Mormon's purpose was not merely to record the events of his day but to sift through hundreds of years of history, preserving only those things that would be of great worth to the people of the latter day. He, like other prophets, had seen our day and knew by revelation what our problems would be. (See Morm. 7:1; Morm. 8:35; 2 Ne. 25:8.) Because the records were so numerous that not even "a hundredth part" of the available writings could be included, Mormon had to be very selective in his abridgment. (Hel. 3:14.) If, under these circumstances, he felt the need to include so many war stories, I felt there must be greater value in them than I had recognized.

And so the question continued to nag at me. It wasn't until several weeks later that I found what was, for me, a key to the answer I sought. A friend was sharing her concern that perhaps her children would not remain righteous with all the worldly influences around them. "I'm really scared," she said. "It's like a war out there." As she spoke, my mind filled with the unlikely scene of her children lined up on the front lawn in fierce battle against the heavily armed forces of the adversary.

Then it hit me. That was it! *This* was the war that applied to me—not a war of swords and spears, but the eternal war for my soul and those of my family. Satan is waging an all-out war against truth and righteousness. His forces are everywhere, and we are involved in that war whether we like it or not. The danger is real, and the stakes are high. All around us we see the battle casualties, their lives ruined and their souls scarred. If we expect to avoid becoming casualties ourselves, we desperately need the Lord's guidance—and there is no better place to find it than in that book of scripture prepared specifically for our day: the Book of Mormon!

In great excitement I opened the book of Alma and began to read the main war chapters again. But this time, instead of skimming through the various battle accounts, I thought of the Lamanites, who were wicked at the time of these battles, as representing the forces of evil, with Satan at their head, and the Nephites, who were generally righteous at that time, representing the Saints of our day, struggling to protect themselves and their families. Suddenly the battlefield was no longer remote in time and place. This battle was my battle! The family under siege was mine!

With this new insight, I found more than one hundred passages in the last twenty chapters of Alma alone that contain useful information about how Satan and his forces operate or that describe inspired strategies for defending ourselves against evil. Seemingly insignificant military details revealed valuable counsel when I simply asked the question "How does this apply to the war against evil today?"

Alma chapter 43 is a good example. The chapter opens with the Lamanites once again attacking the Nephites. Zarahemnah, their shrewd leader, had used apostate Nephites—Amalekites and Zoramites—as his chief captains because they were of "a more wicked and murderous disposition than the Lamanites." (Alma 43:6.) He wanted them to stir up his people to anger against the Nephites so that he could "usurp great power over them, and also that he might gain power over the Nephites by bringing them into bondage." (Alma 43:8.) On the other hand, the Nephites did not desire power, but only to preserve their families, their rights, and their freedom to worship. They understood all too well what would happen if they fell into the hands of the opposition.

As the Lamanites came forth to attack, much to their dismay they saw that Moroni had prepared his people with protective armor. (See Alma 43:19-21.) This so frightened them that they withdrew into the wilderness. Moroni then sent spies to watch them and give advance warning of their plans. When the word came that the Lamanites were planning to attack the weaker part of the people in the land of Manti, Moroni sent men to the prophet Alma, seeking the word of the Lord as to how the Nephites could best defend themselves. (See Alma 43:22-23.)

Relying on the Lord's word, Moroni devised a strategy to head off the Lamanites. Attacking them in both the front and rear, the Nephites initially prevailed in the fierce battle. The Lamanites, however, fought on, spurred by their apostate captains, who would not retreat. (See Alma 43:43-44.) The Nephites continued to fight valiantly, but in time the overwhelming numbers of the Lamanites began to wear them down. As the exhausted Nephites were about to flee, Moroni went among them, reminding them of that for which they were fighting. Buoyed up by his inspired words, they turned with renewed determination upon the opposition, crying with one voice unto the Lord for their freedom. (See Alma 43:50.) Once

more they were able to stand with power against the opposition, and eventually they emerged triumphant.

On the surface, this chapter seems to be only a historical account of a typical ancient American battle. However, by looking at it also as a “type and shadow” of the eternal war between good and evil, we can glean much to guide our lives today. We see that, similar to enemy forces in Nephite times, Satan and his followers use apostates to lead attacks against the Church today. Zarahemnah’s evil plotting reminds us that Satan’s plan is to usurp power over men and bring them into bondage. Like the Nephites, we must fight this evil, for if Satan is allowed to prevail, our precious rights to life and liberty will be lost.

As the Nephite armies prepared, we prepare for that spiritual battle by putting on “the whole armour of God,” which will enable us to “stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Eph. 6:11.) Satan has a difficult time conquering an individual protected by this armor. Like the opposition leaders, Satan will usually focus his attack on our weakest parts, hoping for a major attack on our souls after our defenses crumble.

Not unlike the Nephite spies, modern prophets and the scriptures can give us advance warning of the plans of the evil one. If we follow the Lord’s counsel through his prophet, as did Moroni, we too can know how, when, and where to best defend ourselves. The gospel gives us the “battle strategy,” and the Church provides the necessary structure for setting up our defenses and defeating the enemy with minimum casualties.

As did the faithful Nephites, we battle not for money or power but to save our families, worship God, and do our duty. The fight is long and tiring, for Satan’s forces are strong, but when the future looks hopeless, we can be rallied by reminders of the cause for which we are fighting. If we unite and turn to the Lord for help, we *can* prevail against the evils of the world.

This chapter is just a beginning. Other battles offer more insights. For example, when seen as symbolic, the wicked Amalickiah shows us that Satan gains support for his causes by using flattery and promises of power (see Alma 46:5), by using whatever devious means necessary to gain power (see Alma 47), and by not caring whom he hurts in the process (see Alma 49:10). The Lamanite attack on the city of Ammonihah reminds us that, like an enemy army, Satan will quietly try to dig down our defenses when he is not allowed direct access to our hearts. (See Alma 49:22.)

We learn, too, that failure to keep God’s commandments leads to destruction. If we are faithful, we will be delivered not only from political but also from spiritual destruction. (See Alma 50:21-22.) Moroni’s seemingly harsh treatment of dissenters parallels the vigor with which we must overcome even small areas of rebellion in our lives before they gather strength and do real damage. (See Alma 50:25-36; Alma 46:30-35; Alma 51:20.) It is heartening to consider ways in which we may fortify ourselves and our families against the forces of Satan by preparing our homes to defend ourselves against the onslaughts of evil. (See Alma 49:4-12.)

Seeing that Satan will attack our weak spots, we need to be particularly vigilant to prevent him from gaining access to us. (See Alma 49:13-15.) We would be wise to follow Moroni’s defense strategies and never cease our efforts to fortify ourselves, even when the attack does not seem imminent. (See Alma 50:1; Alma 53:7; Alma 62:42.) We gain great hope when we see what protection the two thousand sons of Helaman were afforded because of the faith of their mothers and because of their own exactness in keeping “every word of command.” (Alma 57:21.)



Moroni himself sets an example of the kind of warriors we must be: “strong and . . . mighty,” with “perfect understanding,” “firm in the faith of Christ,” and willing to “labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety” of our fellowmen. What a strong defense we would then marshal against evil, for “if all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would [be] shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men.” (Alma 48:11-13, 17.)

The Lord has not left us defenseless against Satan’s powerful forces. Nevertheless, we must search out and obey the counsel he has given us. As Moroni wrote to Pahoran, “Do ye suppose that the Lord will still deliver us, while we sit upon our thrones and do not make use of the means which the Lord has provided for us?” (Alma 60:21.)

No longer am I tempted to skip the war stories in the Book of Mormon or daydream my way through them. If I am to successfully defend my family in the great war with evil, I want to take advantage of every word of counsel from the Lord’s “combat manual” for the latter days—the Book of Mormon.