

## **BM#31 "Firm in the Faith of Christ" - Alma 43-52**

- I. Introduction
- II. Alma 43--44
- III. Alma 45--46
- IV. Alma 47--48
- V. Alma 49--52
- VI. Conclusions

### **I. Introduction**

Traditionally, Alma, Chapters 43-62, are referred to as the "War Years." Like the Isaiah chapters, many choose to skip these chapters and proceed their reading with Alma 63. To some, the inclusion of Alma, chapters 43-62, in the Book of Mormon seem to be irrelevant at best, and a waste of space on the precious plates, at worst. Many wonder how Mormon could justify using so much space addressing the wars and battles of the Nephites and Lamanites. While I can't answer this question completely, let me suggest one approach that may assist you in this venture.

If you and I view these chapters symbolically as representing the continuing battle between good and evil that initially began in the pre-existence and continues on the earth today, our perspective may also change. As the forces of evil abound all around us, and impinge upon our very spiritual lives, it does seem to me like we are in a war, even at times on the frontlines. How we survive the battle along with our loved ones, and immerse victorious, is the key to our salvation. As this battle intensifies, we will see the causality rate increase as those among us fall against the forces of evil. The increase in our nation of sexual permissiveness; dishonesty and graft among our leaders; and the wielding of power and influence by corporate leaders are just a few of ways Satan and his servants are wrecking havoc on the lives of the honest in heart. As the forces of evil increase, so proportionally does the need for total commitment by the members of the kingdom of God increase.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"Each city—Zion [The Church of the Lamb of God] and Babylon [The World of Satan] makes definite requirements of its citizens, and as the time approaches the millennial day each of these communities will insist upon the total

devotion and consecration of its citizenry. To read the signs of the times is to recognize that in the future fewer and fewer individuals will be 'lukewarm' Latter-day Saints; that the myopic and misguided of the religious world will grow in cynicism and confusion; that the ungodly will, as time goes by, sink ever deeper into despair known only to those who revel in iniquity; that wickedness will widen and malevolence multiply until the citizens of Babylon seal themselves to him who is the father of all lies.

"To read the signs of the times is to also become aware that 'Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments' (D&C 82:14); that the Church of the Lamb shall continue to require the tithes, and offerings, and donations of its members,' the full energies of the Saints, 'until that day when a full and consecrated life is required; and that through giving all to the Lord through his Church, the Saints of the Most High shall establish a heaven on earth and eventually receive the glorious assurance of exaltation in the highest heaven.'" (*Sustaining and Defending the Faith*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985, 32-33).

As the demand for greater participation by the members increases, those who only have a lukewarm commitment to building the kingdom of God will begin to question the request of their leaders. As a result, their participation and attendance will begin to falter. If giving ten percent of our time to the kingdom was difficult, imagine the strain upon our limited commitment when we are asked to give more. The drop-out rate of the uncommitted will only increase as the demands for service and righteousness increase. In this regard, we forget that in the early days of the Church, many men left their families and served missions that required them to be away for two or more years from their loved ones. This left their wives to care for their children with, in most cases, limited means. Should we not also be expected to make sacrifices for our faith?

Outline of Alma 43-53:

"Alma 43-44

Led by Zerahemla, the Lamanites come to battle against the Nephites, seeking to bring them into bondage. The Nephites, led by Moroni, fight to defend their families and their liberty. The Nephites prevail because

they are 'inspired by a better cause' and because they exercise faith in Jesus Christ.

"Alma 45:20-24; 46 Amalickiah desires to be king and causes dissension among the Nephites. Captain Moroni raises the 'title of liberty' to inspire the people, and they covenant to follow God. Amalickiah and a few of his followers join the Lamanites.

"Alma 47-48 Through treachery, Amalickiah becomes king of the Lamanites. He incites the Lamanites to fight against the Nephites. Captain Moroni prepares the Nephites to defend themselves righteously.

"Alma 49-52 War continues between the Nephites and the Lamanites. The king-men desire to set up a king over the Nephites, but they are defeated. Teancum kills Amalickiah, who is succeeded as king of the Lamanites by his brother, Ammoron. (*Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 138).

In 2004, John Bytheway published a book, *Righteous Warriors: Lessons from the War Chapters in the Book of Mormon*. In 2012, he wrote an article for the on-line LDS Meridian Magazine. It is titled, **Lesson 31, "Firm in the Faith of Christ," Alma 43-62**. It is also his understanding that "within the tactics, the stratagems, and the battlefield heroics are numerous spiritual lessons which will help us survive in a time of spiritual and temporal war." In his article, he summarizes his "favorite spiritual lesson from each of the war chapters." ([www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/](http://www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/)).

These chapter summaries will be quoted at the end of each of the subsequent chapters in this lesson.

## **II. Alma 43-44**

Alma 43:3

**3 And now I return to an account of the wars between the Nephites and the Lamanites, in the eighteenth year of the reign of the judges.**

Kathleen S. McConkie states,

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

"With this new insight, I found more than one hundred passages in the last twenty chapters of Alma alone that contained useful information about how Satan and his forces operate or that describe inspired strategies for defending ourselves against evil. Seemingly insignificant military details revealed valuable counsel when I simply asked the question "How does this apply to the war against evil today?" ("Defending Against Evil," in *Ensign*, January, 1992, 19-20).

Alma 43:5-6, 8

**5 And it came to pass that the Lamanites came with their thousands; and they came into the land of Antionum, which is the land of the Zoramites; and a man by the name of Zerahemnah was their leader.**  
**6 And now, as the Amalekites were of a more wicked and murderous disposition than the Lamanites were, in and of themselves, Zerahemnah appointed chief captains over the Lamanites, and they were all Amalekites and Zoramites.**

**8 For behold, his designs were to stir up the Lamanites to anger against the Nephites; this he did that he might usurp great power over them, and also**

**that he might gain power over the Nephites by bringing them into bondage.**

Kathleen S. McConkie continues,

"We see that, similar to enemy forces in Nephite times, Satan and his followers use apostates to lead attacks against the Church today. Zarahemnah's evil plotting reminds us that Satan's plan is to usurp power over men and bring them into [subjection]. Like the Nephites, we must fight this evil, for if Satan is allowed to prevail, our precious rights to life and liberty will be lost."  
(*"Defending Against Evil,"* in *Ensign*, January, 1992, 20).

On the surface, the motive of Satan and his followers appears to be correcting falsehoods within the Church. His real desire, however, is and has always been, to undermine the principles of truth and to destroy the Church that bears the name of Jesus Christ.

Alma 43:9-10

**9 And now the design of the Nephites was to support their lands, and their houses, and their wives, and their children, that they might preserve them from the hands of their enemies; and also that they might preserve their rights and their privileges, yea, and also their liberty, that they might worship God according to their desires.**

**10 For they knew that if they should fall into the hands of the Lamanites, that whosoever should worship God in spirit and in truth, the true and the living God, the Lamanites would destroy.**

The stark contrast between the motives of wicked and the righteous are clearly marked. Those who are wicked desire power over others, and their eventual subjection including their death. Those who espouse righteousness seek only the preservation of their own families, lands, houses, and their freedom of worship. Today, we seek the same freedoms, including the freedom of religion. In fact, "We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege" (11<sup>th</sup> Article of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).

Alma 43:13-14, 21, 51 [underlined for emphasis]

**13 ...thus the Nephites were compelled, alone, to withstand the Lamanites, who were a compound of Laman and Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael and all those who had dissented from the Nephites...**

**14 Now those descendants were as numerous, nearly, as were the Nephites;...**

**21...they were exceedingly afraid of the armies of the Nephites because of their armor, notwithstanding their number being so much greater than the Nephites.**

**51 Now, the Lamanites were more numerous, yea, by more than double the number of the Nephites;...**

George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"This was a day of peril for the Nephites. Their enemies were much more numerous than they, and were filled with a savage thirst for blood, which was especially felt against those who were of their own race and kindred who had bowed in obedience to Heaven's command." (*Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. IV. Amplified and Arranged by Philip C. Reynolds and David Sjodahl King. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977, 231*).

Though they were outnumbered by the combined forces against them, the Nephites were prepared. Their preparation included: (1) An excellent leader named Moroni. (see Alma 43:17.)

George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl continue,

"At this juncture the Lord raised up one of the greatest heroes ever born on American soil. He was not only a military leader, but a priest and prophet, and by his inspiration and devoted courage the Nephites were for many years led to uninterrupted victory. Such was Moroni, who now, though only twenty-five years old, took the chief command of the armies of his nation." (*Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. IV. Amplified and Arranged by Philip C. Reynolds and David Sjodahl King. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977, 231*).

(2) Moroni had armed his men with "breastplates and with arm-shields, yea, also shields to defend their heads, and

also they were dressed with thick clothing—" (Alma 43:19);  
(3) Moroni sent spies into the wilderness to watch their  
camp" (Alma 43:23);

Kathleen S. McConkie states,

"Not unlike the Nephite spies, modern prophets and the scriptures can give us advance warning of the plans of the evil one. If we follow the Lord's counsel through his prophet as Moroni, we too can know how, when, and where to best defend ourselves. The gospel gives us the 'battle strategy,' and the Church provides the necessary structure for setting up our defenses and defeating the enemy with minimum casualties." ("Defending Against Evil," in *Ensign*, January, 1992, 20).

and, (4) Moroni sought direction from the Prophet Alma "whether the armies of the Nephites should go to defend themselves against the Lamanites" (Alma 43:23).

Today, the Lord has also raised up a Prophet to guide and strengthen the members of the Church against the forces of evil. The men of the Church are also armed with the power of the priesthood and are clothed in righteous armor. (see Doctrine and Covenants 27:15-18.) They are also aware of the work of Satan in the world today and his motives, having being prepared for these last days by our inspired leaders, past and present. They know that after they have done all they can daily to be spiritually prepared, though sincere prayer, the Lord will also guide, and protect them from the forces of evil.

In preparation to meet the Lamanites in battle, Captain Moroni used statagam against his enemies.

Alma 43:27-30

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

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

**29 and now, as Moroni knew the intention of the Lamanites, that it was their intention to destroy their brethren, or to subject them and bring them into**

**bondage that they might establish a kingdom unto themselves over all the land;**

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

Today, we know that the best way to protect our youth from the designs of Satan is to help them to live righteous lives and to gain strong testimonies. Therefore, each morning and night we gather together as a family to seek the Lord guidance as we go forth each day and at night, express our gratitude for his protection. We also arm our families by everyday reading the scriptures. Fortified by the word of God, we are strengthened to choose the right against the daily temptations we experience.

Alma 43:37-38

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

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

Ezra Taft Benson states,

"Never before on the face of the earth have the forces of evil and forces of good been as well organized. Now it the great day of the devil's power, with the greatest mass murderers of all time living among us. But now is also the great day of the Lord's power, with the greatest number ever of priesthood holders on the earth. And the showdown is fast approaching.

"Each day the forces of evil and the forces of good pick up new recruits. Each day we personally make many decisions

that show where our support will go. The final outcome is certain--the forces of righteousness will finally win. What remains to be seen is where each of us personally, now and in the future, will stand in this fight--how tall we will stand...Great battles can make great heroes, but heroes will make great battle. You will never have a better opportunity to be a great hero in a more crucial battle than in the battle you will face today and in the immediate future. Be warned some of the greatest battles you will face will be fought within the silent chambers of your own soul." ("In His Steps," in *Brigham Young Fireside Address*, March 4, 1979).

Alma 43:43-46

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

**44 And they were inspired by the Zoramites and the Amalekites, who were their chief captains and leaders, and by Zerahemnah, who was their chief captain, or their chief leader and commander; yea, they did fight like dragons,...**

**45 Nevertheless, the Nephites were inspired by a better cause, for they were not fighting for monarchy nor power but they were fighting for their homes and their liberties, their wives and their children, and their all, yea, for their rites to worship and their church.**

**46 And they were doing that which they felt was the duty which they owed to their God;...**

Sheri L. Dew states,

"You and I compose a pivotal battalion in the army of the Lord! May we arise in this, the greatest cause on earth. May we go forward together in the strength of the Lord. More than ever He needs our faith and faithfulness, our vitality and our ingenuity, our unwavering commitment and conviction. This life is a test. It is also a glorious privilege." ("This is a Test," in *Ensign*, July, 2000, 66).

Alma 43:46

**46 ...for the Lord had said unto them, and also unto their fathers, that: Inasmuch as ye are not guilty of**

the first offense, neither the second, ye shall not suffer yourselves to be slain by the hands of your enemies.

47 And again the Lord has said that: Ye shall defend your families even unto bloodshed. Therefore for this cause were the Nephites contending with the Lamanites, to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion.

The law of the Lord is that we are never to be the aggressors. We are to turn both cheeks to those who offend us, but we are justified on the third opportunity to defend ourselves and our families and our country. If we follow his directive, we may then count upon his support for our righteous cause.

David O. McKay states,

"There are, however, two conditions which may justify a truly Christian man to enter--mind you, I say enter, not begin--a war: (1) An attempt to dominate and to deprive another of his free agency, and (2) Loyalty to his country. Possibly there is a third, viz. Defense of a weak nation that is being unjustly crushed by a strong, ruthless one." (*Conference Report*, April, 1942, 72).

Alma 43:48-50

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

49 And it came to pass that they turned upon the Lamanites, and they cried with one voice unto the Lord their God, for their liberty and their freedom from bondage.

50 And they began to stand against the Lamanites with power; and in that selfsame hour that they cried unto the Lord for their freedom, the Lamanites began to flee before them;...

We learn that the army of Moroni, became fearful, and began to doubt. Captain Moroni reminded them of the purpose of their battle, and, as they acted, and stood against the

Lamanites, the Lord heard their prayer, and brought them victory. This same formula also applies to us when we are confronted by Satan's forces and begin to fear. They are: (1) When we doubt, it is important we remember the covenants and promises we have made with the Lord; (2) Offer a silent prayer in our heart for guidance and strength; (3) Continue to stand firm; and (4) Await the Lord's blessings.

Following the Lamanites being surrounded by the forces of Captain Moroni, "they were struck with fear" (Alma 43:53). Moroni then stopped the shedding [of] their blood" (Alma 43:54).

Spiritual Lesson--Chapter 43: John Bytheway

"Moroni's confrontation with Zerahemnah teaches us the value of prophets in times of war and peace. When Zerahemnah's army changed course after being frightened by the Nephite army. Captain Moroni immediately issued two orders: First, he sent spies to follow the Lamanite army, and second, he sent men to inquire of the prophet Alma where the Lamanites might go. This is faith and works. He did everything in his power, and he called on a power higher than his own.

"Modern prophets have continually warned that in the latter-days, the adversary will attack marriage and family. More than thirty years ago, President Harold B. Lee stated, "Satan's greatest threat today, is to destroy the family and make a mockery of the law of chastity and the sanctity of the marriage covenant" (*Church News*, August 19, 1972,3). In 1995, The Proclamation to the World: The Family was issued. Prophets tell us where the enemy will strike next. The spiritual message is clear. Keep your eyes on the living prophets, they know where the enemy will attack." ([www.ldsmag.com/article/1-11211/](http://www.ldsmag.com/article/1-11211/)).

#### **Alma 44**

Alma 44:1, 6-7

**1 And it came to pass that they [Nephite army] did stop and withdrew a pace from them [Lamanite army]. And Moroni said unto Zerahemnah: Behold, Zerahemnah, that we do not desire to be men of blood. Ye know that ye are in our hands, yet we do not desire to slay you.**

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

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

Hugh Nibley states,

"Here was Moroni's chance to settle the Lamanite problem once and for all on the spot; a vastly superior force had entered and ravaged a large part of his country, bent on subduing it entirely, and now he had them, as he says, completely in his power. Well might he have said, 'Kill or be killed. It is either you or us!' and finished them off. But instead of that type of total victory he did not even ask for unconditional surrender...All he asked of his bloodthirsty foe was that they deliver up their weapons and promise not to fight the Nephites anymore; then they could go their way in peace without reprisals, punishment, hostages, or guarantees (Alma 44:6)." (*Since Cummorah, Vol. 7*. John W. Welch, General Editor. Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1967, [Second Edition, 1988], 299).

Captain Moroni had the opportunity to become a man of blood, but instead chose to be a man of peace. Daily, each of us make our own choices as to how we will be remembered. Moroni chose to offer mercy and forgiveness to his enemy, rather than justice. What will we choose?

Zerahemnah's response was to state, "we will not suffer ourselves to take an oath unto you, which we know that we shall break,...Behold, we are not of your faith; we do not believe that it is God that has delivered us into your hands; but we believe that it is your cunning that has preserved you from our swords. Behold, it is your breastplates and your shields that have preserved you" (Alma 44:8-9). Moroni responded,

Alma 44:10

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

Zerahemnah took his sword and attempted to kill Moroni, however, one of his soldiers cut off the hair from his scalp. Zerahemnah retreated to the midst of his soldiers. When his soldiers saw what had occurred, many came forth and delivered up their weapons of war in exchange for peace. Zerahemnah was angry and stirred up the army to resume the battle. Zerahemnah saw the slaughter upon his army by the Nephites, "and that they were all about to be destroyed, cried mightily unto Moroni, promising that he would covenant and also his people with them, if they would spare the remainder of their lives, that they would never come to war against them" (Alma 44:19). Moroni responded to his plea.

Alma 44:20

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

Thomas R. Valletta states,

"Captain Moroni was steeped in covenant theology. The word 'covenant' or its derivatives appear 26 times in the Book of Alma chapters dealing with Moroni (Alma 43-62), while they appear only three other times in the rest of the book. 'Covenant' appears seven times in Alma 46 and five times in Alma 44, a frequency surpassed only by the Lord's discourse in 3 Nephi 20, where the term or a derivative appears ten times...Clearly, realizing Moroni's fundamental grounding in and adherence to covenants is necessary to understand him." ("The Captain and the Covenant," in *The Book of Mormon: Alma, The Testimony Of The Word, Vol.6*. Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992, 230).

We might ask ourselves how we feel about the covenants we have made. How do we feel about, for example, our baptismal covenant?; our priesthood covenant?; our sacramental covenant?; and our covenants at the temple? How do these covenants affect the choices we make daily? It is true that we are a covenant making people. Are we also a covenant keeping people?

Once again, Captain Moroni had an opportunity to perform the work of death upon Zerahemnah and the Lamanite army, but again he choose mercy over justice. Because of his actions, the death of his men remained upon Zerahemnah and not upon Moroni. One day, each of us will stand before God and give an accounting of our actions. Whether we chose evil or good and the effect they had upon making a difference in our lives will be of great importance in determining the judgment we will receive. It is in our daily choices that we determine the outcome of our judgment. Let us choose wisely.

Spiritual Lesson: Chapter 44: John Bytheway

"With information from the prophet Alma, Moroni quickly surrounded the Lamanites, and after a brief battle called a 'cease fire.' At this point, Moroni could have compelled the Lamanites to swear on oath of non-aggression and leave. However, Moroni was a witness of God at all times, in all things and in all places. [see Mosiah 18:9.] So before he delivered his very benevolent terms, he bore a powerful testimony of faith in Christ to a captive audience. Read [Alma 44], verses 3-4, and notice the number of time the word "faith" appears!"

Alma 44:3-4 [underline added]

**3 But now ye behold that the Lord is with us; and ye behold that he has delivered you into our hands. And now I would that ye should understand that this is done unto us because of our religion and our faith in Christ. And now ye see that ye cannot destroy this our faith.**

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

"Moroni never took credit for the Nephite successes, and always took the blame for their failures. The spiritual message is wonderful--faith in Christ is a power to be reckoned at all times, in all things and in all places, including war." ([www.lds.org/magazine/article/1-11211/](http://www.lds.org/magazine/article/1-11211/)).

### **III. Alma 45-46**

In Alma, Chapter 45, we learn that prior to the Prophet Alma's departure from the land, he had a special meeting with his son, Helaman. Helaman had been selected by Alma to become the keeper of the records. Beginning with Chapter 45 and continuing through 62 inclusive, Helaman is the recorder of the plates, which will later be abridged by Mormon.

Alma asks his son three questions.

Alma 45:2-8

- 2 ..Alma came to his son Helaman and said unto him: Believest thou the words which I spake unto thee concerning those records which have been kept?**
- 3 And Helaman said unto him: Yea, I believe.**
- 4 And Alma said again: Believest thou in Jesus Christ, who shall come?**
- 5 And he said: Yea, I believe all the words which thou hast spoken.**
- 6 And Alma said unto him again: Will ye keep my commandments?**
- 7 And he said: Yea, I will keep thy commandments with all my heart.**
- 8 Then Alma said unto him: Blessed art thou; and the Lord shall prosper thee in this land.**

At the conclusion of these questions from Alma and responses from his son, Helaman, he shares with him a prophecy he has received from the Lord regarding the final state of the Nephites. Here are excerpts from his prophecy with his preface counsel to Helaman that he is to record the prophecy, but it is not to be made known until after it is fulfilled. (see Alma 45:9.)

Alma 45:10-12, 14 [Underlined for emphasis]

- 10 And these are the words: Behold, I perceive that this very people, the Nephites, according to the**

spirit of revelation which is in me, in four hundred years from the time that Jesus Christ shall manifest himself unto them, shall dwindle in unbelief.

11 Yea, and then shall they see wars and pestilences, yea, famines and bloodshed, even until the people of Nephi shall become extinct--

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

14 But whosoever remaineth, and is not destroyed in that great and dreadful day, shall be numbered among the Lamanites, and shall become like unto them, all, save it be a few who shall be called the disciples of the Lord; and them shall the Lamanites pursue even until they shall become extinct. And now, because of iniquity, this prophecy shall be fulfilled.

Many had noted that the events from the last days of the Nephi nation foreshadow the events that shall occur during the days preceding the Lord's Second Coming. Unlike the Nephite nation, those who are righteous will have their lives spared and will live to greet the Savior upon his return. As we give our attention to the sins that Alma highlighted, we would be well advised to put our own houses in order, and insure that our lives are clean and pure and that we are worthy to meet the Lord.

Alma concluded his prophecy by giving a blessing to Helaman, "...and also his other sons; and he also blessed the earth for the righteous sake...[and] he blessed the church, yea, all those who should stand fast in the faith from that time hence forth" (Alma 45:15, 17).

Alma 45:18-19

18 And when Alma had done this he departed out of the land of Zarahemla...And it came to pass that he was never heard of more; as to his death or burial we know not of.

19 ...we suppose that he has also [like Moses] received Alma in the spirit, unto himself;...

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"The scriptural inference is that Moses was translated as was Alma. [Alma 45:18-19 is quoted]...

"It is a very reasonable thought to believe that both Moses and Alma, like Elijah and John, were translated to accomplish some work which the Lord had in store for them at some future day." (*Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol. 5*. Compiled and Edited by Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1966, [Fourth Printing, 1972], 38).

Following the defeat of the Lamanite army by Captain Moroni and his army, Helaman returned to his responsibility as the Prophet and President of the Church which had occurred following the departure of Alma, his father. He now, "went forth among the people to declare the word [of the Lord] unto them" (Alma 45:20).

Alma 45:21-22

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

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

Lynn D. Wardle states,

"In Moroni's day it was not merely the secular authorities (generals and chief judges) who established the peace. The high priest of the church, Helaman, worked closely with Moroni to quell dissent. Before the lengthy Nephite-Lamanite war began, he tried to set the church in order because the dissensions that soon were to plague the nation were evident in the church (Alma 45:20-22)..." ("Dissent: Perspectives from the Book of Mormon," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 3/1 (1994), 67).

Alma 48:19

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

Alma 45:23-24

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

**24 But they grew proud, being lifted up in their hearts, because of their exceedingly great riches; therefore they grew rich in their own eyes, and would not give heed to their words, to walk uprightly before God.**

Lynn D. Wardle continues,

"It is noteworthy that dissension in the Nephite church was associated with contention in the nation (Alma 45:21-46:7; Helaman 4:1). In other words, there may be a spill-over effect. The spillage may move in both directions. For instance, dissension with the church preceded (and perhaps spiritually caused) the great civil dissensions that soon plagued the entire Nephite nation as it plunged into a terribly destructive series of wars with the Lamanites, who were led and strengthened by Nephite dissenters (Alma 45:20-24; Alma 46-62)." ("Dissent: Perspectives from the Book of Mormon," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 3/1 (1994), 69).

While civil dissension may lead to dissension within the church, it is noteworthy that dissension within the church may precede civil dissension and thereby contribute to instability of a nation. If this is correct, it would also follow that the opposite is true: the righteousness of the church may be a source of strength to the nation and may serve to delay or even prevent the particular nation's downfall.

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"The peace the gospel brings is not just the opposite of any conflict, armed or unarmed. It is the opposite of national or ethnic hostilities, of civil or family strife...By preaching righteousness, our missionaries seek to treat the causes of war. They preach repentance from personal corruption, greed, and oppression because only by individual reformation can we overcome corruption and oppression by groups or nations. By inviting all to repent and come unto Christ, our missionaries are working for peace in this world by changing the hearts and behavior of individual men and women." ("World Peace," in *Ensign*, May 1990, 71, 73).

Peace in the nation, starts with peace in the homes of her citizens. It is a truism that when there is contention in the home among its members, the example of a peacemaker can have a positive effect upon resolving the conflict and restoring peace once again in the home. One person can make a difference.

Spiritual Lesson--Chapter 45: John Bytheway

"Alma the Younger prophesied the ultimate destruction of the Nephites, and departed out of the land. Knowing more wars were coming, what did Heleman and his brethren do? Make swords? Armor? Fortifications? No. "For because of their wars...it became expedient that the *word of God* should be declared among them..." (Verse 21, *emphasis added*). The war chapters are very consistent on this point--spiritual preparation is always first. The spiritual message is clear: get your spiritual life in order, then prepare temporally for whatever may come. Physical swords come in handy, but the "sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" is a more powerful and more important weapon (see Ephesians 6:17).

#### **Alma 46**

Peace had been restored to the land through the defeat of the Lamanites by Captain Moroni and his army, but now there was dissention in the church. There arose a man by the name of Amalickiah. It was his desire to be king. He received the support from the lower judges who sought to have greater power which Amaliciah promised them if he were king.

Alma 46:6-7

6 Thus they were [many] led away by Amalickiah to dissensions, notwithstanding the preaching of Helaman and his brethren, yea, notwithstanding their exceedingly great care over the church, for they were high priests over the church.

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

The precarious circumstances of the Nephite nation at this time caused Mormon to declare:

Alma 46:8-10

8 Thus we see how quick the children of men do forget the Lord their God, yea, how quick to do iniquity, and to be led away by the evil one.

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

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

How quickly they, and we, are to forget the Lord and how quick to do iniquity. When we turn from the Lord and reject his counsel and commandments, we turn to and then embrace the iniquity of Satan. Once bereft of the spirit of the Lord, we become highly susceptible to the temptations of Satan and his servants. We become gullible to the words of the "powerful speakers and clever propagandists, skilled in the use of 'flattering words';" (Hugh Nibley. *Since Cummorah*, Vol. 7. John W. Welch, General Editor. Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1967, [Second Edition,

1988], 303). Always their underlying purpose is to extend their power and authority over others, and to bring others under their control.

Moroni saw the state of affairs of his nation and her citizens, and acted quickly.

Alma 46:11-13

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

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

13 ...and he took the pole, which had on the end thereof his rent coat, (and he called it the title of liberty), and he bowed himself to the earth, and he prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren, so long as there should a band of Christians remain to possess the land--

If there is such an emotion as "righteous indignation" Moroni was entitled to express it towards the actions of Amalickiah. Moroni and his army had just concluded a battle with the Lamanites in which the blood of many had been shed. Many of the Lamanites had then entered into a sacred oath not to raise their sword against the Nephites. In a brief period of time, at the instigation of Amalickiah, they were again ready to do battle.

Alma 46:19-20

19 And..Moroni...went forth among the people, waving the rent part of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent part, and crying with a loud voice, saying:

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

Moroni determines that the cause of liberty is so important that he requires each of his soldiers to make a covenant with God regarding their service to the cause of freedom.

Alma 46:22

**22 Now this was the covenant which they made, and they cast their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying: We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression.**

Covenants and oaths are terms often spoken of together. An examples is "the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood." (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:33-44.)

The Guide to the Scriptures states,

"An oath is a sworn affirmation to be true and faithful to one's promises. A covenant is a solemn promise between two parties. [For example] the Aaronic Priesthood is received by covenant alone; the] Melchizedek Priesthood holders receive the priesthood by unspoken oath as well as by covenant." (**Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood: The Guide to the Scriptures.** Intellectual Reserve, Inc., 2001).

A special covenant with deity is defined as a sacred agreement between God and man. The oath, made by God, confirms that to all those who keep their agreement: God's blessings will be forthcoming based upon the individual's righteousness.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"The oath [is] one of the most sacred and solemn matters in antiquity. The oath was an attestation of the truthfulness and veracity of one's word or of an action in question. From the beginning it was socially and culturally inappropriate to break an oath...(*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987, [11<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1999), 39).

Moroni responds to the covenant that has been made:

Alma 46:23-24

23 Moroni said unto them: Behold, we are a remnant of the seed of Jacob; yea, we are a remnant of the seed of Joseph, whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces; yea, and now behold, let us remember to keep the commandments of God, or our garments shall be rent by our brethren, and we be cast into prison, or be sold, or be slain.

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

Hugh Nibley states,

"Note here that there were two remnants of Joseph's garment, one sent by Joseph to his father as a sign that he was still alive (since the garment had not decayed), and the other, torn and smeared with blood, brought by Judah to his father as a sign that Joseph was dead [Genesis 37:31-34]. Moroni actually quotes Jacob ("Now behold, this is the language of Jacob" [Alma 46:26]) as saying: 'Now behold this giveth my soul sorrow; nevertheless, my soul hath joy in my son' (Alma 46:25)...

"These interesting little details are typical apocryphal variations on a single theme, and the theme is the one Moroni mentions; the rent garment of Joseph is the symbol of both his suffering and his deliverance, misfortune and preservation." (*An Approach to the Book of Mormon, Vol. 6.* John W. Welch, General Editor. Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1957, [Third Edition, 1988], 220-221).

Alma 46:28

28 And now it came to pass that when Moroni had said these words he went forth, and also sent forth in all the parts of the land where there were dissensions, and gathered together all the people who were desirous

**to maintain their liberty, to stand against Amalickiah and those who had dissented, who were called Amalickiahites.**

Anthony W. Ivins states,

"I appeal to you to reflect, and to resolve, in the words of Moroni...that so long as there is a band of Christians left in the world, they will gird on their armor, the armor of righteousness, that the word of the Lord may be advocated in every nation, and if necessary the arm of every Christian be steeled to fight for the perpetuity of these eternal truths upon which the salvation of the world depends today. God give victory to the armies which are fighting in defense of these principles. May he give to the latter-day Saints to properly perform their part in this great struggle, and above all may he give power to spread these truths among all nations, until the world shall be converted, God's kingdom come, and his will be done upon earth, as it is in heaven." (*Conference Report*, October, 1918, 52-53).

While we may not be called upon to physically come forth clothed in our armor and with our steel sword in hand, we have been called to serve missions, at home and abroad. We are to bear witness of the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and of the restoration of the gospel.

Amalickiah upon seeing that the people of Moroni were greater than his group of dissenters, and questioning the determination to his own people regarding the cause, departed out of the land of Nephi to join forces with the Lamanites. Captain Moroni sought to prevent him from gaining greater forces, and sought to cut him off. He was successful in this endeavor. (see Alma 46:29-32.) He was, however, not successful in capturing Amalickiah. (see Alma 46:33.)

Moroni took the dissenters whom they had captured and offered them a choice regarding their freedom.

Alma 46:35

**35 And it came to pass that whomsoever of the Amalickiahites that would not enter into a covenant to support the cause of freedom, that they might maintain**

**a free government, he caused to be put to death; and there were but few who denied the covenant of freedom.**

Once again Captain Moroni chose not to be a man of blood. He chose instead to rely upon the time honored and sacred commitment by offering the prisoners to enter into an oath rather than exterminating all the Amalikhiah prisoners as traitors.

The Book of Mormon student manual [1981] states,

The option of a oath is "a very humane and just approach, and it was remarkable for two reasons. First, how many times in history does one find prisoners of war given a chance to swear their allegiance to the government and then freed, even though the war still continues? Second, once again we see the great importance these people placed on making and keeping oaths. In today's society, many would swear such an oath to escape death, with no intent of ever keeping it. But then, the oath was a very important and sacred thing to the people." (*The Book of Mormon student manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 330-331).

Alma 46:36, 38

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

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

As a result of Captain Moroni's military efforts and teaching of the word by Helaman and the high priest, peace was established again in the land for four years. As we shall later note, this peace is disrupted by the return of Amalickiah, his dissenters, and the Lamanites.

Alma 46:40

**40 And there were some who died with fevers, which at some seasons of the year were very frequent in the land--but not so much so with fevers, because of the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared to remove the cause of diseases, to which men were subject by the nature of the climate--**

Hugh Nibley states,

"They were able to control fevers because of the very good remedies they had from these tropical plants. Quinine wasn't discovered until 1840. Nobody knew that the quinine bark would cure these fevers until then. They didn't know what could cure them. They didn't know about mosquitoes or anything else. Again, here we have a wonderful insight. There are these occasional flashes of background in the Book of Mormon, which for the most part concentrate intently on the issues of salvation. But here it just happens to note in passing (it's good to note) that it was fever country and there were diseases to which men were subject by the nature of the climate, which was tropical and humid. The fevers were held under control by the most excellent quality of the plants." (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 3, Lecture 62*. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1988-1990, 65).

Here the Book of Mormon gives value to the use of plants as herbal medicine.

Spiritual Lesson--Chapter 46: John Bytheway

"Amalickiah was a Nephite who wanted to be king. He wanted to destroy the system of judges, and rule over the Nephites. Captain Moroni, well aware of the problems of having a king, rent his coat and wrote upon it the title of liberty. Later, the title of liberty was hoisted upon every tower in all the land. Amalickiah and his followers eventually fled.

"Apparently, towers were the media of the day. Wherever anyone went in the land occupied by the Nephites, the title of liberty was there, 'hoisted upon every tower.' The message is wonderful--place reminders of your covenants everywhere. President Kimball urged families to display a picture of the temple in their homes. We can also have a

picture of the Savior to remind us of our baptismal and sacrament covenants. These visible reminders of spiritual commitments help us to remember what we are fighting for.” ([www.lds.org/magazine/article/1-11211/](http://www.lds.org/magazine/article/1-11211/)).

#### **IV. Alma 47-48**

Alma 47:1-2

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

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

It is noteworthy that a great number of the Lamanites did not want to go into battle with the Nephites. They did not want to displease their king, yet they also feared for the loss of their lives. In response to the resistance of his people, the king made Amalickiah the leader over those who were willing to go into battle and to persuade those who opposed to war with the Nephites. The king did not understand that Amalickiah's ulterior motive was power.

Alma 47:4

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

Bryan Richards states,

“Amalickiah is the prototype of wickedness. The forces of good and evil are polarized in the characters of Amalickiah and Moroni. Amalickiah's subtle yet successful subversion

is a type of the wicked devices of every generation. In Chapter 47, Mormon takes the time to show us his modus operandi. How does this help us today? Certainly, those whose goal is to become like Moroni, strong, mighty, and of perfect understanding (Alma 48:11), must learn to recognize and combat the methods of the evil one as typified by his servant, Amalickiah.

"Amalickiah was unscrupulous, Machiavellian, and scheming. But the list of his attributes is much longer than that. He was also:

- "1) **Traitorous**--Fled from the Nephites to the Lamanites (vs. 1).
- "2) **Warmonger**--he stirred up the Lamanites to anger against the people of Nephi (vs. 1).
- "3) **Designing**--he obtained command of part of the king's army (vs. 3-4)
- "4) **Disloyal**--It was not Amalickiah's intention to give them battle according to the commandments of the king (vs. 8).
- "5) **Shameless glory seeker**--it was his intention to gain favor with the armies of the Lamanites (vs. 8).
- "6) **Deceitful**--has his own army surrounded by the enemy (vs. 13).
- "7) **Calculating**--predicts the response of his surrounded army (vs. 15).
- "8) **Disobedient**--he surrendered his army, contrary to the commands of the king (vs. 16).
- "9) **Murderous**--he caused that one of his servants should administer poison by degrees to Lehonti (vs. 18).
- "10) **Instigator of secret combinations**--plotted with his servants to kill the king (vs. 22-24).
- "11) **Cover-up artist**--blamed the king's servants for the murder (vs. 26-29, 33-34).

- "12) **Phony**--pretended to be angry at the king's death (vs. 27).
- "13) **Liar**--testified to the queen that the king's servants had killed him (vs. 32-34).
- "14) **Power hungry**--sought the favor of the queen, and took her unto him to wife (vs. 35).

"For every attribute of wickedness which Amalickiah had mastered, his contemporary counterpart, Moroni, had perfected the corresponding attributes of righteousness." ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-47](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-47)).

Now Amalickiah goes with his army to the place where those, who were determined not to obey the order of the king to go into battle, had gathered.

Alma 47: 8, 10

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

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

Initially, Lehonti would not come down and meet with Amalickiah. Finally, Amalickiah went up to the mount, near to where Lehonti and his men were camped. Amalickiah makes him the following offer.

Alma 47:13-14

**13 And it came to pass that when Lehonti had come down with his guards to Amalickiah, that Amalickiah desired him to come down with his army in the night-time, and surround those men in their camps over whom the king had given him command. and that he would deliver them**

**up into Lehonti's hands, if he would make him  
(Amalickiah) a second leader over the whole army.  
14 And it came to pass that Lehonti came down with his  
men...**

Bryan Richards states,

"[Some]...have suggested that...Amalickiah [be considered] as a type for Satan. This is particularly useful in considering his interaction with Lehonti. Consider Amalickiah as Satan and Lehonti as a member of the church like yourself. You are prepared for battle on a high mountain; in effect, you are standing in a holy place. You know the enemy is coming, and you are ready for him. You have an army with personal guards, armor, and you stand on higher ground. Certainly, you have the advantage.

"Amalickiah sends his secret embassy to tempt you to lower your standards and come all the way down the mountain. Standing on high ground you, of course, refuse. You would never do something that stupid. Yet, Amalickiah persists. Like Satan, he tempts you a second and a third time. Wisely, you decline his offer. Just as your confidence waxes strong, Amalickiah tries one more time. This time, he doesn't ask for any great thing. Rather, he has come almost all the way up to your camp—pretending to be completely harmless. He guarantees your safety if you just leave your comfort zone for a moment. 'Bring your guards!' he says, coaxing you into his lair. You don't have to come all the way down the mountain, just a short distance.

"This is the moment of decision for Lehonti. He is completely safe with his armies on top of mount Antipas. But Satan wants him to descend just a little, to make a little compromise, to travel to the edge, to push the limits. What does Lehonti do? Does it matter that he had three times rejected the temptation? Is he really safe because Amalickiah presents no immediate threat?

"Next comes the offer. Amalickiah offers Lehonti something he can't refuse. He gets power, authority, and strength for nothing. What a deal! Too good to be true! A temptation wrapped in tinsel. It looks great on the surface but danger and destruction lie in wait. Lehonti falls into the trap like a fly on flypaper. Having made just a small compromise, he left himself open for a large temptation. 'It does not matter how small the sins are, provided that

their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing... Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one.' (C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, 48)" ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-47](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-47)).

Alma 47:17-19

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

**18 And it came to pass that Amalickiah caused that one of his servants should administer poison by degrees to Lehonti, that he died.**

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

Bryan Richards states,

"Satan delivers poison by degrees to those who have allowed themselves to fall into his grasp. Spiritual death is rarely a sudden death--it takes time. The poison destroys bit by bit until the life is completely sapped. Nephi expressed this concept as follows, 'He leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen (soft) cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever...thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell' (2 Ne.26:22; 28:21)."

([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-47](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-47)).

Carlos E. Asay states,

"Those who become followers of the evil one do not generally reach their captive state with one misdeed; they lose their freedom one sin at a time—one error after another—until almost all is lost. Flaxen cords are transformed into awful chains of steel as they allow themselves to follow the downward course. Each easy step away from the line of goodness and truth makes it more and more difficult to recover." (*In the Lord's Service: A Guide to Spiritual Development*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990, 74).

Amalickiah returns to the city of Nephi with his troops. The king comes out to greet and honor him. Amalickiah sent his servants to greet him and after bowing down before the king, one arose and stabbed the king, killing him.

Amalickiah immediately cried that the king had been killed by one of the Kings servants who then fled. Amalickiah sent his forces after them. The servants went and joined with the people of Ammon and the army returned unable to find them. (see Alma 47:21-29.)

Alma 47:30-31

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

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

Amalickiah then sent an embassy to the queen notifying her of the death of the king, and they had pursued his servants, but they had made their escape. She requests that Amalickiah come to the palace and bring witnesses to testify of the kings death. He brings the very servants who had killed him who testified that he was killed by his servants. The queen is now satisfied as to the death of the king. (see Alma 47:32-34.)

Alma 47:35

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

Thereby, with his cunning and wickedness, Amalickiah obtained his goal to become the king of all the Lamanites. But he is not satisfied. He wants to also control the Nephites.

Mormon now makes a wise observation regarding those who turn away from the truths of the gospel.

Alma 47:36

**36 Now these dissenters, having the same instruction and the same information of the Nephites, yea, having been instructed in the same knowledge of the Lord, nevertheless, it is strange to relate, not long after their dissentions they became more hardened and impenitent, and more wild, wicked and ferocious than the Lamanites—drinking in with the traditions of the Lamanites; giving way to indolence, and all manner of lasciviousness; yea, entirely forgetting the Lord their God.**

Joseph Smith states,

"Strange as it may appear at first thought, yet it is no less strange than true, that...apostates after turning from the faith of Christ, unless they have speedily repented, have sooner or later fallen into the snares of the wicked one, and have been left destitute of the Spirit of God, to manifest their wickedness in the eyes of multitudes...When once that light which was in them is taken from them, they become as much darkened as they were previously enlightened, and then, no marvel, if all their power should be enlisted against the truth, and they, Judas like, seek the destruction of those who were their greatest benefactors." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 67).

Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 47: John Bytheway

"As Latter-day Saints, we have gone up to the 'mountain of the Lord' and made covenants. Satan continually invites us to come down. We refuse. So he invites us to come down just a little. If we do, we subject ourselves to his power where we will eventually be poisoned by degrees. If we are wounded by gunshot, or a sword, we know about it! But if we are slowly poisoned, we might not even realize it's happening. Poison is a perfect metaphor for Satan's tactics, because a victim of poison may not even realize what's happening, and may still believe he's in control up until the moment he dies.

"The spiritual message is powerful and chilling--don't come down from your mountain! Keep your covenants! Satan wants us to come down so he can poison us by degrees. (It's

interesting to note that Jesus was invited to come down three times from the pinnacle of the temple, but he never did. (See Matthew 4:1-11)."

([www.ldsmag.com/article/1-11211](http://www.ldsmag.com/article/1-11211)).

## **Alma 48**

Alma 48:2-4

**2 ...he [Amalickiah] having accomplished his designs thus far, yea, having been made king over the Lamanites, he sought also to reign over all the land, yea, and all the people who were in the land, the Nephites as well as the Lamanites.**

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

**4 For he was determined, because of the greatness of the number of his people to overpower the Nephites and bring them into bondage.**

Amalickiah, through trickery, deceit and treachery, had solidified his army of dissenters by gaining control of the Lamanites, and was now ready to continue his desire of domination over both the Lamanites and Nephites.

Alma 48:7

**7 Now it came to pass that while Amalickiah had thus been obtaining power by fraud and deceit, Moroni, on the other hand, had been preparing the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord their God.**

Hugh Nibley states,

"You do not expel evil from 'the hearts of the children of men' by shooting them or blowing them up or torturing them—the inquisition operated on that theory. Nor can the powers of hell be shaken' by heavy artillery or nuclear warheads. The devil does not care who is fighting or why, as long as there is fighting...Nobody knows that better than Moroni, whose effort to avoid conflict far exceeded his labors in battle. When he sees trouble ahead, he gets ready for it by 'preparing the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord their God' (Alma 48:7)." (*The Prophetic Book of*

*Mormon, Vol. 8.* John W. Welch, Editor. Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1989, 491-492),

Having listed the qualities of Amalickiah, in Chapter 47, let us now list the qualities of Moroni.

Joe J. Christen states,

- "1. **Prepared himself**--At age twenty-five he was qualified and trusted...to be appointed leader of all the armies of the Nephites (see Alma 43:17).
- "2. **Compassionate and wise**--He did not delight in bloodshed... At the earliest indications that his enemies were weakening or willing to stop the conflict, he would call a halt to the battle. He was magnanimous in forgiveness but, as in the case of the confrontation with Zarahemnah, he was firm for the right (see Alma 44:1-20). Moroni was vitally concerned for the welfare of his people, and particularly for those who fought under his leadership. He worked diligently to assure that they were well-armed, trained, and prepared for war (see Alma 43:18-21). He built up defenses of stone walls, forts, and banks of earth to help secure his people (see Alma 48:7-10; see also 49:6, 18-20; 50:1-4).
- "3. **Spiritual and sensitive to ecclesiastical leadership**-- He sought, obtained, and followed the counsel of the prophet Alma (see Alma 43:23-26). He delighted in doing good, in preserving his people, and in keeping the commandments of God (see Alma 48:16).
- "4. **Intelligent**--He used a variety of tactics and strategies to defeat his enemies (for example, see Alma 43:27-35). Even some modern military leaders have indicated that Moroni's military skills were obvious and ingenious.
- "5. **Leader surrounded with good and able people**-- 'Helaman and his brethren were no less serviceable unto the people than was Moroni; for they did preach the word of God, and they did baptize unto repentance all men whosoever would hearken unto their words' (Alma 48:19).

- "6. **Great leadership ability, [that] included charisma--** [He]...was able to rally a people to the title of liberty (see Alma 46:13). In Moroni's day 'there never was a happier time among the people of Nephi' (Alma 50:23). His leadership likely inspired the two thousand stripling warriors who were led into battle so successfully by Helaman (see Alma 53; 56-57).
- "7. **He knew...organization and labor--**He knew that when he caused the Lamanite prisoners to work, it was easier to guard them (see Alma 53:5). A parallel might be that when we are busy, it is easier to guard ourselves against the influences of the adversary.
- "8. **Family-oriented--**The Nephite armies would not take prisoners of women and children. When the opportunity came to exchange prisoners with the Lamanites, Moroni would not exchange except on the condition that a Nephite man and his wife and children would be freed for each Lamanite prisoner exchanged (see Alma 54:11).
- "9. **Man of courage--**He personally scaled the wall of a Lamanite city and directed his men to a victory through remarkable valor and strategy (see Alma 62:20-23)...

"This Moroni is a heroic ideal and model for our times. He is one whose life and characteristics should be understood by the older and taught to the younger so that they will never be able to say honestly that they do not have a hero worthy of emulation. He is one who taught us powerfully of those values--those priceless blessings--worth fighting and even dying for." ("Captain Moroni, An Authentic Hero," in *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995, [Seventh Printing, 1998], 131-132, bold added). (see also Alma 48:11-16.)

Hugh Nibley states,

"...By all means, let us take Captain Moroni for our model and never forget what he fought for--the poor, outcast and despised; and what he fought against--pride, power, wealth and ambition; or how he fought--as the generous, considerate and magnanimous foe, a leader in every sense." ("Leadership Verses Management," in *BYU Today*, February 1984, 46; also *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995, [Seventh Printing, 1998], 130).

Alma 48:8-9

**8 Yea, he [Moroni] had been strengthening the armies of the Nephites, and erecting small forts, or places of resort; throwing up banks of earth round about to enclose his armies, and also building walls of stone to encircle them about, round about their cities and the borders of their lands; yea, all round about the land.**

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

While Amalickiah was gaining power by deceit and treachery, Moroni was "preparing the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord their God" (Alma 48:7), and strengthening the fortifications around the land, especially in those that were the weakest. Moroni knew that in order to win the war, he had to have a righteous people so that they would be entitled to receive God's blessings upon them. He also knew that along with personal righteousness, physical fortification was also a necessity. This was especially true in those areas most vulnerable to attack. In preparation for our battles, we need to arm ourselves with righteousness by keeping the commandments and being worthy to receive the promptings of the Holy Ghost. We must also identify those areas in our lives where improvement is necessary and then fortify ourselves in our areas of weakness. "Lord, what do I still lack?" is a good question for each of us to ask the Lord as we too prepare for battle.

In Alma 48:11-16, Mormon identifies character traits of Captain Moroni that identify him as a Man of God. He concludes with the following tribute.

Alma 48:17-18

**17 Yea, verily, verily I say unto you, if all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men.**

**18 Behold, he was a man like unto Ammon, the son of Mosiah, yea, and even the others sons of Mosiah, yea,**

**and also Alma and his sons, for they were all men of God.**

Byran Richards states,

"Maybe one of the...reasons why Mormon spent so much time discussing these Nephite wars was because he wanted us to be acquainted with the power and personality of this man [Captain Moroni], for if we were all like him, we would quickly win our war against evil...In the last chapters of Alma, [he] spends...53 pages in a character study of a righteous chief captain. We must be thankful to Mormon for including this detail, for without it, we could never become as Moroni--mighty and unshakable in the face of the devil and his angels."

[www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-48](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-48)).

Howard W. Hunter states,

"...Not all of us are going to be like Moroni, catching the acclaim of our colleagues all day every day. Most of us will be quiet, relatively unknown folks who come and go and do our work without fanfare. To those of you who may find that lonely or frightening or just unspectacular, I say you are 'no less serviceable' (Alma 48:19), than the most spectacular of your associates. You, too, are part of God's army.

"Tens of thousands of unseen people make possible our opportunities and happiness every day. As the scriptures state, 'no less serviceable' than those whose lives are on the front pages of newspapers." ("No Less Serviceable," in *Ensign*, April 1992, 64).

Alma 48:21-22

**21 But, as I have said, in the latter end of the nineteenth year, yea, notwithstanding their peace amongst themselves, they were compelled reluctantly to contend with their brethren, the Lamanites.**

**22 Yea, and in fine, their wars never did cease for the space of many years with the Lamanites, not with standing their much reluctance.**

The war with the Lamanites, instigated by the determination of Amalickiah, will commence, and it will continue for many years. The people who choose to follow the teachings of

Christ will always be involved in a war with the forces of evil. It will be never ending throughout our mortal life. Eventually, the forces of Christ will overcome those of Satan, but until then we must go forward armed with righteousness; being steadfast and immoveable to the cause of truth.

Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 48: John Bytheway

“Much of Alma 48 is a stirring tribute to Captain Moroni [by Mormon]. At the beginning of the chapter, however, we are reminded of the preeminence of spiritual preparation: ‘While Amalickiah had thus been obtaining power by fraud and deceit, Moroni, on the other hand, had been preparing...Preparing what? Sorry to interrupt, but what do you suppose the rest of the verse will say? Had Moroni been preparing more weapons and forts? No. The verse continues, ‘Moroni, on the other hand, had been preparing *the minds of the people to be faithful* unto the Lord their God’ (verse 7. *emphasis added*). Once again, we see the power of faith in Christ, and the priority of putting first things first, especially in times of war.” ([www.lds.org/article/1-11211/](http://www.lds.org/article/1-11211/)).

#### V. Alma 49-52

Alma 49:1

**1 And now it came to pass in the eleventh month of the nineteenth year, on the tenth day of the month, the armies of the Lamanites were seen approaching towards the land of Ammonihah.**

You may ask yourself, Why was the land and city of Ammonihah the first city to be attacked by the Lamanites?

Bryan Richard states,

“Less than nine years had passed since the greatest military victory in recent Lamanite history. The battle at the city of Ammonihah must have become legendary among Lamanite soldiers. The city was the site of the wicked Nephites who imprisoned Alma and Amulek and burned the believing women and children (Alma 14). As a punishment, the city was completely destroyed in one day (Alma 16:9-11). Unaware of the hand of the Lord in their earlier success, the Lamanites must have thought that this newly

rebuilt city would again yield a spectacular military victory." ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-49](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-49)).

Alma 49:4-5

**4 But behold, how great was their disappointment...  
5 Now at the time the chief captains of the Lamanites were astonished exceedingly, because of the wisdom of the Nephites in preparing their places of security.**

How different the city of Ammonihah had become under Moroni's direction, since the one-day destruction nine years previous. The city had been fortified with "a ridge of earth round about them, which was so high that the Lamanites could not cast their stones and their arrows at them...save it was by their place of entrance" (Alma 49:4). More importantly, the inhabitants had been prepared spiritually. When a city is fortified both without and within, it is less venerable to attack by her enemies. So often, however, the city was secure physically, but the people had not been prepared spiritually, and this was their greatest vulnerability.

The astonishment by the military leaders to the preparation that Moroni had made (Alma 49:5, 8-9), caused them to determine that the city of Ammonihah was so well fortified that the cost of lives was too great. In the absence of Amalickiah who "did care not for the blood of his people," the leaders determined to direct their efforts to the land of Noah. (see Alma 49:10-12.)

Alma 49:14-15

**14 But behold, to their [continued] astonishment, the city of Noah, which had hitherto been a weak place, had now, by the means of Moroni, become strong, yea, even to exceed the strength of the city of Ammonihah.  
15 And now, behold, this was wisdom in Moroni; for he had supposed that they would be frightened at the city of Ammonihah; and as the city of Noah had hitherto been the weakest part of the land, therefore they would march thither to battle; and thus it was according to his desires.**

Despite the strength of the fortifications at the city of Noah, the "chief captains [of the Lamanites] had sworn with

an oath to attack the city: therefore, they brought up their armies. The result of the attack was catastrophic for the Lamanites.

Alma 49:22-23

**22 Now when they found that they could not obtain power over the Nephites by the pass, they began to dig down their banks of earth...and instead of filling up their ditches by pulling down the banks of earth, they were filled up in a measure with their dead and wounded bodies.**

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

The Lamanite army, having suffered a great loss of men, determined to return to King Amalickiah and give their report.

Alma 49:26-27

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

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

The forces of Amalickiah had been defeated and he was angry for he had not been able to subject the Nephites to bondage. In his rage, he blamed God and Moroni, but took no responsibility himself for the defeat.

Alma 49:28

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

The contrast between the response of Amalickiah and Captain Moroni is striking. One is enraged at the defeat of his army and their failure. The other is thankful to the Lord for his divine intervention in protecting his people.

Alma 49:30

**30 Yea, and there was continual peace among them, and exceedingly great prosperity in the church because of their heed and diligence which they gave unto the word of God, which was declared unto them by Helaman, and Shiblon, and Corianton, and Ammon and his brethren, yea, and by all those who had been ordained by the holy order of God, being baptized unto repentance, and sent forth to preach among the people.**

Bryan Richards states,

"In our personal fight against evil,...We, too, can win the battle before it even starts by preparing ourselves spiritually and making certain decisions before we are ever confronted with the opposition. How many times have our youth been taught that is much easier to make the decision not to use drugs or alcohol long before the opportunity presents itself? So it is with the Word of Wisdom, the Law of Chastity, and many other principles. ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/content/Alma-49](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/content/Alma-49)).

Kathleen S. McConkie states,

"The Lamanite attack on the city of...[Noah] reminds us that, like an enemy army, Satan will quietly try to dig down our defenses when he is not allowed direct access to our hearts (See Alma 49:14, 22)." ("Defending against Evil," in *Ensign*, January 1992, 20).

Spiritual Lesson--Chapter 49: John Bytheway

"I call Alma 49 the 'Boy Scout' chapter because of the Boy Scout motto: 'Be Prepared.' Note the astonishment of the Lamanites as they come upon each expertly prepared Nephite city! (Verses 5,8,9). Note also, that because of the preparations of the Nephites, weak cities became strong (Verse 14), a real-life parallel to that which happens when we come to the Lord with our weakness (Ether 12:27)." ([www.ldsmag.com/article/1-11211](http://www.ldsmag.com/article/1-11211)).

## **Alma 50**

Alma 50:1, 6

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

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

What a powerful lesson for each of us. Moroni "did not stop making preparations for war or to defend his people" (Alma 50:1). Often it occurs that after we have won a victory, we then let down our defenses. Satan, ever alert to our weaknesses, is there to attack when we are most venerable. Ever vigilant, we must always be preparing for the next battle. Satan never rests nor does he give up.

Alma 50:12

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

Moroni was ever constant in his desire to defend his people from their enemies. In each of the cities in the land, he fortified them against attack. He also found ways to cut off the strength of the Lamanites so that they could achieve no power over them.

Alma 50:18, 20

**18 And they did prosper exceedingly and they became exceedingly rich; yea, and they did multiply and wax strong in the land.**

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

Just as we must learn to be faithful in the face of adversity and tribulation in our lives, we must also learn to be faithful during times of prosperity. While each of these trials may appear to be extremes on the continuum of life, regardless of our circumstances, we must hold firm to the iron rod and keep our eyes riveted on Jesus Christ. If do not, we have failed to understand one of the most important lessons in the Book of Mormon and we will suffer the consequences, just as they who went before us did.

Alma 50:22

**22 And those who were faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord were delivered at all times, whilst thousands of their wicked brethren have been consigned to bondage, or to perish by the sword, or to dwindle in unbelief, and mingle with the Lamanites.**

Just as the night follows the day, this is the promise of the Lord to his children. Those who are faithful in keeping his commandments will be delivered, while those who chose not to be faithful, will not.

Peace and harmony prevailed in the land until contention arose between two groups of people regarding the ownership of a piece of land that bordered their communities. It almost came to blows, however, one group fled to Captain Moroni for assistance. Fearful that Captain Moroni and his army would destroy them, the second group followed Morianton who urged his people to depart northward. In anger, Morianton had beat one of his maid servants and she went to Moroni and told him the plans of Morianton to depart from the land. (see Alma 50:25-31.)

Alma 50:32-33

**32 Now behold, the people who were in the land Bountiful, or rather Moroni, feared that they would hearken to the words of Morianton and unite with his people, and thus he would obtain possession of those**

**parts of the land, which would lay a foundation for serious consequences among the people of Nephi, yea, which consequences would lead to the overthrow of their liberty.**

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

One of Moroni lieutenants, Teancum, was placed in charge of the soldiers who were to stop the action of Morianton and his people. Morianton in his wickedness refused to obey and ordered his men to battle. Teancum defeated the army and killed Morianton. He returned to Moroni with his prisoners. (see Alma 50:34-35.)

It is an important lesson for us not to become so prideful that we rise up in rebellion against our leaders and also convince others to join with us in rebellion. Unfortunately, the members of the Church are also susceptible to the "pride virus" and when we reach the point where we believe we know better, even more than God's own inspired leaders, we have then left the protection of the Holy Ghost. Without humble repentance, we will continue our apostasy from the Lord's Church.

Alma 50:36

**36 And thus were the people of Morianton brought back [as prisoners]. And upon their covenanting to keep the peace they were restored to the land of Morianton, and a union took place between them and the people of Lehi; and they were also restored to their lands.**

Once again we see his patience and forgiveness of the actions of his people who previously had been in rebellion. Like Our Heavenly Father, Moroni believes that people can change, and as a result "they were...restored to their lands" (Alma 50:36).

There is a change in the position of Chief Judge in the land. Nephihah, who had replaced Alma as the Chief Judge, died. His son, Pahoran, was appointed to fill the position of his father.

## Spiritual Lesson--Chapter 50: John Bytheway

"Moroni continued to prepare his cities with a series of heaps, timbers, pickets and towers. Watchmen were placed within each tower so that they could warn the inhabitants of the incoming danger from afar. Imagine how silly it would be for those in the city, after hearing the watchman warn of trouble approaching, to respond, 'Well, I didn't see the danger.'

Prophets are called 'watchman on the towers' (Ezekiel 3:17). They may see things we don't. Perhaps our assignment is among the heaps, timbers or pickets--but prophets have the special assignment of seeing--thus, they carry the title of seers. The spiritual message is obvious--Keep your eyes and ears on the watchman, and be humble enough to realize that watchman may see things we do not."

[\(www.lds.org/magazine/article/1-11211/\)](http://www.lds.org/magazine/article/1-11211/).

### **Alma 51**

As Pahoran is acting in his responsibility as Chief Judge, a petition comes to him regarding altering "a few particular points of the law" (Alma 51:2). When their petition is denied, those who had supported the petition, seek for Pahoran to be removed from office. They become known as "king-men, for they are desirous that the law should be altered in a manner to overthrow the free government and to establish a king over the land" (Alma 51:6).

Those who held that Pahoran should continue in his office and that the rights of a free government including the "rights and the privileges of their religion" (Alma 50:6), were known as freemen.

The matter was presented to the people and the rights of free government prevailed and Pahoran remained in the office of Chief Judge. The scripture notes that the "king-men [were put] to silence, that they durst not oppose but were obligated to maintain the cause of freedom..Now those who were in favor of kings were those of high birth, and they sought to be kings; and they were supported by those who sought power and authority over the people" (Alma 50:7-8). We will see that the actions of the king-men will play an important role in the outcome of the war with Amalickiah and the Lamanites.

As Amalickiah and his army are prepared to again come against the Nephites, Moroni had an external problem among the people that he had to first address.

Alma 51:13

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

By their refusal to act and defend their country, they limited the number of individuals that Moroni had to draw from in order to be able to mount a defense for the country. No doubt, the purpose of the pacifism of the king-men was designed to sway the outcome of the war to Amalickiah and his forces as they were in full support of a monarchy.

Alma 51:14-16

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

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

**16 ...And it came to pass that it was granted according to the voice of the people.**

Whenever our loyalty is lacking, whether it be in serving our country, our God, or our home, we will not succeed. Any distraction that results in lessening our total commitment and devotion will eventually result in disaster.

Alma 51:18-19

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

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

These dissenters who lost their lives were among the nobility of the Nephites and their actions resulted in their death or imprisonment. Moroni believed in total and complete fidelity by the people to the cause of freedom, for anything less, he knew it would undermine his military efforts.

Alma 51:20

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

Thomas R. Valletta states,

"Moroni was a man needed in his day to counter the pride, dissension, iniquity, and covenant-breaking which abounded. The term 'dissension' or its derivative appears over 26 times in these chapters, more than in any other book. The next most frequent usage is in the book of Helaman, where the term or a derivative of it appears 15 times.

"Moroni's views concerning dissension and disunity can be best understood within his covenantal perspective. He coupled a love of freedom and liberty...with the knowledge that these could only be secured by faithfulness and obedience to covenants. Dissidents, in his view, were covenant-breakers. Their lack of trust in God or concern for the community of the saints put all of the people in jeopardy. Their alliances with Nephite enemies only

compounded the problem. Both Moroni and Mormon saw dissension as a root cause of Nephite problems. (see Alma 46:27; 50:21.)" ("The Captain and the Covenant," in *The Book of Mormon: Alma, The Testimony Of The Word, Vol.6.* Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992, 243-244).

Alma 51:22-23, 26-27 [underline added]

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

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

**26 And thus he went on, taking possession of many cities, the city of Nephihah, and the city of Lehi, and the city of Morianton, and the city of Omner, and the city of Gid, and the city of Mulek, all of which were on the east borders by the seashore.**

**27 And thus had the Lamanites obtained, by the cumming of Amalickiah, so many cities, by their numberless hosts, all of which were strongly fortified after the manner of the fortifications of Moroni; all of which afforded strongholds for the Lamanites.**

The action by the dissenters required Moroni to focus his attention upon their uprising, and as a consequence he was unable to continue the process of fortifying the Nephite cities. It is when he was preoccupied, that Amalickiah initiated his attack upon the Nephite nation.

It is true with us. It is often at the times when we are distracted or preoccupied; when we are venerable, that Satan and his servants attack us.

Moroni dispatched his lieutenant, Teancum, to stop the advancement of Amalickiah's forces.

Alma 51:31-32

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

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

Despite the fact that Amalickiah and his forces outnumbered the men of Teancum, their strength and skill compensated for their lack in numbers and they were able to harass them until evening. While others slept, Teancum and his servant, crept into the tent of Amalickiah and "put a javelin to his heart; and...did cause the death of the king immediately that he did not awake his servants" (Alma 51:34).

It is when we, like Teancum, are tired and yet we reach deep into our souls for strength in order to fulfill our duty. Teancum acted in order to slay a dreaded enemy. We too, may also be required to make extra effort in order to defeat our unseen enemy. We do this by resisting temptation; by removing ourselves from a polluted environment; or simply by getting up and going to Church. Teancum's enemy could be seen; often ours cannot.

Spiritual Lesson--Chapter 51: John Bytheway

"The Kingmen nearly destroyed the Nephite society from within, while the Nephite armies were trying to protect the Nephites from the enemy without. Similarly, enemies of the Church from the outside may inflict a few blows, but we must beware of pride from within--of taking and giving offense, of gossiping and backbiting. I suspect that more people become less active from what happens within their own congregations than from attack from outside the Church. The spirit of love, unity, forgiveness, and acceptance is our best protection from self-destruction."

[\(www.ldsmag.com/article/1-11211/\)](http://www.ldsmag.com/article/1-11211/).

## Alma 52

This chapter begins with the Lamanites forces awaking to learn that Amalickiah, their king and military leader is dead and the Nephites warriors are again prepared to give them battle. It is time for them to retreat to the recently conquered Nephite city of Mulek. Mulek, and other previously Nephite cities the Lamanites had occupied were so well fortified against attack, that "also seeing the enormity of their number, Teancum thought it was not expedient that he should attempt to attack them in their forts [or Nephite cities]" (Alma 52:5).

Teancum was limited in options for the cities were well fortified and were fruitless unless he had more men.

Alma 52:8

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

Moroni later used these prisoners to exchange for Nephites the Lamanites had taken as prisoners.

Moroni was unable to come to aid Teancum as the Lamanites, now under the direction of Ammoron, who was a brother of Amalickiah, were now advancing on the borders of the west sea. Finally, Moroni and his forces were able to be successful in their battle and to come to the aid of Teancum.

Alma 52:19, 21

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

**21 And it came to pass that Moroni, having no hopes of meeting them upon fair grounds, therefore, he resolved**

**upon a plan that he might decoy the Lamanites out of their strongholds.**

It is easy to assume that Moroni and his chief captains, as a result of their military knowledge, came up with this plan on their own. I would offer another explanation. After the Nephite military leaders had put forth the necessary effort to devise a plan, the Lord then intervened and revealed this ingenious, yet simple plan to them. I wonder how many times in our lives, when we too have put forth the effort to arrive at a solution to a problem we are experiencing, an answer then comes to our mind. If we are not spiritually attentive, we may not recognize yet another tender mercy of Our Father in Heaven to us. We may even falsely conclude that we solved the problem as a result of our own intellect. Others know better. I believe Moroni knew the source of their answer.

The plan was that Teancum with a small force of men would come near by the city of Mulek and attempt to draw out the forces of the Lamanites to pursue them due to their small number. At night, Moroni and his men would come near the city and remain in hiding until the forces of the Lamanites were pursuing Teancum and his men. Once he had secured the city, he would then come at the rear of the Lamanites. In this manner, he would block their retreat to Mulek. Teancum would continue ahead of the Lamanites until they reached the city Bountiful where they would be reinforced by Lehi and his fresh, but small army. The plan was put in place. (see Alma 52:22-27.)

Alma 52:28-29

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

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

As the battle ensued, Jacob, the leader of the Lamanites, was unwilling to surrender their weapons of war, and "was determined to slay them and cut his way through to the city of Mulek. But behold, Moroni and his men were more

powerful; therefore, they did not given way before the Lamanites" (Alma 52:34).

Alma 52:35

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

Seeing the death of their enemy and their confusion, Moroni offered them the opportunity to surrender rather than be killed.

Alma 52:38-40

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

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

**40 And now the number of prisoners who were taken exceeded more than the number of those who had been slain, yea, more that those who had been slain on both sides.**

While we are not told the total number of prisoners, it can be assumed that it was a large number in order to exceed the number killed on both sides!

The plan, inspired of the Lord, worked perfectly. The Lamanites were drawn out of the city and once they had pursued Teancum and his small forces, Moroni captured the city and it returned back into Nephite hands. His forces then followed the advancing Lamanites and thereby blocked the retreat of the Lamanites when Teancum's forces were joined with the fresh army of Lehi. In this manner the Lamanites were defeated.

It takes courage and inspiration in order to win on the battlefield. It also takes courage and inspiration in order to defeat the evil one and his forces on a daily basis. We

are at war with the ever increasing forces of the evil one. While our numbers may be few, we have the strength of more than one hundred for we have the guidance and blessing of our leader who is Jesus Christ. If we are valiant and true to the faith, we will, like Moroni, be victorious.

Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 52: John Bytheway

"When the Lamanites realized they'd been lured away, they turned to rush back to the city of Mulek only to see Moroni's army behind them. They thought they wanted something, they were enticed out of their stronghold, and they lost everything.

"The spiritual lesson is powerful. Don't think you can sin now and repent later, or leave the church now and come back later. Don't be decoyed or lured out of your stronghold. King David left his stronghold. At first he only inquired after Bathsheba, but he was slowly lured further and further away from his stronghold until he lost everything. Some 'small' temptations may actually be Satan's 'stratagems' calculated to lead you slowly away from your place of safety. You may think, 'I can handle this temptation, and I'll be right back' but Alma 52 teaches, 'Don't leave your stronghold, because you may never get back.'" ([www.lds.org/magazine/article/1-11211/](http://www.lds.org/magazine/article/1-11211/)).

## **VI. Conclusions**

As we viewed these chapters from the perspective of our also being confronted daily by the forces of evil, our view of the importance of these chapters greatly increased. We see more clearly the dramatic contrast between evil as exemplified by the Nephite dissenter, Amalickiah, and goodness and praiseworthy as seen in the actions of Captain Moroni.

In Alma, Chapters 43–44, we learned Moroni was able to defeat the forces of evil, by seeking the counsel of the Prophet Alma. (see Alma 43:23.) If we also will follow the counsel of the Prophet and the Apostles, we will also be able to defeat evil. The question is not will we be tempted by evil, but how tall will we stand when we are.

Moroni had a choice of being a "man of Blood" or a "man of Peace." We also have a choice in our lives whether we will be revengeful and unforgiving or merciful and forgiving.

In Alma, Chapters 45–46, we learned of a meeting that Alma had with his son, Helaman, prior to his translation. At their meeting, he prophesied to Helaman of the eventual destruction of the Nephite nation. Helaman was directed not to write it until after it had occurred. While the destruction of the nation would come, it was important for Helaman and for each of us not to delay putting our lives in order. Righteousness of the people is a strong factor in determining the outcome of the war.

It is sad to learn that it was the dissension by those in the Church that contributed to the loss of many lives during the war with the Lamanites. It is tragic that we are so quick to do iniquity. (see Alma 46:8.)

As Captain Moroni began to prepare the people for battle, he raised the "Title of Liberty" (Alma 46:12-13). He asked his soldiers to make a covenant with God to be obedient to the commandments or to forfeit their lives. (see Alma 46:22.) Through teaching the word of God to the people by Helaman and the military efforts of Moroni, peace was established.

In Alma, Chapters 47–48, the attributes of Amalickiah and Captain Moroni are contrasted. We need to be aware of Satan's attributes so that we may recognize them in his servants. We must also seek to obtain the qualities of character as seen in Captain Moroni, so that we may know how to defeat the unseen enemy that we face everyday.

In Alma, Chapters 49–52, the Lamanites come to battle against the Nephites. The first city they attack is Ammonihah. Previously they had destroyed the city in one day. (see Alma 16:9-11.) It was now fortified spiritually as well as physically. The Lamanites did not attack. They went to the city of Noah and thought it was even more fortified, they attacked and suffered a great loss of men. Upon reporting to Amalickiah, he was extremely angry and cursed both God and Moroni. The Nephites praised God for his deliverance.

Even though they had defeated the Lamanites, Moroni continued his preparation to defend his people. Just as we must be faithful during times of adversity, we must also learn to be faithful during times of prosperity.

In Alma, Chapter 51, dissention arose among the people as those of nobility and wealth, wanted to change the form of government and have a king. They became known as the king-men. Those who oppose their actions were called the freemen. By the voice of the people, the petition of the king-men was defeated. They then decided not to fight against the Lamanites. While Moroni was addressing their dissension, the Lamanites under Amalickiah attacked the city of Mulek and others and were able to gain control over the cities. It is often when we are distracted that Satan chooses to attack us. We must ever be vigilant.

In Alma, Chapter 52, an ingenious plan was devised to lure the Lamanites away from the city of Mulek and while they were in pursuit of a small group of Nephites, Moroni would retake the city and then would follow the pursuing Lamanites. As the small group of Nephites reached the city of Bountiful, they were joined by the soldiers of Lehi and his men. The Lamanites weary and tired, now sought to return to their city, only to be confronted by Moroni and his men. Finally, the battle was over and a large number of the Lamanites were taken prisoners. It takes courage and inspiration to win on the battlefield. It also takes courage and inspiration to defeat Satan and his servants in our daily lives. If we are valiant and true to the faith, we will be victorious.

How blessed we are to have these chapters for they were written for us so we would know how to defeat the forces of evil that attack us today.

In our next lesson [BM#32], we will address the second part of the "war chapters." We will continue to enhance our understanding of Satan's techniques and practices so we may be victorious in our battle against evil.