

LESSON 43
“How Could Ye Have Departed From the Ways of the Lord”
Mormon 1-6; Moroni 9

OVERVIEW:

Mormon is given responsibility for the sacred records. Mormon becomes the leader of the Nephite armies. The Nephites suffer in battle because of their wickedness. Mormon explains the purposes for the records he has abridged and written. In a final great battle, all but 24 of the Nephites are killed.

In Mormon’s record we get a glimpse of what life without a hope in Christ would be like.

SCRIPTURES:

THE BOOK OF MORMON
CHAPTER 1

Ammaron instructs Mormon concerning the sacred records—War commences between the Nephites and the Lamanites—The Three Nephites are taken away—Wickedness, unbelief, sorceries, and witchcraft prevail. [About A.D. 322—326]

1 AND now I, Mormon, (In an effort to correct an error in relation to the word *Mormon*, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote the following letter to the editor of the *Times and Seasons*, an early Church publication: “SIR: - Through the medium of your paper I wish to correct an error among men that profess to be learned, liberal and wise; and I do it the more cheerfully because I hope sober-thinking and sound-reasoning people will sooner listen to the voice of truth than be led astray by the vain pretensions of the self-wise. The error I speak of is the definition of the word Mormon. It has been stated that this word was derived from the Greek work *mormo*. This is not the case. There was no Greek or Latin upon the plates from which I, through the grace of the Lord, translated the Book of Mormon...The word Mormon, means literally, more good.” History of the Church, 5:399-400. Student Manual, p. 130) make a ^arecord of the things which I have both seen and heard, and call it the ^bBook of Mormon. (Jeffrey R. Holland: “In one of the loneliest scenes in scriptural history, a silent, war-weary soldier looked out across time and the unspeakable tragedy his family and followers faced. Mormon, the man destined before the world was formed to abridge and summarize the Nephite story—and in so doing to have his name forever immortalized with this additional testament of Jesus Christ—surveyed the casualties of a nation that had turned from the Lord. As sobering as the account is, it does not give a full account of all the sin and sadness Mormon had seen. Indeed, such an account probably would have been impossible to record.” (Christ and the New Covenant, p. 317))

2 And about the time that ^aAmmaron hid up the records unto the Lord, he came unto me, (I being about ten years of age, and I began to be ^blearned somewhat after the manner of the learning of my people) and Ammaron said unto me: I perceive that thou art a ^csober (thoughtful, serious-minded, mature beyond his chronological age.) child, (“The way to get along in any important matter is to gather unto yourselves wise men, experienced and aged men, to assist in council in all times of trouble. Handsome men are not apt to be wise and strong minded men; but the strength of a strong minded man will generally create course features, like the rough, strong bough of the oak. You will always discover in the first glance of a man, in the outlines of his features something of his mind” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.299) and art quick to observe; (Jeffrey R. Holland: “We know that ‘every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose’ in his premortal existence. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 365.) Perhaps that call has an effect on those men even in their earliest mortal years, for Mormon was recognized by his predecessor Ammaron as being ‘a sober child’ and one ‘quick to observe.’ (Morm. 1:2.)” (Ensign, Mar. 1978, “Mormon: The Man & The

Book”) David A. Bednar: Please note that the root word *observe* is used three times in these verses. And Mormon, even in his youth, is described as being “quick to observe.” As you study and learn and grow, I hope you also are learning about and becoming quick to observe. Your future success and happiness will in large measure be determined by this spiritual capacity. As used in the scriptures, the word *observe* has two primary uses. One use denotes “to look” or “to see” or “to notice”—as we learn in Isaiah 42:20: “Seeing many things, but thou *observest* not; opening the ears, but he heareth not” (emphasis added). The second use of the word *observe* suggests “to obey” or “to keep”—as is evident in the Doctrine and Covenants: “But blessed are they who have kept the covenant and *observed* the commandment, for they shall obtain mercy” (D&C 54:6; emphasis added). Thus when we are quick to observe, we promptly look or notice and obey. Both of these fundamental elements—looking and obeying—are essential to being quick to observe. And the prophet Mormon is an impressive example of this gift in action. ... Being quick to observe is an antecedent to and is linked with the spiritual gift of discernment.... Being quick to observe is a prerequisite to and a preparation for the gift of discernment. We can hope to obtain that supernal gift of discernment and its light of protection and direction only if we are quick to observe—if we both look and obey. Ensign, Dec. 2006, 32,34)

3 Therefore, when ye are about twenty and four years old I would that ye should remember the things that ye have observed concerning this people; and when ye are of that age go to the ^aland Antum, unto a hill which shall be called ^bShim; and there have I deposited unto the Lord all the sacred engravings concerning this people. (Apparently, Ammoron did not have a son of his own to pass the plates on to.)

4 And behold, ye shall take the ^aplates of Nephi unto yourself, and the remainder shall ye leave in the place where they are; (More plates left behind in the hill. Then in verse 2:17) and ye shall engrave on the plates of Nephi all the things that ye have observed concerning this people.

5 And I, Mormon, being a descendant of ^aNephi, (and my father’s name was Mormon) I remembered the things which Ammaron commanded me.

6 And it came to pass that I, being *eleven years old, was carried by my father into the land southward, even to the land of Zarahemla.

7 The whole face of the land had become covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea. (Hugh Nibley: “He was eleven years old, and he was taken by his father to a land southward to Zarahemla—the big city, the big capital. He was impressed as a little kid, he says. The land was covered with buildings, and he [had] never seen anything like that. ‘The people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea.’ Now this is important for the Book of Mormon, you see. We talk about such vast numbers—well, we’ll see what vast numbers are. When they gather all their forces for a big war down here, how many do they have in the army? Thirty thousand—that’s just one division (v. 11). In our army 27,000 would make a division. He calls that as numerous as the sands of the sea. Well, as an eleven-year-old, he’s impressed. You’d be impressed with these things. So we have to be very careful and not be simplistic when we read the Book of Mormon. When this kid tells us that people in Zarahemla were as numerous as the sands of the sea, how many hundred trillion people are there? It doesn’t mean that at all. It’s a metaphor here, as it were the sands of the sea.” (Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Lecture 104, p. 192-3))

8 And it came to pass in this year there began to be a war between the ^aNephites, who consisted of the Nephites and the Jacobites and the Josephites and the Zoramites; and this war was between the Nephites, and the Lamanites and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites. (Notice that they name 7 families. 7 is symbolic of complete. That is, these are all of the Lehitites. What happened to the Samites? Sam is seldom mentioned. His inheritance is with Nephi.)

9 Now the ^aLamanites and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites were called Lamanites, and the two parties were Nephites and Lamanites.

10 And it came to pass that the war began to be among them in the borders of Zarahemla, by the waters of Sidon.

11 And it came to pass that the Nephites had gathered together a great number of men, even to exceed

the number of thirty thousand. And it came to pass that they did have in this same year a number of^a battles, in which the Nephites did beat the Lamanites and did slay many of them.

12 And it came to pass that the Lamanites withdrew their design, and there was peace settled in the land; and peace did remain for the space of about four years, that there was no bloodshed.

13 But wickedness did prevail upon the face of the whole land, insomuch that the Lord did take away his^a beloved disciples (The 3 Nephites), and the work of miracles and of healing did cease because of the iniquity of the people.

14 And there were no^a gifts from the Lord, and the^b Holy Ghost did not come upon any (This is a bit of an exaggeration. Mormon and Moroni had the Holy Ghost as did a few others of their friends and family.), because of their wickedness and^c unbelief. (Hugh Nibley: “It is not surprising that their personal experience of things led both Mormon and his son to embrace a completely pessimistic view of the world... True, ‘awful is the state of man’ only if ‘faith has ceased’—but faith has ceased! If men insist that there is no redemption, then, sure enough, ‘they are as though there had been no redemption made’ (Moroni 7:38-39). ‘If these things have ceased,’ says Moroni speaking of gifts of the Spirit (Moroni 7:37), ‘wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain.’ This is no mere figure of speech; if faith fulfills its own prophecies so does unbelief, and those who insist that all is vain are quite right; if men reject the gospel they will find everywhere powerful confirmation for their unbelief, and undeniable evidence to support their contention that the human predicament is hopeless.” (Since Cumorah, p. 401) Joseph Smith: “Have not the pride, high-mindedness, and unbelief of the Gentiles, provoked the Holy One of Israel to withdraw His Holy Spirit from them, and send forth His judgments to scourge them for their wickedness? This is certainly the case... The Lord declared to His servants, some eighteen months since [the Church was organized], that He was then withdrawing His Spirit from the earth (See D&C 1); and we can see that such is the fact, for not only the churches are dwindling away, but there are no conversions, or but very few: and this is not all, the governments of the earth are thrown into confusion and division; and Destruction, to the eye of the spiritual beholder, seems to be written by the finger of an invisible hand, in large capitals, upon almost every thing we behold.” (History of the Church, 1:314))

15 And I, *being^a fifteen years of age (About the same age as Joseph Smith) and being somewhat of a^b sober mind, therefore I was^c visited of the Lord, (Second Comforter) and^d tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus. (“There must be something significant . . . concerning the stage of life one goes through at the age of about 14. Mormon’s awakening to spiritual matters at about this age foreshadows a similar awakening at a similar age by the young Joseph Smith, who would translate Mormon’s record. . . . Similarly, through modern-day prophets, the Lord has specified 12 as the age when worthy young men of His Church can receive the Aaronic Priesthood. What all of this seems to suggest is a heightened spiritual sense experienced at about this age - something that conscientious parents of young teenagers would do well to keep in mind.” (E.D. Clark & R. S. Clark, Fathers and Sons in the Book of Mormon, as taken from Church News, 10/24/92))

16 And I did endeavor to preach unto this people, but my mouth was shut, and I was forbidden (It is not normal for members of the Church to be commanded not to preach the gospel to their neighbors. Don’t cast your pearls before swine.) that I should preach unto them; for behold they had^a wilfully rebelled against their God; and the beloved disciples were^b taken away out of the land, because of their iniquity. (Jeffrey R. Holland: “The maturing Mormon, by then fifteen years of age, stood beyond the sinfulness around him and rose above the despair of his time. Consequently, he ‘was visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus,’ trying valiantly to preach to his people. But as God occasionally does when those with so much light reject it, Mormon literally had his mouth shut. He was forbidden to preach to a nation that had wilfully rebelled against their God. These people had rejected the miracles and messages delivered them by the three translated Nephite disciples, who had now also been silenced in their ministry and been taken from the nation to whom they had been sent. Remaining among those people but silenced in his testimony.” (Christ And The New Covenant, p. 318) Sterling W. Sill:

“Mormon had to be restrained in his desire to preach the gospel...Most of us have to be coaxed and begged and reminded to do our duty. Mormon had to be held back.” (quoted in Daniel Ludlow, A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, p. 298))

17 But I did remain among them, but I was forbidden to ^apreach unto them, because of the hardness of their hearts; and because of the hardness of their hearts (Erastus Snow: If our spirits are inclined to be stiff and refractory, and we desire continually the gratification of our own will to the extent that this feeling prevails in us, the Spirit of the Lord is held at a distance from us; or, in other words, the Father withholds his Spirit from us in proportion as we desire the gratification of our own will. JD, 7:352) the land was ^bcursed for their sake. (After the Fall, the Lord declared unto Adam: “Cursed is the ground for thy sake.” It is clear from other scriptural commentary that this original cursing of the land, as a result of the Fall, was a beneficial act that provided for the growth and development of Adam and Eve and their posterity, as well as allowing for the full operation of the plan of salvation. In contrast to this usage of the phrase “for their sake,” Mormon uses the phrase not to illustrate any beneficial aspects but rather to point out another terrible consequence of the wickedness of his people. The definition of “sake” in an 1830 dictionary or some other contemporary edition would include “on account of.” This definition seems to fit better with Mormon’s intent and is consistent with other Book of Mormon passages that use similar language. The land was “cursed” not for the blessing or benefit of the Nephites in any way, but rather on account of their great wickedness. DCBM, 4:212. Joseph Smith: I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God of Israel... the withdrawing of the Spirit of God from the earth await this generation, until they are visited with utter desolation. TPJS, 328.)

18 And these Gadianton robbers, who were among the Lamanites, did infest the land, insomuch that the inhabitants thereof began to ^ahide up their ^btreasures in the earth; and they became slippery, because the Lord had cursed the land, that they could not hold them, nor retain them again. (Remember, that’s exactly what Samuel the Lamanite had said – you place all your love in your riches. Behold your riches will become slippery that you cannot hold them. Of course they do. I mean the stock market can be wiped out in an hour. They became slippery that they could not hold them. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 4:194. The “slippery” earth did not necessarily swallow up treasurers in some mystical or magical way, but rather such treasures disappeared through the thievery and dishonesty of the Gadiantons and others with similar motives. DCBM, 4:212. Brigham Young: When we consider the condition of the Latter-day Saints, and see how many there are who seem to have their eyes fixed upon the things of this world, things that are not lasting, but that perish in the handling, and how anxious they are to obtain them, how do you think I feel about it? We see many of the Elders of Israel desirous of becoming wealthy, and they adopt any course that they think will bring them riches, which to me is as unwise as anything can be—to see men of wisdom, men that seem to have an understanding of the world and of the things of God, searching after minerals throughout these mountains;... These treasures that are in the earth are carefully watched, they can be removed from place to place according to the good pleasure of Him who made them and owns them. He has his messengers at his service, and it is just as easy for an angel to remove the minerals from any part of one of these mountains to another, as it is for you and me to walk up and down this hall. JD, 19:36-37)

19 And it came to pass that there were ^asorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics; and the power of the evil one was wrought upon all the face of the land, even unto the fulfilling of all the words of Abinadi, and also ^bSamuel the Lamanite.

* Verse 6 [About A.D. 322]; Verse 15 [About A.D. 326].

CHAPTER 2

Mormon leads the Nephite armies—Blood and carnage sweep the land—The Nephites lament and mourn with the sorrowing of the damned—Their day of grace is passed—Mormon obtains the plates of Nephi—Wars continue. [Between A.D. 327 and 350]

1 AND it came to pass in that same year there began to be a war again (after 4 years of peace) between the Nephites and the Lamanites. And notwithstanding I being ^ayoung, (16 years old) was large in stature; therefore the people of Nephi appointed me that I should be their leader, or the leader of their armies. (We may conclude that Mormon received the priesthood at a very tender age. He was only ten years old when Ammaron counseled him and placed in him the wonderful trust as guardian of the sacred plates. Moreover, when he was fifteen years of age he had a visitation by the Lord and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus. (Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, 2:9-10.) It appears that Mormon was appointed to lead the Nephite armies into battle against the Lamanites not so much because of his physical stature but more likely because he was indeed a remarkable leader in many aspects of his life. We are left only to surmise all of the reasons why Mormon was thrust into weighty responsibilities while so young. The record does not detail all of the greatness and unique qualifications of Mormon. Mormon the record keeper was also modest and humble. DCBM, 4:214)

2 Therefore it came to pass that *in my sixteenth year I did go forth at the head of an army of the Nephites, against the Lamanites; therefore three hundred and twenty and six years had passed away. (Sterling W. Sill: “If you think it an inspiration that a 16 year old boy could win the leadership of a great national army what would you think of a man between the ages of 65 and 74 who was still the best man among his entire people for this top position of leadership, and in those days the general marched at the head and not in the rear of his troops. (Mormon 6:11) It is one thing to shoot a guided missile at an enemy a thousand miles away, but it is quite another thing to meet the enemy face to face, and with a sword or a battle axe, take on all comers, old and young, on any basis they might choose to elect; and still be in there fighting at age 74. No weakling or coward survives a test like that. His leadership and great skill in battle must have been an inspiration to those fortunate companions in arms who were privileged to fight at his side” (quoted in Daniel Ludlow’s A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, p.299))

3 And it came to pass that in the three hundred and twenty and seventh year the Lamanites did come upon us with ^aexceedingly great power, insomuch that they did frighten my armies; therefore they would not fight, and they began to retreat towards the ^bnorth countries. (This is the beginning of the migration to the north, toward the hill Shim and Cumorah)

4 And it came to pass that we did come to the city of Angola, and we did take possession of the city, and make preparations to defend ourselves against the Lamanites. And it came to pass that we did ^afortify the city with our might; but notwithstanding all our fortifications the Lamanites did come upon us and did drive us out of the city.

5 And they did also drive us forth out of the land of David.

6 And we marched forth and came to the land of Joshua, which was in the borders west by the seashore.

7 And it came to pass that we did gather in our people as fast as it were possible, that we might get them together in ^aone body.

8 But behold, the land was ^afilled with ^brobbers and with Lamanites; and notwithstanding the great destruction which hung over my people, they did not repent of their evil doings; therefore there was blood and carnage spread throughout all the face of the land, both on the part of the Nephites and also on the part of the Lamanites; and it was one complete revolution throughout all the face of the land.

9 And now, the Lamanites had a king, and his name was ^aAaron; and he came against us with an army of forty and four thousand. And behold, I withstood him with forty and two thousand. And it came to pass that I beat him with my army that he fled before me. And behold, all this was done, and *three hundred

and thirty years had passed away.

10 And it came to pass that the Nephites began to repent of their iniquity, and began to cry even as had been prophesied by Samuel the prophet; for behold no man could ^akeep that which was his own, for the thieves, and the robbers, and the murderers, and the magic art, and the witchcraft which was in the land. (Hugh Nibley: “The first two chapters of Mormon give a wonderful description of the complete breakdown of a civilization. ‘And it was one complete revolution throughout all the face of the land’ (Mormon 2:8). Recent studies have shown that when the Roman Empire collapsed all of a sudden, just such vast roving and plundering bands filled the earth as those described in the Book of Mormon. Insecurity was complete (Mormon 1:18); people took refuge in ‘sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics’ (Mormon 1:19). The Dark Ages were upon them. ‘No man could keep that which was his own, for the thieves, and the robbers, and the murderers, and the magic art, and the witchcraft which was in the land’ (Mormon 2:10).” (An Approach to the Book of Mormon, p. 395) “Everyone was a possible victim here. Nobody was safe. Total insecurity. And this is the way you feel today if you want to walk around in some of our inner cities. Everybody’s bedizened and befuddled by these magic arts. It’s the mystique of the gangs and the graffiti... They get themselves up in fantastic, spooky costumes; paint their faces; draw their weird graffiti; and have their secret signs.” (Teachings From the Book of Mormon, Lecture 106, p. 211))

11 Thus there began to be a ^amourning and a lamentation in all the land because of these things, and more especially among the people of Nephi.

12 And it came to pass that when I, Mormon, saw their lamentation and their ^amourning and their sorrow before the Lord, my heart did begin to rejoice within me, knowing the mercies and the long-suffering of the Lord, therefore supposing that he would be merciful unto them that they would ^bagain become a righteous people.

13 But behold this my joy was vain, for their ^asorrowing was not unto repentance, (The tears the Nephites shed did not flow from hearts that were broken and spirits that were contrite. Their sorrow stemmed not from faith in Christ but rather from a hopelessness and despair which cometh because of iniquity. DCBM, 4:215.) because of the goodness of God; but it was rather the ^bsorrowing of the ^cdamned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take ^dhappiness in sin. (Spencer W. Kimball: “Often people indicate that they have repented when all they have done is to express regret for a wrong act. But true repentance is marked by that godly sorrow that changes, transforms, and saves. To be sorry is not enough. Perhaps the felon in the penitentiary, coming to realize the high price he must pay for his folly, may wish he had not committed the crime. That is not repentance. The vicious man who is serving a stiff sentence for rape may be very sorry he did the deed, but he is not repentant if his heavy sentence is the only reason for his sorrow. That is the sorrow of the world. The truly repentant man is sorry before he is apprehended. He is sorry even if his secret is never known. He desires to make voluntary amends...Repentance of the godly type means that one comes to recognize the sin and voluntarily and without pressure from outside sources begins his transformation.” (The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 153 as taken from Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 473-4) Neal A. Maxwell: “Recognition is a sacred moment...real remorse floods the soul...False remorse instead is like ‘fondling our failings.’ In ritual regret, we mourn our mistakes but without mending them.” (Conference Report, Nov. 1991 Ensign, “Repentance”) “...the natural man never picks up the cross. His is the ‘sorrowing of the damned,’ which involves regret but not necessarily over the sin itself. Instead, it is because these sorrowers can no longer take pleasure in sin (see Mormon 2:13). Quite a difference, for the natural man still clings, not to the cross, but to his old ways” (That Ye May Believe, p. 48) “...we see so much ‘sorrowing of the damned’-this by those in a psychological no-man’s-land (see Mormon 2:12–13). These individuals can no longer take pleasure in sin, but they do not fully repent, either. They hope somehow to be saved in their sins instead of being willing to ‘give away all [their] sins’ in order to know God (Alma 22:18).” (If Thou Endure It Well, p. 16) But modern sinners demand that modern science do just that; they claim as their right freedom from consequences, the

suspension of the cause-effect principle when it interferes with their desires.” (Rodney Turner, Book of Mormon Symposium Series, Jacob - WofM, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 278) Hugh Nibley: “The classic example of this we have with us now. We never knew such a perfect case [of] the sorrowing of the damned. Sorrow for their sins? [for] what they have done?...No, but ‘because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin.’ What’s the attitude of people with AIDS? They sorrow, they suffer, they want a cure. We have to do something. They have to be saved, but never do they show any inclination to repent of what brought the thing on. If we only had the cure, then they could continue in their own ways and feel happy about it. They sort of resent being unable to do that...They sorrow, but it’s the sorrow of the damned and they sorrow just for one reason—that they can’t go on doing the very thing that’s brought them into this terrible path. If they had a chance, they’d go right on doing it forever. The Lord must call a halt here sometime. So now he’s going to do it.” (Teachings From the Book of Mormon, Lecture 104, p. 197))

14 And they did not come unto Jesus with broken ^ahearts and contrite spirits, but they did ^bcurse God, and wish to die. Nevertheless they would struggle with the sword for their lives.

15 And it came to pass that my sorrow did return unto me again, and I saw that the ^aday of ^bgrace ^cwas passed with them, both temporally and spiritually; (Spencer W. Kimball: “It is true that the great principle of repentance is always available, but for the wicked and rebellious there are serious reservations to this statement. For instance, sin is intensely habit-forming and sometimes moves men to the tragic point of no return. Without repentance there can be no forgiveness, and without forgiveness all the blessings of eternity hang in jeopardy. As the transgressor moves deeper and deeper in his sin, and the error is entrenched more deeply and the will to change is weakened, it becomes increasingly nearer hopeless and he skids down and down until either he does not want to climb back up or he has lost the power to do so.” (The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 117.) One of the greatest principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the principle of repentance. However, if one has sinned so seriously and becomes habitually a sinner, the spirit of repentance leaves, and he may or may not be able to repent. Harold B. Lee, Church News, March 3, 1973, p. 4) for I saw thousands of them hewn down in open ^drebellion against their God, and heaped up as ^edung upon the face of the land. And thus *three hundred and forty and four years had passed away.

16 And it came to pass that in the three hundred and forty and fifth year the Nephites did begin to flee before the Lamanites; and they were pursued until they came even to the land of Jashon, before it was possible to stop them in their retreat.

17 And now, the city of Jashon was near the ^aland where Ammaron had ^bdeposited the records (the hill Shim) unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed. And behold I had gone according to the word of Ammaron, and taken the ^cplates of Nephi, and did make a record according to the words of Ammaron. (Elder Anthony W. Ivins said, “It will be observed that at this time only the plates of Nephi were removed from the hill Shim, by Mormon.” (Conference Report, Apr. 1928, p. 12))

18 And upon the plates of Nephi I did make a full account of all the wickedness and abominations; but upon ^athese plates (the plates of Mormon, the golden plates. to 4:23) I did forbear to make a full account of their wickedness and abominations, for behold, a continual scene of wickedness and abominations has been before mine eyes ever since I have been sufficient to behold the ways of man. (When Ammaron turned the responsibility of the records over to Mormon, he indicated that Mormon should engrave on the plates of Nephi all the things that [he] had observed concerning his people. Thus Mormon’s major record of the events of his day was written on the large plates of Nephi. However, later in his life he was commanded by the Lord to make a separate set of plates, the plates of Mormon. He then abridged onto his own plates all of the writings from the large plates of Nephi, including his own writings. Concerning his writings on these two sets of plates, Mormon said: And upon the plates of Nephi I did make a full account of all the wickedness and abominations; but upon these plates [the plates of Mormon] I did forbear to make a full account of their wickedness and abominations. Earlier in his writings, Mormon indicated he did not write on the plates of Mormon even one hundredth part of the things that were

written on the large plates of Nephi. Ludlow, Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, p. 299-300)

19 And wo is me because of their wickedness; for my heart has been filled with sorrow because of their wickedness, all my days; nevertheless, I know that I shall be ^alifted up at the last day. (Mormon had his calling and election made sure. “One great objective of our lives should be to make our calling and election sure, that is, to so live that we receive assurance from the Lord that when this life is over, we shall be exalted and dwell with him. Mormon may have had this blessing, as did other Nephite prophets (see Mosiah 26:20; Enos 1:27; 3 Nephi 28:3), for he tell us: ‘I know that I shall be lifted up at the last day.’ (Mormon 2:19) Those members of the Church who devote themselves wholly to righteousness, living by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, make their calling and election sure. That is, they receive the more sure word of prophecy, which means that the Lord seals their exaltation upon them while they are yet in this life... ..The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy through the power of the Holy Priesthood.’ (D. & C. 131:5)... The prophet, for one, had this seal placed upon him... To him Deity said: ‘I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father with Abraham your father.’ (D. & C. 132:49.)’ (Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pp. 109-110)” (Book of Mormon Student Manual, 1981, p. 459-60) We can only read between the lines and wonder how he could remain faithful and righteous under such adverse conditions, and how he could maintain a personal hope when he was so often filled with sorrow and discouragement at the sins of his society. Implicit in this statement is the special spiritual blessing Mormon had received, which was an anchor to his soul amidst the turmoil and troubles of his life. It seems clear that he had obtained the “more sure word of prophecy” – the sure knowledge that he was sealed up to eternal life. This is linked with his having received the Second Comforter, the presence of the Savior. The Prophet Joseph Smith often urged the Saints “to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it. TPJS, p. 299. One receives these blessings only after, as Joseph taught, the Lord has thoroughly proven him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards. TPJS, p. 150. The realization that these blessings were his most assuredly kept Mormon from becoming overcome with sorrow or debilitated with discouragement and also provided the spiritual strength he most needed to continue to succor and serve an unresponsive, unappreciative, hardened, and iniquitous people. DCBM, 4:219)

20 And it came to pass that in this year the people of Nephi again were hunted and driven. And it came to pass that we were driven forth until we had come northward to the land which was called Shem.

21 And it came to pass that we did ^afortify the city of Shem, and we did gather in our people as much as it were possible, that perhaps we might save them from destruction. (“Our information on the timing of warfare in this area has not been examined comprehensively by scholars. What is known is consistent, for example, with the fact that in Yucatan, wars were usually fought between October and the end of January (or February in other Mesoamerican regions). In that period, travel was rarely restricted due to bad weather; it was still relatively cool, and food was available either by supply from the logistical base or by taxing the subjugated. The schedule varied slightly depending on local topography and climate. The corn crop, fundamental in the diet everywhere in Mesoamerica, is typically planted in April or May, just before the rains begin and after the fields have been cleared and the rubbish burned. It can be harvested about the time when the clouds and rain taper off (the wettest months are July and September for most regions) and the temperature rises because of greater sunshine. Harvest is from October to December, again depending on locality and on crop variety. The crucial time for agricultural labor under this regime is, and was anciently, March through May. At other times, being away was inconvenient but not critical. Probably the segment of time freest from field work for the typical cultivator/warrior was November through February, which, of course, coincides with the war season. Under emergency

conditions, naturally, some military action could go on, though hampered, throughout most of the year. (John L. Sorenson. "Seasonality of Warfare in the Book of Mormon and in Mesoamerica." Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin, eds., Warfare in the Book of Mormon [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1990], 456.))

22 And it came to pass in the *three hundred and forty and sixth year they began to come upon us again.

23 And it came to pass that I did speak unto my people, and did urge them with great energy, that they would stand boldly before the Lamanites and ^afight for their ^bwives, and their children, and their houses, and their homes. (God and religion are missing from the list of things to fight for. This was on the title of liberty of Moroni.)

24 And my words did arouse them somewhat to vigor, insomuch that they did not flee from before the Lamanites, but did stand with boldness against them.

25 And it came to pass that we did contend with an army of thirty thousand against an army of fifty thousand. And it came to pass that we did stand before them with such firmness that they did flee from before us.

26 And it came to pass that when they had fled we did pursue them with our armies, and did meet them again, and did ^abeat them; nevertheless the ^bstrength of the Lord was not with us; yea, we were left to ourselves, that the Spirit of the Lord did not abide in us; therefore we had become weak (without the Holy Ghost) like unto our brethren. ("By using his own people as an example, Mormon provides us with a significant doctrinal teaching concerning the 'strength of the Lord' that comes by the power of the Holy Ghost through personal righteousness. 'I know, in the strength of the Lord thou canst do all things,' Lamoni testified (Alma 20:4). There is a real power, both physical and spiritual, that can come into the life of every man or woman who is filled with the Holy Ghost. That power constitutes the 'strength of the Lord'--a divine, unlimited power. Without that strength and power we are left only with the limited mortal abilities of man. Mormon informs us that his people were without the Spirit. Having no claim upon the infinite powers and strengths of God, being cut off from the blessings of the Spirit, they were left to their own natural abilities, which were infinitely inferior to the 'strength of the Lord.' Thus they were nothing special or unique; they were just like any other natural man. Ammon clearly understood the difference between the strength of the Lord and mortal man's weakness. He testified: 'I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things' (Alma 26:12). This important doctrinal message was also forcefully impressed upon the heart and soul of the young prophet Joseph Smith after the loss of the 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon. To him the Lord declared: 'For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.' The Lord further instructed Joseph to be faithful and repent of his sins, and then again warned: 'Except thou do this, thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men' (see D&C 3:4, 11, italics added). To ensure that we do not disqualify ourselves from having the strength of the Lord we must live our lives in such a way as not to repel the Spirit. By being faithful, obedient, penitent, and spiritually vigilant we can have the companionship of the Holy Ghost, which strengthens and protects in both physical and spiritual ways (we D&C 35:14; D&C 84:33; D&C 89:18-20; see also Teachings, p. 323)." (McConkie, Millet, and Top, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, vol. 4, p. 220))

27 And my heart did sorrow because of this the great calamity of my people, because of their wickedness and their abominations. But behold, we did go forth against the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, until we had again taken possession of the lands of our inheritance.

28 And the *three hundred and forty and ninth year had passed away. And in the three hundred and fiftieth year we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided.

29 And the Lamanites did give unto us the land ^anorthward, yea, even to the ^bnarrow passage which led

into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward.

* Verse 2 [A.D. 327—328]; Verse 9 [A.D. 331]; Verse 15 [A.D. 345]; Verse 22 [A.D. 346]; Verse 28 [A.D. 350].

CHAPTER 3

Mormon cries repentance unto the Nephites—They gain a great victory and glory in their own strength—Mormon refuses to lead them, and his prayers for them are without faith—The Book of Mormon invites the twelve tribes of Israel to believe the gospel. [Between A.D. 350 and 362]

1 AND it came to pass that the Lamanites did not come to battle again *until ten years more had passed away. And behold, I had employed my people, the Nephites, in preparing their lands and their arms against the time of battle.

2 And it came to pass that the Lord did say unto me: Cry unto this people—Repent ye, and come unto me, and be ye baptized, and build up again my church, and ye shall be ^aspared. (The Nephites are given one more chance to repent and avoid the destruction that awaits otherwise. God wants us to repent and will do anything to help us do so. But we still have our agency and may choose not to.)

3 And I did cry unto this people, but it was ^ain vain; and they did ^bnot realize that it was the Lord that had spared them, and granted unto them a chance for repentance. And behold they did harden their hearts against the Lord their God. (Marion G. Romney: “We who today bear the priesthood of God are the legal heirs to this great commission. Ours is the responsibility of officially declaring repentance unto all the inhabitants of the earth. None are exempt. We must discharge this responsibility, regardless of the manner in which our message is received.” (Conference Report, Apr. 1950, p. 87) Joseph Fielding Smith: “That is our duty. When we see evil lurking, when we see dangers confronting the people, and especially the Latter-day Saints, it is our duty to raise the warning voice, and not only in behalf of the Latter-day Saints, but to warn all people, for our mission is one that is world-wide, and we should warn all men and give them the opportunity of repentance, of serving the Lord and keeping his commandments if they will. If they will not, then we have saved our souls. We are clear from the blood of this generation. That is our duty.” (Conference Report, Oct. 1933, p. 61))

4 And it came to pass that after this tenth year had passed away, making, in the whole, three hundred and sixty years from the coming of Christ, the king of the Lamanites sent an epistle unto me, which gave unto me to know that they were preparing to come again to battle against us.

5 And it came to pass that I did cause my people that they should gather themselves together at the land ^aDesolation, to a city which was in the borders, by the narrow pass which led into the land ^bsouthward.

6 And there we did place our armies, that we might stop the armies of the Lamanites, that they might not get possession of any of our lands; therefore we did fortify against them with all our force.

7 And it came to pass that in the three hundred and sixty and first year the Lamanites did come down to the ^acity of Desolation to battle against us; and it came to pass that in that year we did beat them, insomuch that they did return to their own lands again.

8 And in the *three hundred and sixty and second year they did come down ^aagain to battle. And we did beat them again, and did slay a great number of them, and their dead were cast into the sea.

9 And now, because of this great thing which my people, the Nephites, had done, they began to ^aboast in their own strength, and began to swear before the heavens that they would avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren who had been slain by their enemies. (Hugh Nibley: “Here are two victories in a row; the Nephites were doing all right...They decided they were unbeatable because of this great thing, and revenge becomes the motive. Verse 9: ‘And now, because of this great thing...they began to boast in their own strength, and began to swear before the heavens that they would avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren who had been slain by their enemies.’ Here is the standard scenario of the Western, of course. The bad guys do bad things for the first half [of the movie], and the good guys get

revenge for the second half. And we love that revenge—catching up with them and shooting them or blowing them up, etc. That revenge is the main scene...John Wayne or someone is the good guy who doesn't want war or anything like that. Then they [the bad guys] do something very, very bad. Then the thing we all sit on the edge of our seats and relish is the revenge that follows, because innocent people have suffered, etc...This is the theme of countless police stories, detective stories, and Westerns. Mr. Good Guy goes and cleans up the bad guy, but only after he's been driven to the extreme. He has to avenge the blood of his brethren. Well, how about this noble motive of avenging the blood of your brethren—the private eye plot, the police officer whose pal gets shot, etc.? Is not avenging the blood of your brethren an ideal? Isn't it an obligation?...Finally they're going to settle the Lamanite question once and for all with a big battle, because they've got them on the run now. But they shouldn't have done that.” (Teachings From the Book of Mormon, Lecture 105, p. 201))

10 And they did ^aswear by the heavens, and also by the throne of God, that they ^bwould go up to battle against their enemies, and would cut them off from the face of the land.

11 And it came to pass that I, Mormon, did utterly ^arefuse from this time forth to be a commander and a leader of this people, because of their wickedness and abomination. (The Nephites are now taking the offensive which is different than their history.)

12 Behold, I had led them, notwithstanding their wickedness I had led them many times to battle, and had loved them, according to the ^alove of God which was in me, with all my heart; and my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long for them; nevertheless, it was ^bwithout faith, because of the ^chardness of their hearts.

13 And ^athrice have I delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, and they have repented not of their sins. (They were given three chances to repent.)

14 And when they had sworn by all that had been ^aforbidden them by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that they would go up unto their enemies to battle, and avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren, behold the voice of the Lord came unto me, saying:

15 ^aVengeance is mine, and I will ^brepay; (Joseph F. Smith: "...men are not called upon to curse mankind; that is not our mission; it is our mission to preach righteousness to them. It is our business to love and to bless them, and to redeem them from the fall and from the wickedness of the world. This is our mission and our special calling. God will curse and will exercise his judgment in those matters. 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord, 'and I will repay.' We are perfectly willing to leave vengeance in the hands of God and let him judge between us and our enemies, and let him reward them according to his own wisdom and mercy.” (Conference Report, Oct. 1904, p. 5) Joseph Smith: “Brethren, bear and forbear one with another, for so the Lord does with us. Pray for your enemies in the Church and curse not your foes without: for vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay. To every ordained member, and to all, we say, be merciful and you shall find mercy. Seek to help save souls, not to destroy them.” (Teachings, p. 77) Vengeance is not the same as self-defense, and the differences are important. While the Lord does permit us to fight in defense of our liberty, our homes and families, and our freedom of religious worship, He does not justify our participation in an offensive war. It is God, not us, who is authorized to deal out retribution to men. Charles Penrose taught that there is a huge difference between going to war for blood, conquest, or to gain territory or power and going to war to defend ourselves in the spirit of justice, righteousness, and equity. It is essential that we rely on the Spirit in all matters of war. Ludlow, *Unlocking the Book of Mormon*, 473.) and because this people repented not after I had delivered them, behold, they shall be cut off from the face of the earth.

16 And it came to pass that I utterly refused to go up against mine enemies; and I did even as the Lord had commanded me; and I did stand as an idle (unused) witness to manifest unto the world the things which I saw and heard, according to the manifestations of the Spirit which had testified of things to come. (“A striking new study has been initiated comparing a subtle, recurring pattern in the Book of Mormon with a particular type of human behavior recently identified in the writings of the ‘survivors’ of Hitler's and Stalin's death camps...the dominant response of the few who survived the European

concentration camps has been an irrepressible desire 'to bear witness.' The world of death camps and gulags produces a consistent reaction, a will to survive not for oneself, but rather to bear witness to the world in a particular kind of testament or indictment against man's inhumanity to his fellows. 'Survival is an act involving choice [even when death might seem easier]... The 'utmost concern' of such survivors was to hide up a record 'preserved for future generations.' One survivor speaks of his duty to witness as a 'mission,' a 'sacred task,' and a 'burning within me, screaming: Record!' ... That profile has much in common with the human conduct of several people in the Book of Mormon, like Mormon and Moroni. For example, there is the will 'to remember and record' that overcomes one's fears of the surrounding savagery (see Mormon 2:15; 4:11-21). There is the survivor viewing his task as a sacred duty, born out of the realization that no one will be left.'" (John W. Welch, Reexploring The Book of Mormon, p. 267))

17 Therefore I write ^aunto you, Gentiles, and also unto you, house of Israel, when the work shall commence, that ye shall be about to prepare to return to the land of your inheritance;

18 Yea, behold, I write unto all the ends of the earth; yea, unto you, twelve tribes of Israel, who shall be ^ajudged according to your works by the twelve whom Jesus chose to be his disciples in the land of Jerusalem.

19 And I write also unto the remnant of this people, (The Lamanites) who shall also be judged by the ^atwelve whom Jesus chose in this land; and they shall be judged by the other twelve whom Jesus chose in the land of Jerusalem. (The reality is that there will be a whole hierarchy of judges who, under Christ, shall judge the righteous. He alone shall issue the decrees of damnation for the wicked. Bruce R. McConkie, Millennial Messiah, p. 520)

20 And these things doth the Spirit manifest unto me; therefore I write unto you all. And for this cause I write unto you, that ye may know that ye must all stand before the ^ajudgment-seat of Christ, (All are brought back into God's presence to be judged of the Savior. Only those whose garments have been made white in the blood of the Lamb through faith in his name and by obedience to his laws and ordinances will thereafter be able to remain in the presence of God, living in eternal life. DCBM, 4:225) yea, every soul who belongs to the whole human ^bfamily of Adam; and ye must stand to be judged of your works, whether they be good or evil; (Neal A. Maxwell: "Not only are there individual moments of truth, but there are also collective. As we are meek, we will have a perspective about that moment yet to come when the 'whole human family of Adam' will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (Mormon 3:20.) But with meekness also comes sober realization that we are our 'own judges, whether to do good or evil.' (Alma 41:7.) If we are meek, our minds will not be darkened, and we can judge rightly because it is 'given unto [us] to judge, that [we] may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain . . . as the daylight from the dark night.' (Moroni 7:15.) At that remarkable, sobering, and exhilarating moment, yet future, there will be no proud grievances with the justice of God. 'The time shall come when all shall see the salvation of the Lord; when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just.' (Mosiah 16:1.)" (Meek and Lowly, p. 58))

21 And also that ye may ^abelieve the gospel of Jesus Christ, which ye shall ^bhave among you; and also that the ^cJews, the covenant people of the Lord, shall have other ^dwitness besides him whom they saw and heard, that Jesus, whom they slew, was the ^every Christ and the very God. (Jeffrey R. Holland: "The principal and commanding figure in the Book of Mormon, from first chapter to last, is the Lord Jesus Christ. In its unparalleled focus on the Messianic message of the Savior of the world, the Book of Mormon is rightly referred to as God's 'new covenant' with the house of Israel. It is literally a new testament or (to avoid confusion) 'another testament' of Jesus Christ... From the title page to the book's final declaration, this testament reveals, examines, underscores, and illuminates the divine mission of Jesus Christ as recorded in the sacred accounts of two New World dispensations (Jaredite and Lehite) written for the benefit of a third dispensation, the dispensation of the fulness of times. The Book of Mormon has many purposes, but this one transcends all others. Written by prophets and preserved by

angels, it was written for the fundamental and eternally essential purpose of ‘convincing . . . the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations’ . . . Thus the Book of Mormon is the preeminent statement of God's covenant with and his love for his children here on earth. It is his definitive latter-day declaration regarding the atoning sacrifice of his Son. It is his great revelation of the greatest Revelation God has ever given us.” (Christ And The New Covenant, p. 4)

Bruce R. McConkie: “What is the Book of Mormon? It is ‘Another Testament of Jesus Christ,’ a new and living witness for Christ, and a holy book that proclaims the divine Sonship of our Lord. It is a volume of holy writ that contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel, meaning that it contains a record of God's dealings with a people who had the fulness of the gospel, and that their prophets summarized on its pages the things all men must do to gain the fulness of salvation. Those who believe the witness it bears and obey the doctrines it teaches will be led to that further light and knowledge revealed in this day, and to the mysteries of the kingdom that the saints alone can receive. It was ‘written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and revelation.’ And it came forth ‘to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever.’ And it came forth, above all, ‘to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations.’ (Title page.)” (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, p. 415))

22 And I would that I could persuade ^aall ye ends of the earth to repent and prepare to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

* Verse 1 [A.D. 360]; Verse 8 [A.D. 362].

CHAPTER 4

War and carnage continue—The wicked punish the wicked—Greater wickedness prevails than ever before in all Israel—Women and children are sacrificed to idols—The Lamanites begin to sweep the Nephites before them. [Between A.D. 363 and 375]

1 AND now it came to pass that in the *three hundred and sixty and third year the Nephites did go up with their armies to ^abattle against the Lamanites, out of the land Desolation.

2 And it came to pass that the armies of the Nephites were driven back again to the land of Desolation. And while they were yet weary, a fresh army of the Lamanites did come upon them; and they had a sore battle, insomuch that the Lamanites did take possession of the ^acity Desolation, and did slay many of the Nephites, and did take many prisoners.

3 And the remainder did flee and join the inhabitants of the city Teancum. Now the city Teancum lay in the borders by the seashore; and it was also near the city ^aDesolation.

4 And it was ^abecause the armies of the Nephites went up unto the Lamanites that they began to be smitten; for were it not for that, the Lamanites could have had no power over them. (“Once the Nephite soldiers started to wage offensive war they soon became so bloodthirsty they were concerned only with the taking of human life. . . . The leaders of this dispensation have also warned against the dangers of starting an offensive war. President Charles W. Penrose has said: ‘Now if a nation essays to go forth against another nation for the purpose of conquest, to gain territory, to grasp something that does not belong to that nation, then the nation thus assailed has the right to resist even to the shedding of blood, as it was in this land in the war for independence. But we have to be careful as to what spirit we are guided by. . . . We Latter-day Saints must watch ourselves and not give way to passion and desire to shed blood and to destroy, for that is the power of the evil one. We do not want to imitate any nation that is bent on a policy of destruction, to destroy where they cannot rule, to break down and trample under foot where they cannot dominate. If we have that desire, it is the spirit of the wicked one. . . . There is a very great difference between arising to go forth for conquest, for blood, for plunder, to gain territory and power in the earth, and in fighting to defend our own possessions in the spirit of justice and

righteousness and equity, and standing up like men for those things that we have a right to contend for.' (Conference Report, April 1917, pp. 21-22.)" (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 301))

5 But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the ^awicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are ^bpunished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed. (Brigham Young stated: "Of one thing I am sure, God never institutes war; God is not the author of confusion or of war; they are the results of the acts of the children of men. Confusion and war necessarily come as the results of the foolish acts and policy of men; but they do not come because God desires they should come. If the people, generally, would turn to the Lord, there would never be any war. Let men turn from their iniquities and sins, and instead of being covetous and wicked, turn to God and seek to promote peace and happiness throughout the land, and wars would cease. We expect to see the day when swords shall be turned into ploughshares, spears into pruning hooks, and when men shall learn war no more. This is what we want. We are for peace, plenty and happiness to all the human family." (Discourses of Brigham Young, pp. 366-367.) But again, we must recognize the parallel for our day. The Nephite civilization was destroyed by wars in which the wicked killed the wicked. A similar destruction has been decreed for the dispensation of the fulness of times. The Lord has decreed wars upon the face of the earth, and the wicked shall slay the wicked, and fear shall come upon every man; And the saints also shall hardly escape; nevertheless, I, the Lord, am with them (DC 63:33)...thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn...until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations (DC 87:6). "Often, very often, we are punished as much by our sins as we are for our sins," Elder Boyd K. Packer has written (Teach Ye Diligently, p. 262). As was the case with the Nephites, so often is it the case that God does not have to personally curse, condemn, or punish the wicked; their actions and associations produce natural consequences that in and of themselves become severe punishments. Many of the destructions, plagues, and atrocities that come upon the world are a direct result of the wickedness of man. C. S. Lewis insightfully observed: 'The possibility of pain is inherent in the very existence of a world where souls can meet. When souls become wicked they will certainly use this possibility to hurt one another; and this, perhaps, accounts for four-fifths of the suffering of men. It is men, not God, who have produced racks, whips, prisons, slavery, guns, bayonets, and bombs; it is by human avarice or human stupidity, not by the churlishness of nature, that we have poverty and overwork.' (The Problem of Pain, p. 89.)" (McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 4, p. 228))

6 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did make preparations to come against the city Teancum.

7 And it came to pass in the three hundred and sixty and fourth year the Lamanites did come against the city Teancum, that they might take possession of the city Teancum also.

8 And it came to pass that they were repulsed and driven back by the Nephites. And when the Nephites saw that they had driven the Lamanites they did again ^aboast of their own strength; and they went forth in their own might, and took possession again of the city Desolation.

9 And now all these things had been done, and there had been thousands slain on both sides, both the Nephites and the Lamanites.

10 And it came to pass that the three hundred and sixty and sixth year had passed away, and the Lamanites came again upon the Nephites to battle; and yet the Nephites repented not of the evil they had done, but persisted in their wickedness continually.

11 And it is impossible for the tongue to describe, or for man to write a perfect description of the horrible scene of the blood and carnage which was among the people, both of the Nephites and of the Lamanites; and every heart was hardened, so that they ^adelighted in the shedding of blood continually.

12 And there never had been so great ^awickedness among all the children of Lehi, nor even among all the house of Israel, according to the words of the Lord, as was among this people.

13 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did take possession of the city Desolation, and this because their ^anumber did exceed the number of the Nephites.

14 And they did also march forward against the city Teancum, and did drive the inhabitants forth out of her, and did take many prisoners both women and children, and did offer them up as ^asacrifices unto their idol gods.

15 And it came to pass that in the three hundred and sixty and seventh year, the Nephites being angry because the Lamanites had sacrificed their women and their children, that they did go against the Lamanites with exceedingly great anger, insomuch that they did beat again the Lamanites, and drive them out of their lands.

16 And the Lamanites did not come again against the Nephites until the three hundred and seventy and fifth year.

17 And in this year they did come down against the Nephites with all their powers; and they were not numbered because of the greatness of their number.

18 And ^afrom this time forth did the Nephites gain no power over the Lamanites, but began to be swept off by them even as a dew before the sun. (Those who live on the American continent will suffer a like fate of being swept off the land, if we don't serve Jesus Christ.)

19 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did come down against the ^acity Desolation; and there was an exceedingly sore battle fought in the land Desolation, in the which they did beat the Nephites.

20 And they fled again from before them, and they came to the city Boaz; and there they did stand against the Lamanites with exceeding boldness, insomuch that the Lamanites did not beat them until they had come again the second time.

21 And when they had come the second time, the Nephites were driven and slaughtered with an exceedingly great slaughter; their women and their ^achildren were again sacrificed unto idols.

22 And it came to pass that the Nephites did again flee from before them, taking all the inhabitants with them, both in towns and villages.

23 And now I, Mormon, seeing that the Lamanites were about to overthrow the land, therefore I did go to the hill ^aShim, (to 6:6) and did take up all the ^brecords which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord.

(“Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph when he deposited these plates... When Joseph got the plates, the angel instructed him to carry them back to the hill Cumorah, which he did. Oliver says that when Joseph and Oliver went there, the hill opened, and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room. He says he did not think, at the time, whether they had the light of the sun or artificial light; but that it was just as light as day. They laid the plates on a table; it was a large table that stood in the room. Under this table there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high, and there were altogether in this room more plates than probably many wagon loads; they were piled up in the corners and along the walls.” (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, vol. 19, p. 40))

* Verse 1 [A.D. 363].

CHAPTER 5

Mormon again leads the Nephite armies in battles of blood and carnage—The Book of Mormon shall come forth to convince all Israel that Jesus is the Christ—The Lamanites shall be a dark, filthy, and loathsome people—They shall receive the gospel from the Gentiles in the latter days. [Between A.D. 375 and 384]

1 AND it came to pass that I did go forth among the Nephites, and did repent of the ^aoath which I had made that I would no more assist them; and they gave me command again of their armies, for they looked upon me as though I could deliver them from their afflictions.

2 But behold, I was ^awithout hope, (in Christ because of their wickedness) for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities, but did struggle for their lives without calling upon that Being who created them.

3 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did come against us as we had fled to the city of Jordan; but

behold, they were driven back that they did not take the city at that time.

4 And it came to pass that they came against us again, and we did maintain the city. And there were also other cities which were maintained by the Nephites, which strongholds did cut them off that they could not get into the country which lay before us, to destroy the inhabitants of our land.

5 But it came to pass that whatsoever lands we had passed by, and the inhabitants thereof were not gathered in, were destroyed by the Lamanites, and their towns, and villages, and cities were burned with fire; and thus three hundred and seventy and nine years passed away.

6 And it came to pass that in the three hundred and eightieth year the Lamanites did come again against us to battle, and we did stand against them boldly; but it was all in vain, for so ^agreat were their numbers that they did tread the people of the Nephites under their feet.

7 And it came to pass that we did again take to flight, and those whose flight was swifter than the Lamanites' did escape, and those whose flight did not exceed the Lamanites' were swept down and destroyed.

8 And now behold, I, Mormon, do not desire to harrow up the souls of men in casting before them such an awful scene of blood and carnage as was laid before mine eyes; but I, knowing that these things must surely be made known, and that all things which are hid must be ^arevealed upon the house-tops—

(Mormon tells us he purposely did not record all the detail of the blood and carnage of those terrible years, this in order to prevent the latter-day reader from having an unnecessary and soul-troubling view of it all. His statement that all things must be revealed has a dual meaning. Several scriptural passages testify that at the judgment all deeds, words, thoughts, and intents of the heart – both righteous and wicked – will be revealed, will be shouted from the housetops, as it were, for all to know. Undoubtedly Mormon had this doctrinal concept in mind as he spoke of the wickedness of his own civilization, but examining the context of this statement leads one to believe that Mormon may have also been referring to another, more specific, way in which the fuller record of the Nephites would be revealed. In the next several verses we read of the knowledge of his people that will come forth because of his record.

Throughout his record Mormon speaks of other records or accounts, even another set of plates, that contain additional information and a more history part of the people. Being familiar with the prophecies of those holy men who had preceded him, Mormon was probably also referring to the coming forth of those records that were sealed. As this record which is sealed by the power of God comes to light in the last days, all the workings of God will be revealed, and the deeds and destructions of the Nephites and the Lamanites which Mormon could not describe will indeed be revealed upon the housetops. DCBM, 4:230.)

(A purpose of the Book of Mormon.) 9 And also that a knowledge of these things must ^acome unto the remnant of these people, and also unto the Gentiles, who the Lord hath said should ^bscatter this people, and this people should be counted as naught among them—therefore ^cI write a ^dsmall abridgment, daring not to give a full account of the things which I have seen, because of the commandment which I have received, and also that ye might not have too great sorrow because of the wickedness of this people.

10 And now behold, this I speak unto their seed, and also to the Gentiles who have care for the house of Israel, that realize and know from whence their blessings come.

11 For I know that such will sorrow for the calamity of the house of Israel; yea, they will sorrow for the destruction of this people; they will sorrow that this people had not repented that they might have been clasped in the arms of Jesus.

12 Now ^athese things are ^bwritten unto the ^cremnant of the house of Jacob; and they are written after this manner, because it is known of God that wickedness will not bring them forth unto them; and they are to be ^dhid up unto the Lord that they may come forth in his own due time.

13 And this is the commandment which I have received; and behold, they ^ashall come forth according to the commandment of the Lord, when he shall see fit, in his wisdom.

14 And behold, they (the words of the Book of Mormon) shall go unto the ^aunbelieving of the ^bJews; and for this intent shall they go—that they may be ^cpersuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the

living God; that the Father may bring about, through his most Beloved, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the ^dland of their inheritance, which the Lord their God hath given them, unto the fulfilling of his ^ccovenant;

15 And also that the seed of ^athis people may more fully believe his gospel, which shall ^bgo forth unto them from the Gentiles; for this people shall be ^cscattered, and shall ^dbecome a dark, a filthy, and a loathsome people, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us, yea, even that which hath been among the Lamanites, and this because of their unbelief and idolatry. (“In a special way, the Book of Mormon was written to the Lamanites, the descendants of Lehi, as a major tool to restore them to Christ. It seems that the righteous Nephite prophets, knowing the destruction of their own people, wrote with special feelings to the future Lamanites. Mormon in his final chapter said, ‘And now, behold, I would speak somewhat unto the remnant of this people who are spared’ (7:1); and Moroni in his last chapter said, ‘Now I, Moroni, write somewhat as seemeth me good; and I write unto my brethren, the Lamanites’ (10:1). In 1829, about a year before the publication of the Book of Mormon, the Lord spoke plainly to Joseph Smith after the 116 pages of manuscript had been lost. While reproving young Joseph, the Lord impressed upon him the sacred character and purpose of the Book of Mormon and hence the great importance of his work. ‘Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people- And to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers- And this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites, who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquities of their fathers, whom the Lord has suffered to destroy their brethren the Nephites, because of their wickedness and abominations. And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records-that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people; and that the Lamanites might come to a knowledge of their fathers’ (D&C 3:16-20; emphasis added). “The Book of Mormon was written to all the world as another testament of Jesus Christ. In a special way, however, it was written and preserved to restore the Lamanites to the knowledge and testimony of Christ once had by their fathers and also to convince the Jew and Gentile that ‘Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God’ (title page, Book of Mormon).” (Rex C. Reeve, Jr., Book of Mormon Symposium Series, 2 Nephi, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 266-7))

16 For behold, the Spirit of the Lord hath already ceased to ^astrive with their fathers; and they are without Christ and God in the world; and they are driven about as ^bchaff before the wind. (This is what happens if we reject Christ as our Savior. Joseph Fielding Smith: Now, the Lord has withdrawn His Spirit from the world. Now, do not let this thought become confused in your minds. The Spirit He has withdrawn from the world is not the Holy Ghost, for they never had that, but it is the light of truth, the Spirit of Christ, which is given to every man that comes into this world, as you find it so recorded in the 84th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Now, because of the wickedness of the world that Spirit has been withdrawn; and when the Spirit of the Lord is not striving with men, the spirit of Satan is.

Therefore, we may be sure that the time has come spoken of in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, wherein the Lord says: "For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion." (verse 35.) Peace has been taken from the earth. The devil has power over his own dominion, and the Spirit of the Lord has been withdrawn. Not because the Lord desires to withdraw that Spirit; but because of the wickedness of mankind, it becomes necessary that this Spirit of the Lord be withdrawn. BYU Speeches of the Year, 21 Mar 1967, 5-6)

17 They were once a delightsome people, and they had Christ for their ^ashepherd; yea, they were led even by God the Father.

18 But now, behold, they are ^aled about by Satan, even as chaff is driven before the wind, or as a vessel is tossed about upon the waves, without sail or anchor, or without anything wherewith to steer her; and

even as she is, so are they.

19 And behold, the Lord hath reserved their blessings, which they might have received in the land, for the ^aGentiles who shall possess the land.

20 But behold, it shall come to pass that they shall be driven and scattered by the Gentiles; (Spencer W. Kimball: “Perhaps of all prophecies ever made, none have been fulfilled more literally and more intensely and more devastatingly than this one from Mormon: ‘But behold, it shall come to pass that they shall be driven and scattered by the Gentiles. . . .’ (Mormon 5:20.) And what a tragic and literal fulfillment those scriptures had. . . . The story of the Cherokees would melt the stoniest heart—driven at the point of a bayonet from their homes and lands, evicted from their country and sent to the swampy, mosquito-ridden area of Indian Territory. The prejudiced historian again said that the Indians were the culprits. Their suffering and death means little; their homes and gardens and farms were expropriated. The ‘white heroes’ evicted and expropriated for their own use (at the point of bayonets) the lands of the ‘red demons.’ We follow the Navajos from their exquisitely beautiful red sandstone lands of northeastern Arizona in their long, pitiful, painful march to central New Mexico, to Bosque Redondo on the Pecos River. We suffer and starve and freeze with them in the lonely four years, and then walk with them back to their homeland after signing their treaties. In recent times our attention was arrested by a double-page picture in Life magazine. It is the dead of winter. Plodding across the thousands of square miles of deep snow and the wind-scoured stubbly plain, two Indian women on their horses make a new deep trail through the snow. It is good that their horses can break trail; it is good that their warm skirts are long to their ankles; it is good that their blankets cover them well and their scarves cover their heads and faces, for the wind is bitter and the cold intense, and the way is long. Thank goodness they have a sense of direction, for if the horses failed, never would they be found alive. They have left in their hogans their children, so they might find food for their families. Their wagon is under a tree, a solitary tree; frozen sheep are here and there half covered in the snow. That frozen one that the boy is dragging is one of over half a million sheep, goats, and cattle that were stranded with no food save that from a lucky drop. They will have food for a few days but soon the carcasses will be spoiled beyond eating. Why do I return to a rehearsal of the indignities against the Indian? The answer is that we have a debt to pay. We are deeply indebted and we shall never have liquidated that debt until we shall have done all in our power to rebuild the Indian and give him back the opportunities that are possible for us to give him.” (Faith Precedes The Miracle, p. 340-2)) and after they have been driven and scattered by the Gentiles, behold, then will the Lord ^aremember the ^bcovenant which he made unto Abraham and unto all the house of Israel. (Bruce R. McConkie: “Our case study now turns to the day of Lamanite gathering. The long night of apostate darkness that left the remnants of Lehi's seed in their low and fallen and loathsome state is drawing to an end. Already the rays of gospel light are rising in the eastern sky and the day of gathering is dawning. Lamanites in the United States and Canada, in Mexico and Central America, and in the various nations of South America, together with the Lamanites in the islands of the South Pacific, whom we call Polynesians -- all these are coming back, one by one as the divine decree requires. And when the day has fully dawned, as soon it must, they will be a glorious people indeed. Indeed, that day -- the day of the Lamanite -- shall dawn before the Second Coming. Its arrival will be one of the signs of the times, and all those who can read the promised signs will thereby know that the coming of their Lord is nigh at hand. Pending that day, the Lord's command to his people is: ‘Be not deceived, but continue in steadfastness, looking forth for the heavens to be shaken, and the earth to tremble and to reel to and fro as a drunken man, and for the valleys to be exalted, and for the mountains to be made low, and for the rough places to become smooth -- and all this when the angel shall sound his trumpet.’ Having so announced, the Lord then relates all this to the gathering of Israel, including the Lamanite gathering. ‘But before the great day of the Lord shall come,’ he says, ‘Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. Zion shall flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed.’ (D&C 49:23-25.)” (The Millennial Messiah, p. 210))

21 And also the Lord will remember the ^aprayers of the righteous, which have been put up unto him for them.

22 And then, O ye Gentiles, how can ye stand before the power of God, except ye shall repent and turn from your evil ways?

23 Know ye not that ye are in the ^ahands of God? Know ye not that he hath all power, and at his great command the ^bearth shall be ^crolled together as a scroll?

24 Therefore, repent ye, and humble yourselves before him, lest he shall come out in justice against you—lest a ^aremnant of the seed of Jacob shall go forth among you as a ^blion, and tear you in pieces, and there is none to deliver.

CHAPTER 6

The Nephites gather to the land of Cumorah for the final battles—Mormon hides the sacred records in the hill Cumorah—The Lamanites are victorious, and the Nephite nation is destroyed—Hundreds of thousands are slain with the sword. [A.D. 385]

1 AND now I finish my record concerning the ^adestruction of my people, the Nephites. And it came to pass that we did march forth before the Lamanites.

2 And I, Mormon, wrote an epistle unto the king of the Lamanites, and desired of him that he would grant unto us that we might gather together our people unto the ^aland of ^bCumorah, by a hill which was called Cumorah, and there we could give them battle. (Among scholars, two schools of thought have developed: “The friendly controversy still goes on, the one camp holding that the only Cumorah in or out of the Book of Mormon is the traditional one in New York State, the other supporting the view that the Cumorah in New York has been named after the one in Middle America, but is not the one around which the last great battles of the Nephites and the Lamanites took place. Now which of these two points of view is correct? It would be desirable, if possible, to come to a unity in the matter. Truth should never be on the defensive, but sometimes it is hard to decide just where it is. Perhaps most people of the Church hold to the traditional view of Cumorah, and, indeed, I have defended that view in some of my writings. But in recent years we have again gone over the Book of Mormon evidence very carefully and are prepared to present what we feel are the elements of the strongest case that can be made for a Cumorah in Middle America.” (FARMS: Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, vol. 4, no. 1, Spring-1995, pp. 261-2) Harold B. Lee: “Don't be concerned over Book of Mormon geography. Some say the Hill Cumorah was in southern Mexico (and someone pushed it down still farther) and not in western New York. Well, if the Lord wanted us to know where it was or where Zarahemla was, He'd have given us latitude and longitude, don't you think? And why bother our heads trying to discover with archaeological certainty the geographical locations of the cities of the Book of Mormon like Zarahemla? The witness of the Book of Mormon is not found in the ruins of Central and South America. They may be outward evidences of a people long since disappeared. The real witness is that which is found in the Book of Mormon itself.” (The Teachings of Harold B. Lee, p. 156) “A question many readers will have been asking themselves is a sound and necessary one: how did Joseph Smith obtain the gold plates in upstate New York if the final battleground of the Nephites was in Mesoamerica? Let's review where the final battle took place. The Book of Mormon makes clear that the demise of both Jaredites and Nephites took place near the narrow neck of land. Yet New York is thousands of miles away from any plausible configuration that could be described as this narrow neck. Thus the scripture itself rules out the idea that the Nephites perished near Palmyra. Then how did the plates get from the battleground to New York? We have no definitive answer, but we can construct a plausible picture. Mormon reports that he buried all the records in his custody at the Hill Cumorah of the final battle except for certain key golden plates (Mormon 6:6). Those from which Joseph Smith translated, he entrusted to his son Moroni. As late as 35 years afterward, Moroni was still adding to those records (Moroni 10:1). He never does tell us where he

intended to deposit them, nor where he was when he sealed them up (Moroni 10:34). The most obvious way to get the plates to New York state would have been for somebody to carry them there. Moroni could have done so himself during those final, lonely decades. Would Moroni have been able to survive a trip of several thousand miles through strange peoples and lands, if he did transport the record? Such a journey would be no more surprising than the trip by Lehi's party over land and by sea halfway around the globe. As a matter of fact, we do have a striking case of a trip much like the one Moroni may have made. In the mid-sixteenth century, David Ingram, a shipwrecked English sailor, walked in 11 months through completely strange Indian territory from Tampico, Mexico, to the St. John River, at the present border between Maine and Canada. His remarkable journey would have been about the same distance as Moroni's and over essentially the same route. So Moroni's getting the plates to New York even under his own power seems feasible." (John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1985], 44.))

3 And it came to pass that the king of the Lamanites did grant unto me the thing which I desired.

4 And it came to pass that we did march forth to the land of Cumorah, and we did pitch our tents around about the hill Cumorah; and it was in a land of ^amany waters, rivers, and fountains; and here we had hope to gain advantage over the Lamanites.

5 And *when ^athree hundred and eighty and four years had passed away, we had gathered in all the remainder of our people unto the land of Cumorah.

6 And it came to pass that when we had gathered in all our people in one to the land of Cumorah, behold I, Mormon, began to be old (Mormon is about 74 years old); and knowing it to be the last struggle of my people, and having been commanded of the Lord that I should not suffer the records which had been handed down by our fathers, which were ^asacred, (Brass plates, large plates of Nephi, small plates of Nephi, and gold plates of Mormon) to fall into the hands of the Lamanites, (for the Lamanites would ^bdestroy them) therefore I made ^cthis record out of the plates of Nephi, and ^dhid up in the hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were ^ethese few plates which I gave unto my son ^fMoroni. ("Before the last great battle ensued between the Nephite and Lamanite armies at Cumorah in the year 385 A. D., Mormon entrusted the plates containing his abridgment of the plates of Nephi to his son, Moroni. (Mormon 6:6.) Nevertheless, after the battle-in which he was wounded-Mormon again obtained the plates and added some final words found in chapters six and seven respectively of the book called after his own name. All of the other records of his people he had previously hid up in the Hill Cumorah. (Mormon 6:6.)" (A Book of Mormon Treasury, p. 122) '...therefore I made this record [the Book of Mormon] out of the plates of Nephi, and hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates [the Book of Mormon] which I gave unto my son Moroni' (Mormon 6:6). In other words, the Book of Mormon explicitly states that the records hidden in the Mesoamerican Cumorah were not the plates of the Book of Mormon, but were the other records of the Nephites...Mormon 6:6 specifically states that all the Nephite records, except the Book of Mormon plates, were buried in the hill Cumorah near the narrow neck of land by Mormon, not Moroni. Nowhere in the Book of Mormon does it state where the Book of Mormon plates were finally buried." (William J. Hamblin, *FARMS: Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring-1993, pp. 173,178))

7 And it came to pass that my people, with their wives and their children, did now behold the ^aarmies of the Lamanites marching towards them; and with that awful ^bfear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked, (Hugh Nibley: "...in the last scene the Nephites are allowed the melancholy and terrifying privilege of enjoying one last tremendous spectacle—the full-dress approach of their executioners." (Since Cumorah, p. 333)) did they await to receive them. ("The account of the gathering of all the Nephite people in the lands around Cumorah, and the way Mormon refers to his women and children, men, and people, somewhat interchangeably, introduces some ambiguity into his account. Could it have been that in their last-ditch effort at survival, preparing as they were for a prearranged great battle,

Mormon and the 22 other leaders divided the whole Nephite people, rather than just the armies, into contingents of ten thousand each? If so, the victims of the slaughter at Cumorah were 230,000 men, women, and children, all of the Nephites who had gathered around Cumorah.” (FARMS: Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, vol. 6, no. 1, 1994, pp.2-3) Gordon B. Hinckley: “In the eventual terrible slaughter which occurred between the Lamanites and the Nephites, he watched the destruction of 230,000 Nephite warriors, including his own ten thousand. He was a witness to that awful carnage when the Nephite men, with their wives and children, saw ‘the armies of the Lamanites marching towards them; and with that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked, did they await to receive them’ (Mormon 6:7).” (Heroes From the Book of Mormon, p. 197))

8 And it came to pass that they came to battle against us, and every soul was filled with terror because of the greatness of their numbers.

9 And it came to pass that they did fall upon my people with the sword, and with the bow, and with the arrow, and with the ax, and with all manner of weapons of war.

10 And it came to pass that my men were hewn down, yea, even my ^aten thousand who were with me, and I fell wounded in the midst; and they passed by me that they did not put an end to my life.

11 And when they had gone through and hewn down ^aall my people save it were twenty and four of us, (among whom was my son Moroni) and we having survived the dead of our people, did behold on the morrow, when the Lamanites had returned unto their camps, from the top of the hill Cumorah, the ten thousand of my people who were hewn down, being led in the front by me.

12 And we also beheld the ten thousand of my people who were led by my son Moroni.

13 And behold, the ten thousand of Gidgiddonah had fallen, and he also in the midst.

14 And Lamah had fallen with his ten thousand; and Gilgal had fallen with his ten thousand; and Limhah had fallen with his ten thousand; and Jeneum had fallen with his ten thousand; and Cumenihah, and Moronihah, and Antionum, and Shiblom, and Shem, and Josh, had fallen with their ten thousand each. (Notice that he names 12 men. Maybe he was symbolically saying that the remnant of Israel had fallen.)

15 And it came to pass that there were ten more who did fall by the sword, with their ten thousand each; yea, even ^aall my people, save it were those twenty and four who were with me (230,000 killed in the battle), and also a ^bfew who had escaped into the south countries, and a few who had deserted over unto the Lamanites, had fallen; and their flesh, and bones, and blood lay upon the face of the earth, being left by the hands of those who slew them to molder upon the land, and to crumble and to return to their mother earth. (Jeffrey R. Holland: “Mormon himself fell wounded, but his life, for a time, was spared as the Lamanite armies swept on. Only he, Moroni, and twenty-two other Nephites remained; 230,000 of their nation had fallen. The scope and significance of that horrible slaughter may be seen more readily when we realize that the great American Civil War of the 1860s, the costliest war, in terms of human life, that the United States has ever known, took the lives of 140,000 men in a five-year period. Here, 230,000 fell in a single day.” (Ensign, Mar. 1978, “Mormon: The Man and the Book, Part 1”))

16 And my soul was rent with ^aanguish, because of the slain of my people, and I cried:

17 ^aO ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you! (Neal A. Maxwell: “He is ‘the keeper of the gate ... and He employeth no servant there.’ (2 Nephi 9:41.) Those who reject Him will miss out on a special personal moment, because, as He laments, He has ‘stood with open arms to receive you.’ (Mormon 6:17.) The unfaithful-along with the faithful-might have been ‘clasped in the arms of Jesus’ (Mormon 5:11). The imagery of the holy temples and holy scriptures thus blend so beautifully, including things pertaining to sacred moments. This is the grand moment toward which we point and from which we should not be deflected. Hence, those who pass through their fiery trials and still acknowledge but trust His hand now will feel the clasp of His arms later!” (Cory H. Maxwell, The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book, p. 137))

18 Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. But behold, ye are fallen, and I ^amourn

your loss. (Hugh Nibley: “The tragedy of the Book of Mormon is not what became of the Nephites but what the Nephites became.” (Since Cumorah, as taken from Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 477) Ezra Taft Benson: “Great nations do not fall because of external aggression; they first erode and decay inwardly, so that, like rotten fruit, they fall of themselves. The strength of a country is the sum total of the moral strength of the individuals in that country.” (This Nation Shall Endure, p. 95 as taken from Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 477) Hugh Nibley: “The fog and horror of battle pursue us right up to the end—the nation completely in arms at Cumorah with trained, experienced warriors, all a splendid sight marching forward. Alas, there's nothing heroic about it. How could they have been such fools? Pity was Mormon's only reflection on the splendid sight (Mormon 6:17-22). His last word to the survivors in the land is that they must lay down their arms and never take them up again, for they will never prevail by force. The only way they can prevail, he says (Mormon 7:3), is by repenting. Cumorah was no solution; the war went right on among the victors.” (Prophetic Book of Mormon, p. 524))

19 O ye ^afair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye could have ^bfallen!

20 But behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows cannot bring your return.

21 And the day soon cometh that your mortal must put on immortality, and these bodies which are now moldering in corruption must soon become ^aincorruptible bodies; and then ye must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to be judged according to your works; and if it so be that ye are righteous, then are ye blessed with your fathers who have gone before you. (Sealed as families)

22 O that ye had repented before this great ^adestruction had come upon you. But behold, ye are gone, and the Father, yea, the Eternal Father of heaven, ^bknoweth your state; and he doeth with you according to his ^cjustice and ^dmercy.

* Verse 5 [A.D. 385].

THE BOOK OF MORONI CHAPTER 9

The second epistle of Mormon to his son Moroni.

Both the Nephites and the Lamanites are depraved and degenerate—They torture and murder each other—Mormon prays that grace and goodness may rest upon Moroni forever. [Between A.D. 400 and 421]

1 MY beloved son, I write unto you again that ye may know that I am yet alive; but I write somewhat of that which is grievous.

2 For behold, I have had a sore battle with the Lamanites, in which we did not conquer; and Archeantus has fallen by the sword, and also Luram and Emron; yea, and we have lost a great number of our choice men.

3 And now behold, my son, I fear lest the Lamanites shall destroy this people; for they do not repent, and Satan stirreth them up continually to ^aanger one with another.

4 Behold, I am laboring with them continually; and when I speak the word of God with ^asharpness they tremble and anger against me; and when I use no sharpness (It means direct and to the point. It means not couched in soft, comfortable language but focused on what needs to be said more than on how to say it. DCBM, 4:359) they ^bharden their hearts against it; wherefore, I fear lest the Spirit of the Lord hath ceased ^cstriving with them. (Hugh Nibley: “Their awful guilt leaps out in their instant resentment of any criticism of themselves: ‘When I speak the word of God with sharpness they tremble and anger against me’ (Moroni 9:4). They have reached that point of suicidal defiance which the Greeks called Ate, the point of no return, when the sinner with a sort of fatal fascination does everything that is most calculated

to hasten his own removal from the scene—he is finished, and now all that remains is to get him out of the way: ‘O my beloved son, how can a people like this, that are without civilization . . . expect that God will stay his hand?’ (Moroni 9:11, 14). Nephite civilization was thus not extinguished at Cumorah. It had already ceased to exist for some time before the final house-cleaning. War had become the order of the day, ‘and every heart was hardened’ (Mormon 4:11), with the military requisitioning the necessities of life and leaving the noncombatants ‘to faint by the way and die’ (Moroni 9:16).” (Since Cumorah, p. 400))

5 For so exceedingly do they anger that it seemeth me that they have no fear of death; and they have lost their love, one towards another; and they ^athirst after blood and revenge continually. (Hugh Nibley: “Mormon and Moroni supply the epilogue to the Book of Mormon, the son drawing freely on his father's notes and letters. The picture that these two paint of their world, which in their minds has a significant resemblance to our own, is one of unrelieved gloom. The situation is unbelievably bad and, in view of the way things are going, quite without hope. The scenes of horror and violence, culminating in the sickening escalation of atrocities by Lamanites and Nephites in the 9th chapter of Mormon, need no news-photographs to make their message convincing to the modern world. The Nephites, like the great heroes of tragedy--Oedipus, Macbeth, Achilles--as they approach their end, are hopelessly trapped by a desperate mentality in which the suppressed awareness of their own sins finds paranoid expression in a mad, ungovernable hatred of others: ‘They have lost their love, one towards another; and they thirst after blood and revenge continually’ (Moroni 9:5).” (Since Cumorah, p. 399))

6 And now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness, let us labor ^adiligently; for if we should cease to ^blabor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God. (“This one verse contains an entire discourse on the importance of enduring to the end and always being found doing one's duty. Both Mormon and Moroni could have easily given up hope on their people, lost the motivation to continue in their prophetic callings, and become fatalistic. Instead, Mormon exhorts Moroni to continue to labor in his divinely inspired duty. From their examples we learn that diligence in doing one's duty is not to be dependent upon the receptiveness of others. We must do our duty, be diligent in fulfilling the Lord's commands, regardless of how others choose to conduct their lives or how they respond to our efforts. To do otherwise is to let go of the iron rod, to cease enduring to the end, which brings one under condemnation (compare 2 Corinthians 5:9; Jacob 1:19).” (McConkie, Millet, and Top, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, vol. 4, p. 360) Hugh Nibley: “In this crucible of wickedness the true greatness of Mormon shines like a star as he calls his son to action, telling him that no matter how bad things are, we must never stop trying to do what we can to improve matters, ‘for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay’ (Moroni 9:6). In this spirit Mormon took over command of the army even when he knew that all was lost, ‘for they looked upon me as though I could deliver them from their afflictions. But behold, I was without hope’ (Mormon 5:1-2). His is the predicament of the true tragic hero.” (Since Cumorah, p. 401))

7 And now I write somewhat concerning the sufferings of this people. For according to the knowledge which I have received from Amoron, behold, the Lamanites have many prisoners, which they took from the tower of Sherrizah; and there were men, women, and children.

8 And the husbands and fathers of those women and children they have slain; and they feed the women upon the ^aflesh of their husbands, and the children upon the flesh of their fathers; and no water, save a little, do they give unto them.

9 And notwithstanding this great ^aabomination of the Lamanites, it doth not exceed that of our people in Moriantum. For behold, many of the daughters of the Lamanites have they taken prisoners; and after ^bdepriving them of that which was most dear and precious above all things, which is ^cchastity and ^dvirtue—

10 And after they had done this thing, they did murder them in a most ^acruel manner, torturing their

bodies even unto death; and after they have done this, they devour their flesh like unto wild beasts, because of the hardness of their hearts; and they do it for a token of bravery.

11 O my beloved son, how can a people like this, that are without civilization—

12 (And only a few years have passed away, and they were a civil and a delightsome people)

13 But O my son, how can a people like this, whose ^adelight is in so much abomination—

14 How can we expect that God will ^astay his hand in judgment against us?

15 Behold, my heart cries: Wo unto this people. Come out in judgment, O God, and hide their sins, and wickedness, and abominations from before thy face!

16 And again, my son, there are many ^awidows and their daughters who remain in Sherrizah; and that part of the provisions which the Lamanites did not carry away, behold, the army of Zenephi has carried away, and left them to wander whithersoever they can for food; and many old women do faint by the way and die. (Hugh Nibley: “Revenge, [Mormon] said, was the one thing God absolutely would not tolerate (Mormon 3:9-16). For once that starts, there is no ending. Mormon shows us the military power completely out of control, practicing the usual atrocities, requisitioning everything for themselves while ‘many old women do faint by the way and die’ (Moroni 9:16). (Prophetic Book of Mormon, p. 524))

17 And the army which is with me is weak; and the armies of the Lamanites are betwixt Sherrizah and me; and as many as have fled to the army of ^aAaron have fallen victims to their awful brutality.

18 O the depravity of my people! They are without ^aorder and without mercy. Behold, I am but a man, and I have but the ^bstrength of a man, and I cannot any longer enforce my commands.

19 And they have become strong in their perversion; and they are alike brutal, sparing none, neither old nor young; and they delight in everything save that which is good; and the suffering of our women and our children upon all the face of this land doth exceed everything; yea, tongue cannot tell, neither can it be written.

20 And now, my son, I dwell no longer upon this horrible scene. Behold, thou knowest the wickedness of this people; thou knowest that they are without principle, and past feeling; and their wickedness doth ^aexceed that of the Lamanites. (“Righteousness and truth result in order, while evil and wickedness lead to confusion and disorder. In describing the depraved state of things at the close of the Nephite narrative, Mormon spoke of his people as ‘without civilization,’ ‘without principle,’ ‘past feeling,’ and, interestingly enough, ‘without order and without mercy’ (Moroni 9:11, 18, 20). Whereas faithfulness and adherence to the light of Christ and to moral codes and standards bring forth peace and decency and enhanced organization among the sons and daughters of God, indifference towards or defiance of divine law bring forth chaos and division. Nephi explained that ‘the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction.’ (2 Nephi 26:11.) Those who no longer enjoy the influence of the Spirit ‘are without Christ and God in the world; and they are driven about as chaff before the wind’ (Mormon 5:16). When the Spirit ceases to strive with men and women, Satan has ‘full power over the hearts of the people’ and they are ‘given up unto the hardness of their hearts, and the blindness of their minds’ (Ether 15:19). The Holy Spirit is an organizing principle, and the nearer we approach our Heavenly Father the greater will be our grasp of reality, our ability to see things as they really are and to value our true relationship to man and God.” (Millet and McConkie, Joseph Smith: The Choice Seer, chapter 17) Hugh Nibley: “Here then is the real calamity that befell the Nephites in all its tragic horror—and there is no mention whatever of enemy action or of anyone belonging to the wrong party: the ultimate catastrophe is not that people are struck down, but that they should be found in any circumstances whatever ‘without order and without mercy, . . . without principle and past feeling.’” (Since Cumorah, p. 400))

21 Behold, my son, I cannot recommend them unto God lest he should smite me.

22 But behold, my son, I recommend thee unto God, and I trust in Christ that thou wilt be saved; and I ^apray unto God that he will ^bspare thy life, to witness the return of his people unto him, or their utter destruction; for I know that they must perish except they ^crepent and return unto him.

23 And if they perish it will be like unto the ^aJaredites, because of the wilfulness of their hearts, ^bseeking

for blood and ^crevenge.

24 And if it so be that they perish, we know that many of our brethren have ^adeserted over unto the Lamanites, and many more will also desert over unto them; wherefore, write somewhat a few things, if thou art spared and I shall perish and not see thee; but I trust that I may see thee soon; for I have sacred records that I would ^bdeliver up unto thee.

25 My son, be faithful in Christ; (In spite of all the horrors of war and the depravity of the people, be faithful in Christ.) and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down unto ^adeath; but may Christ lift thee up, (Be optimistic with the hope that Christ will save you in the Celestial Kingdom. Be happy in spite of the troubles that surround us.) and may his sufferings and death, and the showing his body unto our fathers, and his mercy and ^blong-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your ^cmind forever.

26 And may the grace of God the Father, whose throne is high in the heavens, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who sitteth on the ^aright hand of his power, until all things shall become subject unto him, be, and abide with you forever. Amen.