

**BM#32 "They Did Obey...Every Word of Command with Exactness"  
Alma 53-63**

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**I. Introduction**

This lesson is an extension of the prior lesson [BM#31]. Our focus is upon the remaining "War Chapters." Many readers skip these chapters feeling that there is little to be gained from their reading. In lesson 31, and the current lesson, the position taken is that these chapters symbolically represent the continuing battle between good and evil that began initially in the pre-existence and continues on the earth today. How we survive this battle and along with our loved ones emerge victorious, is the key to our salvation.

As we address these remaining chapters, our focus will continue to be on highlighting their challenges and noting how they also apply to our lives as we seek the strength we need to triumph over the forces of evil. While their enemy was visible, ours often is not, but it is no less a real threat to our survival.

As I did in BM#31, I will continue to draw upon the insight of John Bytheway. In 2004, he 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 magazine: Meridian Magazine. It is titled, **Lesson 31, "Firm in the Faith of Christ," Alma 23-62**. 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." I will continue the practice, begun in BM#31, of including these summaries at the end of each of the remaining chapters.

## Outline of Alma 54-63

- "Alma 53-54 Dissensions among the Nephites give rise to Lamanite victories. Helaman takes command of the two thousand stripling sons of the people of Ammon. [Letters regarding the exchange of prisoners is sent between Ammoron and Moroni].
- "Alma 55-56 Moroni refuses to exchange prisoners. Nephite Prisoners [are freed.] The city of Gid is taken without bloodshed...Helaman sends an epistle to Moroni recounting the state of the war with the Lamanites...Helaman's two thousand sons fight with miraculous power and none are slain.
- "Alma 57-58 Helaman[']s...Ammonite striplings fight valiantly...all are wounded, but none are slain...Helaman, Gid, and Teomner take the city of Manti by...stratagem...The sons of the people of Ammon are preserved as they stand fast in defense of their liberty and faith.
- "Alma 59-61 Moroni asks Pahoran to strengthen the forces of Helaman. The Lamanites take the city of Nephihah. Moroni is angry with the government...Moroni complains to Pahoran of the government's neglect of the armies. The Lord suffers the righteous to be slain...Moroni threatens to fight against the government unless help is supplied to his armies...Pahoran tells Moroni of the insurrection and rebellion against the government...Pahoran asks for military aid against the rebels.
- "Alma 62 Moroni marches to the aid of Pahoran in the land of Gideon...Teancum slays Ammoron and is in turn slain. The Lamanites are driven from the land, and peace is established. Helaman returns to the ministry and builds up the church.
- "Alma 63 Shiblon and later Helaman II take possession of the sacred records. Many Nephites travel to the land northward. Hagoth builds ships,

which sail forth in the west sea. Moronihah defeats the Lamanites in battle." (**Chapter Headnotes**. *The Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, 342-366).

## II. Alma 53--54

At the end of Chapter 52, we learned that the number of prisoners Nephites had taken were greater "than the number of those who had been slain, yea, more than those who had been slain on both sides" (Alma 52:40). What was Moroni to do with all these prisoners? He will put them to work.

Alma 53:3, 5

**3 And it came to pass that after the Lamanites had finished burying their dead and also the dead of the Nephites, they were marched back into the land of Bountiful; and Teancum, by the orders of Moroni, caused that they should commence laboring in digging a ditch around about the land, or the city, Bountiful.**

**5 And this city [Bountiful] became an exceeding stronghold ever after; and in this city they did guard the prisoners of the Lamanites; yea, even within a wall which they had caused them to build with their own hands. Now Moroni was compelled to cause the Lamanites to labor, because it was easy to guard them while at their labor; and he desired all his forces when he should make an attack upon the Lamanites.**

It was not Moroni's desire to have prisoners and he gave them an opportunity to give up the battle, and have their lives preserved if they would make an oath not to take up the sword against the Nephites. However, many refused. It was, therefore, necessary to care for them. They were easier to guard if they engaged in a project and Moroni understood the importance of fortifying the cities.

Alma 54:7 [underline added]

**7 And it came to pass that he [Moroni] did no more attempt a battle with the Lamanites in that year, but he did employ his men in preparing for war, yea, and in making fortifications to guard against the Lamanites, yea, and also delivering their women and**

**their children from famine and affliction, and providing food for their armies.**

David E. Sorensen states,

"Resisting temptations of today's electronic media is not easy...trouble is [often] just a few mouse clicks away. To avoid...temptations, be like Captain Moroni of old; [He] set up "fortifications" to strengthen places of weaknesses. Instead of building walls of 'timbers and earth' to protect a vulnerable city, [we must] build 'fortifications' (Alma 53:4,7), in the form of personal ground rules to protect [ourselves]...[President Hinckley] teaches that if we decide now not to watch inappropriate media but instead to walk away, 'the challenge is behind us' ("You Can't Pet A Rattlesnake," in *Ensign*, May 2001, 41-42).

Alma 53:8-9

**8 ...the Lamanites...in the absence of Moroni on account of some intrigue amongst the Nephites, which caused dissensions amongst them, [the Lamanites] had gained some ground over the Nephites, yea, insomuch that they had obtained possession of a number of their cities in that part of the land.**

**9 And thus because of iniquity amongst themselves, yea, because of dissensions and intrigue among themselves they were placed in the most dangerous circumstances.**

K. Douglas Bassett states,

"Note that Mormon [in his abridgment] views the conflict between the Nephites and Lamanites from a spiritual context. There is no mention here of the superior military strength of the Lamanites as a reason for their advantage in battle, but it comes from the dissensions among the Nephites. This message is consistent throughout the Book of Mormon--the Lord defended the Nephites (or his covenant people) when they were righteous.

"In the early pages of the Book of Mormon, the Lord promises Nephi that the Lamanites 'shall have no power over thy seed except they shall rebel against me also' (1 Nephi 2:23)...Hugh Nibley has observed: "No matter how wicked and ferocious and depraved the Lamanites might be (and they were all that!), no matter by how much they outnumbered the

Nephites...they were not the Nephites problem. they were merely kept there to remind the Nephites of their real problem which was to walk uprightly before the Lord.' (Since Cumorah, 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 Editon, 1988. 339-340).\" (Nephi's Freedom Thesis and the Sons of Helaman,\" 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, 293).

Since their conversion, the people of Ammon had been protected by the Nephites. They had made an oath not to take up their swords again and had buried them in the earth. (see Alma 24:16-19.)

Alma 53:13-14

**13 But it came to pass that when they saw the danger, and the many afflictions and tribulations which the Nephites bore for them, they were moved with compassion and were desirous to take up arms in the defence of their country.**

**14 But behold, as they were about to take their weapons of war, they were overpowered by the persuasions of Helaman and his brethren, for they were about to break the oath which they had made.**

Helaman prevailed upon the people of Ammon not to take up arms in violation of their oath to assist the Nephites in their war with the Lamanites. They agreed not to break the oath, but instead offered their sons to serve in the war. The sons had not entered into the oath as had their parents.

Alma 53:18-21

**18 Now behold, there were two thousand of these young man, who...took their weapons of war to defend their country.**

**19 And now behold, as they never had hitherto been a disadvantage to the Nephites, they became now at this period of time also a great support; for they took their weapons of war, and they would that Helaman, [son of Alma] should be their leader.**

**20 And they were all young men, and they were exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all--they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted.**

**21 Yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him.**

Ezra Taft Benson states,

[Speaking to the gathered youth of the Church], "Never before on the face of this earth have the forces of evil and the forces of good been so well organized...While our generation will be comparable in wickedness to the days of Noah, when the Lord cleansed the earth by flood, there is a major difference this time: God has saved for the final inning some of His stronger and most valiant children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly...You are the generation that must be prepared to meet your God...You are a royal generation. Rise up, O youth of Zion. You hardly realize the great potential that lies within you." (Address to Seminary and Institute students, Anaheim, California, Convention Arena, February 8, 1987, in *Ensign*, April 1987, 73).

Alma 53:22

**22 And now it came to pass that Helaman did march at the head of the two thousand stripling [young] soldiers,...**

Jerrie W. Hurd states,

"These sons of the Ammonites made up an unlikely army. They were inexperienced young men reared by parents whose pacifism was their most sacred commitment. Helaman may have had doubts about their fighting ability, but he never doubted their character" (*Our Sisters in the Latter-Day Scriptures*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987, 34-35).

After seeing the two thousand young men perform in battle, Helaman referred to them as "my two thousand sons, (for they are worthy to be called sons" (Alma 56:10). He was impressed with their courage under fire. In the face of battle, they rose to the occasion just as each of us must also do.

Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 53: John Bytheway

"The stripling warriors were men who were 'true at all time in whatsoever thing they were entrusted' (verse 20). It's one thing to know the Church is true. It's another to be true to what you know. It's one thing to wear a CTR ring. It's another to actually choose the right. To know the Church is true is to be *convinced*. to be true to what you know is to be converted." ([www.lds.org/article-1-11211/](http://www.lds.org/article-1-11211/)).

**Alma 54**

At this time, "Ammoron sent unto Moroni desiring that he would exchange prisoners" (Alma 54:1). Moroni response was positive.

Alma 54:2-3

**2 And it came to pass that Moroni felt to rejoice exceedingly at this request, for he desired the provisions which were imparted for the support of the Lamanite prisoners for the support of his own people; and he also desired his own people for the strengthening of his army.**

**3 Now the Lamanites had taken many women and children, and there was not a woman nor a child among all the prisoners whom Moroni, or the prisoners whom Moroni had taken; therefore Moroni resolved upon a stratagem to obtain as many prisoners of the Nephites from the Lamanites as it were possible.**

Moroni's letter to Ammoron overflows with his anger toward him for his actions and those of his brother, Amalickah. "I have written unto you...concerning this war which you have waged...or rather which thy brother hath waged...which you are still determined to carry on after his death...[I] tell you concerning the justice of God, and the sword of his almighty wrath, which doth hang over you except ye repent and withdraw your armies...I would tell you concerning the awful hell that awaits to receive such murderers as thou and thy brother have been...But as you have once rejected these things...so I may expect you will do it again...we are prepared to receive you...as the Lord liveth, our armies shall come upon you except ye withdraw, and ye shall soon be visited with death,...behold, it supposeth me that I talk to you concerning these things in vain; or it supposeth me

that thou art a child of hell; I will close my epistle by telling you that I will not exchange prisoners, save it be on condition that ye will deliver up a man and his wife and his children, for one prisoner; if this be the case that ye will do it, I will exchange...I am in my anger, and also my people; ye have sought to murder us, and we have only sought to defend ourselves" (Alma 54:5-11, 13).

With these words, Moroni concludes his response to Ammoron.

Richard Dilworth Rust states,

"Although at first Moroni rejoices at the request for an exchange, as he gets into the letter his pent-up anger flows forth. This is anger about years of conflict led by Ammoron's brother, the cunning and duplicitous Amalickiah; on a larger scale, it is a response to centuries of Lamanite-Nephite conflict." (*Feasting On The Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City, and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1997, 150).

The following is Ammoron response to Moroni's letter.

"I am Ammoron, the king of the Lamanites; I am the brother of Amalickah whom ye have murdered. Behold, I will avenge his blood upon you,...yea, and I will come upon you with my armies for I fear not your threatenings...For behold, your fathers did wrong their brethren, insomuch that they did rob them of their right to the government when it rightly belonged to them...if ye will lay down your arms, and subject yourselves to be governed by those to whom the government doth rightly belong...[then] there shall be...war no more...You have breathed out many threatenings against me and my people; but behold, we fear not your threatenings. Nevertheless, I will grant to exchange prisoners according to your request...As concerning that God whom ye say we have rejected, behold, we know not such a being; neither do ye; ...And if it so be that there is a devil and a hell, behold will he not send you there to dwell with my brother...But behold, these things matter not...behold, this war hath been waged to avenge their wrongs, and to maintain and to obtain their rights to the government" (Alma 54:16-22, 24).

Richard Dilworth Rust states,

"In cosmic terms, these letters between Moroni and Ammoron have to do less with the exchange of prisoners than with the irreconcilable conflict between the powers of God and Satan, with Moroni appearing as the Christian champion." (*Feasting On The Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City, and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1997, 150).

One of the lessons for us to learn is that you cannot negotiate with Satan or his servants. As David Sorensen was told by his father, "David, my boy, you can't pet a rattlesnake!" ("You Can't Pet A Rattlesnake," in *Ensign*, May 2001, 41).

Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 54: John Bytheway

"The exchange of letters between Moroni and Ammoron is fascinating reading. No punches are pulled. It's interesting to note that Moroni tells Ammoron not only to withdraw, but to 'repent and withdraw' (Verse 6). Moroni, always a witness of Christ, lets Ammoron know that he should fear the wrath of an eternal God much more than the wrath of a mortal general." ([www.lds.org/magazine/article-1-11211/](http://www.lds.org/magazine/article-1-11211/)).

### III. Alma 55--56

Alma 55:1-2

**1 Now it came to pass that when Moroni had received this epistle he was more angry, because he knew that Ammoron had a perfect knowledge of his fraud; yea, he knew that Ammoron knew that it was not a just cause that had caused him to wage a war against the people of Nephi.**

**2 And he said: Behold, I will not exchange prisoners with Ammoron save his will withdraw...for I will not grant...that he shall have any more power than what he hath got.**

The problem with men fighting the on-going war was still a problem. Moroni devised a plan whereby he may gain the release of the prisoners Ammoron was holding. He knew the location of the city of Gid where the Nephites were being held prisoner. He located a Lamanite who is faithful to the Nephites to serve as the spokesman. The man was

located, "was one of the servants of the king who was murdered by Amalickah" (Alma 55:5). He, with others, would go to the city at night and tell the guards, "we have escaped from the Nephites and they sleep; and behold we have taken with wine and brought it with us" (Alma 55:8). Once the guards have drunk the wine and are in a drunken stupor, they will then arm the prisoners within. In the morning, the guards will be "surrounded by the Nephites without, and their prisoners were armed within" (Alma 55:22). The plan was a success and the prisoners, including women and children, were liberated. (see Alma 55:3-23).

Alma 55:24

**24 Now behold, this was the desire of Moroni. He took them [Lamanites as] prisoners of war, and took possession of the city, and caused that all the prisoners should be liberated, who were Nephites, and they did join the army of Moroni, and were a great strength to his army.**

Before departing with the Lamanite prisoners to the stronghold at Bountiful, Moroni engaged the prisoners to "labor in strengthening the fortifications round about the city Gid" (Alma 55:25).

Alma 55:27-28

**27 And it came to pass that they did, notwithstanding all the intrigues of the Lamanites, keep and protect all the prisoners whom they had taken, and also maintain all the ground and the advantage which they had retaken.**

**28 And it came to pass that the Nephites began again to be victorious, and to reclaim their rights and their privileges.**

It is important for us to remember that the success of the military campaigns led by Moroni, were dependent upon the righteousness of the people. God will not sustain victories on behalf of his children unless they are obedient to his commandments. It is not a question of the most soldiers or the greater supply of weapons. It is the people who are the most righteous, whose cause is just and honorable, meaning they are defending themselves rather than seeking to gain more power or domination.

Alma 55:30-32

**30 And many times did they [Lamanites] attempt to administer of their wine to the Nephites, that they might destroy them with poison or with drunkenness. 31 But behold, the Nephites were not slow to remember the Lord their God in this their time of affliction. They could not be taken in their snares; yea, they would not partake of their wine, save they had first given it to some of the Lamanites prisoners. 32 And they were thus cautious that no poison should be administered among them; for it their wine would poison a Lamanite it would also poison a Nephite; and thus they did try all their liquors.**

We learn that the Nephites were "not slow to remember the Lord their God in this their time of affliction" (Alma 55:31). The challenge for the Nephites, and for us, is not to be slow in remembering the Lord during our times afflictions, but to remember Him at all times. The importance of our remembering Him at all times is the promise we make each Sunday as we partake of His Sacrament. As we remember Him, and keep his commandments, we will have his Spirit to be with us. (see Moroni 4:3.) If we do not, then we have no promise, and neither did the Nephites.

Bryan Richards states,

"Some have assumed that previous dispensations lived the Word of Wisdom as we live it today. This was not the case. Except for priests in the temple and the order of the Nazarites (Lev. 10:9; Judges 13:4), the consumption of wine or strong drink was not expressly forbidden in any Book of Mormon or Bible passages. Rather, the excessive use of alcohol is discouraged. As Paul wrote, "be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess" (Eph 5:18). During his ministry, the Savior drank wine with the spiritually infirmed. For this, he was accused of being a wine-bibber (Matt. 11:19).

"Nowhere is this more evident than in the story in which Nephite wine was given to Lamanites guards with the express intent of making them drunk. The Nephites had alcoholic wine, they drank alcoholic wine, and they used it for their sacrament (3 Ne. 18:3-8). They had no problem drinking liquors made by the Lamanites, as long as the Lamanites drank first." ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-55](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-55)).

## Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 55: John Bytheway

"When the offers for a prisoner exchange fail, Moroni devises another way to win the release of the Nephite prisoners of war.

"He delivers wine to the Lamanites in exchange of guarding the prisoners, who eventually become drunk and fall asleep. Moroni could have killed all the guards at this point, but instead, he arms the Nephite prisoners of war, and when the hungover guards awaken, they quickly surrender.

"Later, the Lamanites tried the same trick on the Nephites, delivering not only wine, but wine laced with poison [Don't forget you can't pet a rattlesnake—David Sorensen]. However, the Nephites 'were not slow to remember the Lord their God' and they were 'cautious that no poison should be administered among them' (verses 31,32).

Again, Satan wants to poison us 'by degrees.' Much of the modern media is exactly that kind of poison. But if we are not slow to remember God, we will be cautious that no poison is administered among us, whether it comes in bottles, or through the airwaves, the cable, or the modem." ([www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/](http://www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/)).

### **Alma 56**

Chapter 56, begins with a letter from Helaman to Moroni regarding the performance of the two thousand young men who are under his direction. He begins by stating that these young men "were descendants of Laman, who was the oldest son of our father Lehi;" (Alma 56:3). This serves to illustrate that regardless of your heritage, you are the one who controls your destiny by the daily decisions you make. It does not matter if your ancestor was Nephi or his brother, Laman.

Alma 56:10

**10 And I did join my two thousand sons, (for they are worthy to be called sons) to the army of Antipus, in which strength Antipus did rejoice exceeding; for behold, his army had been reduced by the Lamanites because their forces had slain a vast number of our men, for which cause we have to mourn.**

Despite their lack of prior military experience, Antipus was grateful to have them as part of his army for he had suffered great losses of men. He could not have known at this time, the great benefit they would be to the success of the war effort.

Alma 56:15-17

**15 ...I found Antipus and his men toiling with their might to fortify the city [of Judea].  
16 Yea, and they were depressed in body as well as in spirit, for they had fought valiantly by day and toiled by night to maintain their cities; and thus they had suffered great afflictions of every kind.  
17 And now they were determined to conquer in this place or die; therefore you may well suppose that this little force which I brought with me, yea, those sons of mine, gave them great hope and much joy.**

We need to be remember that righteousness does not assure the individual that there will be an absence of toil and suffering. What is does assure for the individual if they have endeavored to keep the covenants they have made, given service to others, and continued to give their all toward building the kingdom of God on earth, they will one day be received with joy and happiness by Our Father in Heaven.

Alma 56:18-19

**18 And now it came to pass that when the Lamanites saw that Antipus had received a greater strength to his army, they were compelled by the order of Ammoron to not come against the city of Judea, or against us, to battle.  
19 And thus were we favored of the Lord; for had they come upon us in this our weakness they might have perhaps destroyed our little army; but thus were we preserved.**

Helaman is able to recognize the tender mercies of the Lord toward him and his men as they occurred in their lives. Others, having not sought the spirit, do not recognize the hand of the Lord in their lives. They tend to attribute such action to "luck" or "good karma."

As time passed, the Nephites received not only supplies provided by the "fathers of those my two thousand sons"

(Alma 56:27), but also "they were sent two thousand men...from the land of Zarahemla" (Alma 56:28). With their increased forces and provisions, they developed a plan whereby they might draw out the forces of the Lamanites, for they were too well fortified to attack them directly.

The plan was that Helaman and his "little sons [would go] to a neighboring city, as if [they] were carrying provisions to a neighboring city" (Alma 56:30). Antipus would leave part of his army to guard the city of Judea and the rest would follow their forces. The city was Antiparah, which contained "the strongest arm of the Lamanites, yea, the most numerous" (Alma 56:34). Once they saw us they began to pursue us, "And thus we did lead away the most powerful army of the Lamanites" (Alma 56:36). As they pursued Helaman and his sons, the Lamanites saw the forces of Antipus behind them, "but pursued their march in a straight course after us" (Alma 56:37). As night came, they slept and then upon daylight did continue their march, Helaman states.

Alma 56:39

**39 And it came to pass that before dawn of the morning, behold, the Lamanites were pursuing us. Now we were not sufficiently strong to contend with them; yea, I would not suffer that my little sons should fall into their hands; therefore we did continue our march, and took our march into the wilderness.**

**40 Now [the Lamanites] durst not turn to the right nor to the left lest they should be surrounded; neither would I turn to the right nor to the left lest they should overtake me, and we could not stand against them, but be slain, and [the Lamanites] would make their escape; and thus we did flee all that day into the wilderness, even until it was dark.**

When the Lamanites did not continue to pursue them, they stopped and explored their circumstances. They may have halted so that if we returned they would catch us or they may have stopped in order to engage Antipus in battle. Helaman asked his young sons if they would go against the Lamanites in battle? They responded:

Alma 56:46-48

46 ...Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth; we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone; therefore let us go, lest they should overpower the army of Antipus.

47 Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.

48 And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it.

They returned to find Antipus and his forces in a great battle with the Lamanite army. Antipus had been killed and his forces were confused and began to lose ground to the Lamanites. When they saw Helaman and his sons, they did rally. However, the whole army of the Lamanites stopped pursuing Antipus forces and turned upon Helaman and his sons. As the Lamanites turn upon Helaman and his sons, then Antipus forces attacked them from the rear.

Bryan Richards states,

"The antithesis of faith is doubt. The power of heaven cannot be wielded in the mind of the wavering. Peter walked on water until the winds kicked up and made him doubt (Matt 14:25-31). Joseph Smith's successful boyhood prayer only opened the heavens because he asked in faith, nothing wavering (James 1:6-7). If we expect to receive anything from the Lord, we must be as the stripling warriors who, although they had plenty of reasons to doubt their own ability, instead they cleared their minds of negative thoughts. They had purged any intimation of inadequacy. They had swept away the smallest suspicion. The strength of their faith could be measured by the absence of doubt—a trait learned by example, 'for they did not doubt [their] mothers knew it (v.48).

[www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-56](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-56)).

Alma 56:54

54 And now it came to pass that we, the people of Nephi, the people of Antipus, and I with my two thousand, did surround the Lamanites, and did slay them; yea, insomuch that they were compelled to

**deliver up their weapons of war and also themselves as prisoners of war.**

Helaman now numbers his men and learns that "to my great joy, there had not one soul of them fallen to the earth; yea, and they had fought with the strength of God; yea, never were men known to have fought with such miraculous strength; and with such mighty power did they fall upon the Lamanites, that they did frighten them; and for this cause did the Lamanites deliver themselves up as prisoners of war" (Alma 56:56).

Spiritual Lesson--Chapter 56: John Bytheway

"Although Sunday school teachers, young men and young women advisors, seminary teachers and others assist young people in developing their gospel knowledge, the stripling warriors gave full credit to perhaps the most powerful, far-reaching teachers in the universe--mothers. Because they are true to what their mothers taught them, they had nothing to fear, including death. In Helaman's letter to Moroni, Helaman declares, 'Now they had never fought, yet they did not fear death.'" Contrast this with one of the last battles in the Book of Mormon where the wicked Nephites see the Lamanites coming and are filled with 'that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked" (Mormon 6:7). The stripling warriors teach us that we need not fear anything--not even death, when our life is built on this gospel of Jesus Christ."  
([www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/](http://www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/)).

#### **IV. Alma 57--58**

Alma 57:1-2

**1 And now it came to pass that I received an epistle from Ammoron, the king, stating that if I would deliver up those prisoners of war whom we had taken that he would deliver up the city of Antiparah unto us.**

**2 But I sent an epistle unto the king, that we were sure our forces were sufficient to take the city of Antiparah by our force; and by delivering up the prisoners for that city we should suppose ourselves unwise, and that we would only deliver up our prisoners on exchange.**

It appears that the letter from Ammoron was directed to Moroni as he requested to exchange the city of Antiparah for the prisoners he held. Moroni refused his offer, not only because he would only exchange prisoners for prisoners, but he believed that he could reclaim the city through his forces. Ammoron decline to exchange prisoners, but shortly thereafter the people themselves in Antiparah abandoned the city, and it returned to Nephite hands.

Following the Nephites receiving supplies and additional men, six thousand from the land of Zarahemla and an additional sixty of the sons of the Ammonites to join his band. With additional men and supplies, the decision was made to take back the Lamanite occupied city of Cumeni. The strategy was to surround the city and wait until provisions were delivered. It was necessary that they prevent anyone from breaking through at night. (see Alma 57:6-8.)

Alma 57:9

**9 And it came to pass that we did camp round about the city for many nights; but we did sleep upon our swords, and keep guards, that the Lamanites could not come upon us by night and slay us, which they attempted many times; but as many times as they attempted this their blood was spilt.**

They would then capture the provisions, with the understanding that after a period of time, the Lamanites would surrender the city. (see Alma 57:10.)

Alma 57:12

**12 And it came to pass that not many days had passed away before the Lamanites began to lose all hopes of succor; therefore they yielded up the city unto our hands; and thus we had accomplished our designs in obtaining the city of Cumeni.**

The Nephites understood that if they were able to prevent their soldiers from breaking through the forces surrounding the city and then could prevent the necessary provisions from reaching the soldiers in the city, over time they would lose the ability along with their will to fight. Their plan was successful.

The issue of dealing with a large number of prisoners continued to be an issue for the Nephites. The decision was made to transport them to the land of Zarahemla, even though this weakened the Nephite forces. (see Alma 57:13-16.) It was after the soldiers had departed with the prisoners that the Lamanites engaged them in battle. Within a brief period of time the soldiers "returned in season to save us from falling into their [Lamanite] hands. For behold, Ammoron had sent to their support a new supply of provisions and also a numerous army of men" (Alma 57:17).

Helaman shares the performance of his small band of men in the face of battle.

Alma 57:19-21

**19 But behold, my little band of two thousand and sixty fought most desperately; yea, they were firm before the Lamanites, and did administer death unto all those who opposed them.**

**20 And as the remainder of our army were about to give way before the Lamanites, behold, those two thousand and sixty were firm and undaunted.**

**21 Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them; and I did remember the words which they said unto me that their mothers had taught them.**

K. Douglas Bassett states,

"The stripling warriors must have been aware that their obedience to their leaders was an extension of their obedience to their God. This was not a new concept to the Nephites. (See 1 Nephi 3:5-7; Mosiah 2:30-31; Alma 45:2-8.) Their obedience to Helaman's command was more than swift, it was exact. A celestial strategy was involved, even in that mortal battlefield. They had been promised that if they, 'did not doubt, that they should be preserved by his [God's] marvelous power' (Alma 57:26). Would it be possible for them to support their God without supporting their leaders? This is the ultimate test of obedience; to show one's allegiance to a perfect and infallible God by how we obey those less than perfect who are called to lead us."

("Nephi's Freedom Thesis and the Sons of Helaman," 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, 299, Underline added).

Alma 57:22-23

22 And now behold, it was these my sons, and those men who had been selected to convey the prisoners, to whom we owe this great victory; for it was they who did beat the Lamanites; therefore they were driven back to the city of Manti.

23 And we retained our city Cumeni, and were not all destroyed by the sword; nevertheless, we had suffered great loss.

The young men stood firm in the face of battle. They did not surrender ground even when the opposition was great. Despite the great loss the army experienced, they held their city and drove back the enemy. Helaman attended to his band of young men who had been wounded.

Alma 57:25-27

25 And it came to pass that there were two hundred, out of my two thousand and sixty, who had fainted because of the loss of blood; nevertheless, according to goodness of God, and to our great astonishment, and also the joy of our whole army, there was not one soul of them who did perish; yea, and neither was there one soul among them who had not received many wounds.

26 And now, their preservation was astonishing to our whole army, yea, that they should be spared while there was a thousand of our brethren who were slain. And we do justly ascribe it to the miraculous power of God, because of their exceeding faith in that which they had been taught to believe—that there was a just God, and whosoever did not doubt, that they should be preserved by his marvelous power.

27 Now this was the faith of these of whom I have spoken; they are young, and their minds are firm, and they do put their trust in God continually.

George Albert Smith states,

"I think that is one of the greatest tributes that has ever been paid to motherhood—that in circumstances such as they were experiencing, when they were surrounded by enemies,

they could train their children to have that faith in God that would carry them through and would bring them home with losing their lives." (*Conference Report*, April 1943, 89-90).

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"[You are] out there as the sons of Helaman in a world that is full of destructive influences...But if you put your trust in the Almighty and follow the teachings of this Church and cling to it notwithstanding your wounds, you will be preserved and blessed and magnified and made happy." (*LDS Church News*, 09/21/96).

It is important for us to understand that young or old can receive God's protection in the daily battle which they face, if they will keep the commandments with exactness and obey their inspired leaders. If we trust in God, and do not doubt, while we may be wounded, we will survive the battle.

Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 57: John Bytheway

"President Ezra Taft Benson once called the youth of the Church 'today's sons of Helaman' (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 520). That's a lot to live up to. What if we were to compare the membership of the Church with the armies of the Nephites described in this chapter? In which group would we find ourselves?: 'the remainder of our army were about to give way' or 'those two thousand and sixty were firm and undaunted'? (Alma 57:20). In the Church today, some give way to the fashions of the world, others are firm and undaunted. Some give way to the media influences of the world, others are firm and undaunted. Choose wisely to which group you want to belong, because at the end of the day, those who 'gave way' are dead, and those who are firm and undaunted were only wounded. The stripling warriors survived because they 'observed to perform every word of command with exactness' (Verse 21). That's a powerful spiritual message." ([www.lds.org/magazine/article-1-11211/](http://www.lds.org/magazine/article-1-11211/)).

### **Alma 58**

The challenges of war continued for those who were on the battlefield. It is essential that they received provisions in a timely matter as it was most difficult for a soldier to fight on an empty stomach.

Alma 58:4, 7

**4 And it came to pass that I thus did send an embassy to the governor of our land, to acquaint him concerning the affairs of our people. And it came to pass that we did wait to receive provisions and strength from the land of Zarahemla.**

**7 And it came to pass that we did wait in these difficult circumstances for the space of many months, even until we were about to perish for the want of food.**

It surely did not help moral when the Nephites saw that the Lamanites were "receiving great strength from day to day, and also many provisions;" (Alma 58:5). Finally, they did receive food and two thousand men, "and this is all the assistance which we did receive, to defend ourselves and our country from falling into the hands of our enemies, yea, to content with an enemy which was innumerable" (Alma 58:8).

Things were difficult for the Nephite soldiers, including the stripling warriors, Heleman states.

Alma 58:9

**9 And now the cause of these our embarrassments, or the cause why they did not send more strength unto us, we knew not; therefore we were grieved and also filled with fear, least by any means the judgments of God should come upon our land, to our overthrow and utter destruction.**

Whenever we feel discouraged or unable to find a way through our challenges; when life seems unfair and our faith begins to waver; when our life seems to be going from bad to worse, there is a solution. God is always there and he will hear your pleadings and according to what is best for you, He will bless you. Don't give up. Pray and then do your best. Never, never, never, give up.

Alma 58:10-12 [underline added]

**10 Therefore we did pour out our souls in prayer to God, that he would strengthen us and deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, yea, and also give us strength that we might retain our cities, and our**

lands, and our possessions, for the support of our people.

11 Yea, and it came to pass that the Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should have hope for our deliverance in him.

12 And we did take courage with our small force which we had received, and were fixed with a determination to conquer our enemies, and to maintain our lands, and our possessions, and our wives, and our children, and the cause of our liberty.

Assurance + Peace + Faith + Hope = Courage + Determination. These ingredients were put into action as the Nephites, including Helaman's young sons, prepared to win back the city of Manti. They had previously been unable to decoy the Lamanites to go after them and the city had been fortified so a direct attack would have been futile. (see Alma 58:1-2.) The Lamanites had sent out spies and had determined that they could easily defeat the small army of the Nephites so they made preparations to confront them in battle. The plan devised was for Gid and Teomner, with a small group of men, to go and hide themselves in the wilderness. Helaman and his group would then pass by the city with the hope that the Lamanites would pursue them. They would lead them by the area where Gid and Teomner were hidden with their men. Once the Lamanites had passed by, Gid and Teomner and their men would cut off any Lamanites spies. Then they would return and take the city. The plan was put into place.

The Lamanites did pursue Helaman and his small group of men. They went past the area where Gid and Teomner were hidden and "because the Lamanites did suffer their whole army, save a few guards only, to be led away into the wilderness" (Alma 58:22), Gid and Teomner, and their men, were able to take the city.

As the Lamanites continued to pursue Helaman and his small group, night fell.

Alma 58:25-26, 28

25 And behold, it was night and they did pitch their tents, for the chief captains of the Lamanites had supposed that the Nephites were weary because of their

march; and supposing that they had driven their whole army therefore they took no thought concerning the land of Manti.

26 Now it came to pass that when it was night, I [Helaman] caused that my men should not sleep, but that they should march forward by another way towards the city of Manti.

28 And thus it came to pass that by this stratagem we did take possession of the city of Manti without the shedding of blood.

After they had prayed and felt renewed by God, they did not wait for God to deliver the Lamanites into their hands. Instead, they put an inspired plan into action. They were tired from their long march, and when Helaman told them they were not going to sleep that night, they did not complain or worse, rebel. They followed his directions. Someone once said, "When you pray, pray as if everything depends on God; when you get up, act as if everything depends on you." The Nephites did both.

By not sleeping, Helaman and his small force had joined with Gid and Teomner. They were now ready to defend the fortified city of Manti against Lamanite attack.

Alma 58:29

29 And it came to pass that when the armies of the Lamanites did arrive near the city [of Manti], and saw that we were prepared to meet them, they were astonished exceedingly and struck with great fear, insomuch that they did flee into the wilderness.

Helaman continues his letter to Moroni.

Alma 58:32-33

32 But behold, our armies are small to maintain so great a number of cities and so great possessions.  
33 But behold, we trust in our God who has given us victory over those lands, insomuch that we have obtained those cities and those lands, which were our own.

You will recall that as a result of the dissension that had occurred among the Nephites, they were not able to secure

their cities when the Lamanites attacked them. (see Alma 51:22-23.) Helaman and those who served with him were able to regain the lost cities. He reported regarding the performance of the sons of the people of Ammon.

Alma 58:39-40

**39 And those sons of the people of Ammon, of whom I have so highly spoken, are with me in the city of Manti; and the Lord has supported them, yea, and kept them from falling by the sword, insomuch that even one soul had not been slain.**

**40 But behold, they have received many wounds; nevertheless they stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has made them free; and they are strict to remember the Lord their God from day to day; yea, they do observe to keep his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments continually; and their faith is strong in the prophecies concerning that which is to come.**

Howard W. Hunter states,

"Today another battle of far more serious consequences is being waged. It is a battle being fought for the souls of men. Its outcome likewise depends on the steadiness of the soldiery. The clarion call of the chieftain is heard above the fierce artillery of the archenemy, 'Stand firm! Be true!'

"We know that this is the true and living church institutionally, but am I a true and living member individually?

"The question may appear as a play on the words of the Lord when he said this is the true and living church. When I ask, 'Am I a true and living member? My question is: Am I deeply and fully dedicated to keeping the covenants I have made with the Lord? Am I totally committed to living the gospel and being a doer of the word and not a hearer only? Do I live my religion? Will I remain true? Do I stand firm against Satan's temptations? He is seeking to cause us to lose our way in a storm of derision and a tide of sophistry. We can have victory, however, by responding to that inner voice calling 'Stand firm!'" (*That We Might Have Joy*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994, 149).

Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 58: John Bytheway

"Suffering under hunger, fatigue, and feeling abandoned by the government, the Nephite armies poured out their souls to God. What should we do when we feel surrounded, worn out and without support? The same thing. The Lord's response is outlined in one of the most beautiful passages in the war chapters: 'Yea, and it came to pass that the Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him' (Verse 11). Notice the nouns: 'assurance, peace, faith, hope, deliverance.'  
([www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/](http://www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/)).

**V. Alma 59–61**

Bryan Richards states,

"As we return to events on the eastern front, it is easy to get confused about the general course of events. In contrast to Helaman's miraculous success on the western front, Moroni has been struggling in the East. It has been a full five years since the Lamanites had taken the eastern cities of Moroni, Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid, and Mulek (Alma 51:26). For the last three years, Moroni had been in direct command of the eastern forces and had only been able to recapture the cities of Mulek and Gid (see Alma 52:26; 55:24). The remainder of those possessions and cities which the Lamanites had taken included the cities of Moroni, Lehi, Morianton, and Omner. Last we read, Moroni's plans were to attack the city of Morianton (Alma 55:34-35). But before Moroni could execute his plan, the Nephites lose another city--Nephihah.  
([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-59](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-59)).

Alma 59:3

**3 And it came to pass that he immediately sent an epistle to Pahoran, desiring that he should cause men to be gathered together to strengthen Helaman, or the armies of Helaman, insomuch that he might with ease maintain that part of the land which he had been so miraculously prospered in regaining.**

Helaman's success on the western front of the war was in jeopardy if he did not receive more men. The Nephite army was dependent upon Pahoran and his government in Zarahemla to send men and provisions. As Heleman had noted in his letter, they had not been diligent in sending sufficient provisions or men. This was not the case with Ammoron as he received an increase in number from those who had fled from the city of Manti in the west and "being exceedingly numerous, yea, and receiving strength from day to day" (Alma 59:7). Moroni understood the importance that supplies and men were the success of the war. He knew "it was easier to keep the city from falling into the hands of the Lamanites than to retake it from them" (Alma 59:9).

Alma 59:11

**11 And now, when Moroni saw that the city of Nephihah was lost he was exceedingly sorrowful, and began to doubt, because of the wickedness of the people, whether they should not fall into the hands of their brethren.**

Even stalwart Moroni begins to doubt. It is not easy to be the General of the Nephite army when you have to battle not only a formidable foe, but also do so with a limited number of soldiers and provisions. You have the right to expect that you will be supported by the government you are trying to preserve, but neither supplies or men were forthcoming.

Bryan Richards states,

"[W]hen we are concerned for the welfare of others, our faith cannot be limitless. We can pray for the wicked to repent, but it won't always happen. We can struggle to win the souls of men, but not every battle is won. This is because the Lord can control everything in the Universe, but he can't interfere with man's use of agency. When Moroni began to doubt and Mormon prayed without faith, it was because they understood that the Lord can control everything but man's will--his inalienable right to do wrong." ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-59](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-59)).

What do we do when we find ourselves struggling in the face of great hardship and challenges? We may doubt. We may even get discouraged. But we must act. We must never surrender, never give up. We hold on to what we know is true until help comes. Help from above will come. In the meantime, we

stand firm, continue to be valiant in keeping the commandments, and go forward in faith.

Alma 59:13

**13 And it came that Moroni was angry with the government, because of their indifference concerning the freedom of their country.**

Concerned, regarding the cause for which they are fighting and their great need for both men and provisions if they are to succeed, Moroni acts.

Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 59: John Bytheway

"Moroni knew that it was 'easier to keep the city from falling into the hands of the Lamanaites than to retake it from them' (Verse 9). What a wonderful statement! President Ezra Taft Benson expressed the same idea in similar words regarding our attitude towards sin and repentance: 'It is better to prepare and prevent than it is to repair and repent' (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 285)." ([www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/](http://www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/)).

**Alma 60**

Alma 60:1

**1 And it came to pass that he wrote again to the governor of the land, who was Pahoran, and these are the words which he wrote, saying: Behold, I direct mine epistle to Pahoran, in the city of Zarahemla, who is the chief judge and the governor over the land, and also to all those who have been chosen by this people to govern and manage the affairs of this war.**

Moroni exercises the only option he has when his previous efforts have been in vain. He wrote a second letter to the government when his first letter had failed to bring the desired results (Alma 59:3). He tells them that it is their responsibility to gather men and to arm them for battle. Because of their neglect, many have suffered.

Alma 60:3-5

**3 And now behold, I say unto you that myself, and also my men, and also Helaman and his men, have suffered**

exceedingly great sufferings; yea, even hunger, thirst, and fatigue, and all manner of afflictions of every kind.

4 But behold, were this all we had suffered we would not murmur nor complain.

5 But behold, great has been the slaughter among our people; yea thousands have fallen by the sword, while it might have otherwise been if ye had rendered unto our armies sufficient strength and succor [provisions] for them. Yea, great has been your neglect towards us.

As a result of their neglect not only has there been suffering by the soldiers, but thousands have lost their lives due to the lack of strength of the army. The loss of life impacts all, but more so for those who are closest to its occurrence. It is even harder to bear when you believe it could have been prevented.

Alma 60:7-9, 12

7 Can you think to sit upon your thrones in a state of thoughtless stupor, while your enemies are spreading the work of death around you? Yea, while they are murdering thousands of your brethren---

8 Yea, even they who have looked to you for protection, yea, have placed you in a situation that ye might have succored them, yea, ye might have sent armies unto them, to have strengthened them, and have saved thousands of them from falling by the sword.

9 But behold, this is not all--ye have withheld your provisions from them, insomuch that many have fought and bled out their lives because of their great desires which they had for the welfare of this people; yea, and this they have done when they were about to perish with hunger, because of your exceedingly great neglect towards them.

12 Do ye suppose that, because so many of your brethren have been killed it is because of their wickedness? I say unto you, if ye have supposed this ye have supposed in vain; for I say unto you, there are many who have fallen by the sword; and behold it is to your condemnation;

Moroni wants those in the government to understand that they are accountable for the loss of life when they fail to provide the men and provisions necessary in order to defeat

the enemy. The soldier fights the battle, but it is the responsibility of the government and her citizens to support their effort. If they fail in their responsibility, the Lord will hold them accountable.

Alma 60:13

**13 For the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his justice and judgment may come upon the wicked; therefore ye need not suppose that the righteous are lost because they are slain; but behold, they do enter into the rest of the Lord their God.**

Many are prone to hold God responsible for war and the death of their loved ones. However, the fault is not with God, but with men. Men are free to choose and many suffer as a result of the actions of the wicked. Amalickiah and Ammoron were wicked men and sought for power and control over others. Those who honorably serve at the request of their governments will not be held accountable for the lives they take under the performance of their duty. There are those in government, however, even today, "who in a frenzy of hate...lust for unrighteous power and dominion over their fellow men, [who] have put into motion eternal forces they do not comprehend and cannot control. God, in his own due time, will pass sentence upon them." ("Message of the First Presidency To The Church," at *General Conference of the Church*, April 6, 1942; *Messages of the First Presidency*, Vol. 6. Compiled by James R. Clark. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1975, 160-161).

Alma 60:15-16

**15 For were it not for the wickedness which first commenced at our head, we could have withstood our enemies that they could have gained no power over us.  
16 Yea, had it not been for the war which broke out among ourselves...if we had gone forth against them [enemies] in the strength of the Lord, we should have dispersed our enemies, for it would have been done, according to the fulfilling of his word.**

The righteousness of the people in a nation is another factor in the successful outcome of war. If a nation is righteous and goes forth not to conquer, but to defend their nation from an aggressor, then they may turn to the God of Heaven for support and direction. If, however, the

citizenry are unrighteous, and their leaders are the aggressors and seek to conquer and gain control over nations, they will fail.

Alma 60:18-19

**18 But why should I say much concerning this matter? For we know not but what ye yourselves are seeking for authority. We know not but what ye are also traitors to your country.**

**19 Or is it that ye have neglected us because ye are in the heart of our country and ye are surrounded by security, that ye do not cause food to be sent unto us, and also men to strengthen our armies?**

The problem is that Moroni did not know why the officials of his government had not acted on behalf of the defense and freedom in which Moroni and his army were engaged. Communications are essential if all partners are to be aware of the circumstances that are occurring when they are prevented from fulfilling their covenant agreement.

Alma 60:23-24

**23 Do ye suppose that God will look upon you as guiltless while ye sit still and behold these things? Behold I say unto you, Nay. Now I would that ye should remember that God has said that the inward vessel shall be cleansed first, and then shall the outer vessel be cleansed also.**

**24 And now, except ye do repent of that which ye have done, and begin to be up and doing, and send forth food and men unto us, and also unto Helaman...behold it will be expedient that we contend no more with the Lamanites until we have first cleansed our inward vessel, yea, even the great head of our government.**

While Moroni is addressing Pahoran and his government, the need to cleanse the inward vessel also has application to the members of Christ's Church today.

President Ezra Taft Benson states,

"All is not well in Zion...We must cleanse the inner vessel, beginning first with ourselves, then with our families, and finally with the Church." ("Cleansing The Inner Vessel," in *Ensign*, May 1986, 4).

Larry Tibbetts continues,

"There are two methods of cleansing the inner vessel. The first is repentance. But if we do not repent, the Lord will invoke the second method of cleansing--from within. One way or another the vessel will be cleansed. [The three] specific areas [President Benson identified] that need cleansing are: 1. Sexual impurity; 2. Neglect of scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon; 3. Pride or want to be successful at any price." ("Cleansing the Inner Vessel: The Process of Repentance," in *Ensign*, October 1992, 21-22).

It was time for the government to take action and to keep their promised commitment of food and men, or Moroni was going to take action or "cleanse" the government. He knew he could not fight the war on two fronts. He could not defeat the Lamanites if he did not have the food and men necessary.

Alma 60:30-31

**30 Behold, I wait for assistance from you; and except ye do administer unto our relief, behold, I come unto you, even in the land of Zarahemla, and smite you with the sword, insomuch that ye can have no more power to impede the progress of this people in the cause of our freedom.**

**31 For behold, the Lord will not suffer that ye live and wax strong in your iniquities to destroy his righteous people.**

Bryan Richards states,

"Moroni had threatened Pahoran with a military coup. History is replete with generals using their military power to establish a new regime. However, with Moroni's threat, there are some significant differences. First, Moroni was not trying to establish a new regime [with himself at its head]. He was trying to re-establish the old democracy. Second, Moroni was not interested in his own political career, as he said, 'I seek not for power, but to pull it down (v.36). Third, Moroni had a divine mandate, according to his stewardship, to cleanse the inner vessel with force. Hereby, we see that the Lord recognized Moroni's calling as the preserver of the Nephite nation and gave him specific

instructions to keep the nation from falling apart from the inside out." ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-60](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-60)).

Alma 60:36

**36 Behold, I am Moroni, your chief captain. I seek not for power, but to pull it down. I seek not for honor of the world, but for the glory of my God, and the freedom and welfare of my country. And thus I close mine epistle.**

Spiritual Lesson—Chapter 60: John Bytheway

"Moroni sends the chief judge Pahoran a scathing letter, wondering why the Nephite armies are undersupplied, and accusing those in the government of neglect and even treason. Moroni reminds Pahoran that the scriptures teach the inner vessel must be cleansed first.

"Outward observable behavior may show us to be active disciples of Christ, but Moroni reminds Pahoran that the Lord looks on the heart. In the same way, our hearts must be cleansed first, and the outward behavior naturally follows." ([www.ldsmag.com/articles-1-11211/](http://www.ldsmag.com/articles-1-11211/)).

### **Alma 61**

Pahoran loses no time in responding to Moroni's epistle. The scriptures record, "now it came to pass that soon after Moroni had sent his epistle,...he received an epistle from Pahoran..." (Alma 61:1).

Pahoran begins, "Behold, I say unto you, Moroni, that I do not joy in your great afflictions, yea, it grieves my soul" (Alma 61:2). Pahoran proceeds to outline the problems that he has faced: (1) There has been insurrection and rebellion against the government lead by the king-men. (see Alma 61:3.); (2) The king-men have by "great flattery...led away the hearts of many people and have daunted [intimidated] the freemen that they have not come unto you" (Alma 61:4); (3) "They have driven me out...and I have fled to the land of Gideon, with as many men as it were possible that I could get" (Alma 61:5); and, (4) The king-men have taken over the city of Zarahemla, have appointed a king, and formed an alliance with the Lamanites. (see Alma 61:8).

Hugh Nibley states,

Reflecting upon Moroni's second letter to Pahoran. "It was, to say the least, not the most tactful letter in the world, but Moroni's patience was worn out. Also, it turned out, he was right--on every point but one. And that point was an important one: he had accused the wrong man. Aside from that, he had the situation correctly sized up--his long experience with the king-men had not been for nothing." (*Since Cumorah*, 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], 326).

Alma 61:9, 13-14

**9 And now, in your epistle you have censured me, but it mattereth not; I am not angry, but do rejoice in the greatness of your heart. I, Pahoran, do not seek for power, save only to retain my judgment-seat that I may preserve the rights and the liberty of my people. My soul standeth fast in that liberty in the which God hath made us free.**

**13 But behold he doth not command us that we shall subject ourselves to our enemies, but that we should put our trust in him, and he will deliver us.**

**14 Therefore, my beloved brother, Moroni, let us resist evil, and whatsoever evil we cannot resist with our words, yea, such as rebellions and dissensions, let us resist them with our swords, that we may retain our freedom, that we may rejoice in the great privilege of our church, and in the cause of our Redeemer and our God.**

How would we have responded to Moroni's letter of censure if it had been directed to us? With anger?, Defensive?, Frustrated?, You don't really understand! Pahoran is not angry. He did not take offence. He has great respect and love for Moroni, his "beloved brother." What really matters to him are the liberty of the people and their freedom of religion. His simple response: Let's go forward and work together.

John K. Carmack states,

"A person's deepest values and true character surface under stress...Pahoran answered Moroni's scathing epistle without a trace of bitterness or defensiveness. An ordinary person, having been placed in Pahoran's devastating position and then wrongly blamed for creating it, would have automatically responded: 'Why are you blaming me, after all I've been through? Find someone else to shoulder this responsibility. I'm through!'" ("Pahoran: Wartime Statesman, Defender of Freedom," in *Heroes From The Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995, [Seventh Printing, 1998], 140).

Alma 61:16-17

**16 Behold I have sent a few provision unto them [Lehi and Teancum], that they may not perish until ye can come unto me.**

**17 Gather together whatsoever force ye can upon your march hither, and we will go speedily against those dissenters, in the strength of our God according to the faith which is in us.**

Pahoran recognizes the greatness of Moroni. He trusts him as the military leader of the people. He is anxious to defeat those who stand in their way of freedom. He holds no vindictiveness against him. They are brothers.

Alma 61:19-21

**19 And now, Moroni, I do joy in receiving your epistle, for I was somewhat worried concerning what we should do, whether it should be just in us to go against our brethren.**

**20 But ye have said, except they repent the Lord hath commanded you that ye should go against them.**

**21 ...And now I close mine epistle to my beloved brother, Moroni.**

Spiritual Lesson--Chapter 61: John Bytheway

"Moroni had it all wrong about Pahoran. Pahoran's response to Moroni is a powerful example of self-control and meekness. 'I am not angry, but do rejoice in the greatness of your heart' (Verse 9). The interaction between these two faithful men is certainly one of the most compelling parts

of this chapter. I am also compelled, by the wonderful state of Pahoran to his beloved friend Moroni: "But behold [God] doth not command us that we shall subject ourselves to our enemies, but that we should put our trust in him, and he will deliver us" (Verse 13).

"Indeed, God has never commanded us to be subject to Satan. We don't have to give in. We don't have to compromise. We don't have to be subject to Satan. If we put our trust in God, he will deliver us, as he delivered the Nephites."

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

## VI. Alma 62

Alma 62:1-2

**1 And now it came to pass that when Moroni had received this epistle [from Pahoran] his heart did take courage, and was filled with exceedingly great joy because of the faithfulness of Pahoran, that he was not also a traitor to the freedom and cause of his country.**

**2 But he did also mourn exceedingly because of the iniquity of those who had driven Pahoran from the judgment-seat, yea, in fine because of those who had rebelled against their country and also their God.**

Moroni is pleased to learn that Pahoran is still faithful to the cause that he believes in and for which he had been fighting. This is symbolized by the title of liberty: "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives and our children" (Alma 46:12-13).

Alma 62:4-5

**4 And he did raise the standard of liberty in whatsoever place he did enter, and gained whatsoever force he could in all his march towards the land of Gideon.**

**5 And it came to pass that thousands did flock unto his standard, and did take up their swords in the defence of their freedom, that they might not come into bondage.**

Moroni does not arrive in the land of Gideon to meet the exiled Pahoran empty-handed. As he has traveled from the eastern front of the war with the Lamanites, he raised the title of liberty along the way. Thousands joined the cause

of liberty and religious freedom. We learn that when Moroni united his forces with those of Pahoran, "they became exceedingly strong, even stronger than the men of Pachus, who was the king of those dissenters who had driven the freemen out of the land of Zarahemla and had taken possession of the land" (Alma 62:6). You will remember that the king-men had also formed an alliance with the Lamanites thus making them Nephite traitors.

Alma 62:8-9

**8 And behold, Pachus was slain and his men were taken prisoners, and Pahoran was restored to his judgment-seat.**

Pahoran, having been restored to his office of Chief judge, now had to deal with the traitors to the nation.

Alma 62:9-11

**9 And the men of Pachus received their trial,...and also those king-men who had been taken and cast into prison; and they were executed according to the law; yea, those men of Pachus and those king-men, whosoever would not take up arms in the defence of their country, but would fight against it, were put to death.**

**10 And thus it became expedient that this law should be strictly observed for the safety of their country; yea, and whosoever was found denying their freedom was speedily executed according to the law.**

**11 ...Moroni and Pahoran having restored peace to the land of Zarahemla, among their own people, having inflicted death upon all those who were not true to the cause of freedom.**

The Book of Mormon Student Manual [1981] states,

"One might ask, Why compel men to fight or be executed? The answer is simple: treason is a serious offense. Pachus and his men were committed to the overthrow of Nephite freedom. To permit men to live who insisted on using the sword to destroy the very thing Moroni's soldiers were fighting and dying to preserve would be treason to the God-inspired cause of liberty. This neither Moroni nor Pahoran would do." (*Book of Mormon Student Manual*. Salt Lake City: The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, [Second Edition Revised, 1981], 348).

Alma 62:12-13

**12 ...Moroni immediately caused that provisions should be sent, and also an army of six thousand men should be sent unto Helaman, to assist him in preserving that part of the land.**

**13 And he also caused that an army of six thousand men, with sufficient quantity of food, should be sent to the armies of Lehi and Teancum. And it came to pass this was done to fortify the land against the Lamanites.**

Moroni is sensitive to the needs of those who serve in the Nephite army. With the insurrection and rebellion being put down within the Nephite nation, he turned his attention toward resupplying his forces with both men and supplies. Moroni and Pahoran concentrate on regaining the city of Nephihah from the Lamanites. (see also Alma 62:14.)

Moroni was desirous that he should meet the Lamanites on the battlefield. When the Lamanites saw the size of his forces and knowing their courage in battle, they would not leave the protection of their city. (see Alma 62:19.)

During the night, Moroni was then able to climb upon the wall of Nephihah and learn where the Lamanites were camped. He then got strong cords and ladders and quietly surrounded the sleeping Lamanites. (see Alma 62:20-23.)

Alma 62:24-26

**24 And now, when the Lamanites awoke and saw that the armies of Moroni were within the walls, they were affrighted exceedingly, insomuch that they did flee out by the pass.**

**25 And now when Moroni saw that they were fleeing before him, he did cause that his men should march forth against them, and slew many, and surrounded many others, and took them prisoners; and the remainder of them fled into the land of Moroni, which was in the borders by the seashore.**

**26 Thus had Moroni and Pahoran obtained the possession of the city of Nephihah without the loss of one soul; and there were many of the Lamanites who**

**were slain.**

You will recall that it was the loss of the city of Nephihah that had caused Moroni to begin to doubt and precipitated his letter to Pahoran. (see Alma 59:11.) The taking of the city with Pahoran must have been a great satisfaction to Moroni given all that he had been through.

Alma 62:27-29

**27 Now it came to pass that many of the Lamanites that were prisoners were desirous to join the people of Ammon and become a free people.**

**28 And it came to pass that as many as were desirous, unto them it was granted according to their desires.**

**29 Therefore, all the prisoners of the Lamanites did join the people of Ammon, and did begin to labor exceedingly, tilling the ground, raising all manner of grain, and flocks and herds of every kind; and thus were the Nephites relieved from a great burden; yea, insomuch that they were relieved from all the prisoners of the Lamanites.**

This is yet another example to each of us of the hospitality of the people of Ammon as they continued to welcome those who sought peace and religious freedom to their land. They had previously welcomed the Zoramites who has been exiled from their land during the mission of Alma and Amulek. (see Alma 35:8-9.)

As Moroni's army grew the Lamanites became frightened to meet them in battle.

Alma 62:32-33

**32 And it came to pass that Moroni and his army did pursue them from city to city, until they were met by Lehi and Teancum; and the Lamanites fled from Lehi and Teancum even down upon the borders by the seashore, until they came to the land of Moroni.**

**33 And the armies of the Lamanites were all gathered together, insomuch that they were all in one body in the land of Moroni. Now Ammoron, the king of the Lamanites was also with them.**

When the Nephites encamped for the night, Teancum as a result of his anger at Ammoron and Amalickiah for causing

this great war, did go forth in the night to locate Ammoron. Upon doing so, Teancum did cast a javelin...which did pierce him near the heart. Before he died, he did awaken his servants who were able to kill Teancum before his escape. (see Alma 62:35-36.)

Moroni and Lehi were very sorrowful to learn of Teancum's death for he "had been a man who had fought valiantly for his country, yea, a true friend to liberty" (Alma 62:37).

Alma 62:38, 40

**38 Now it came to pass that Moroni marched forth on the morrow, and came upon the Lamanites, insomuch that they did slay them with a great slaughter; and they did drive them out of the land; and they did flee, even that they did not return at that time against the Nephites.**

**40 ...nevertheless for the righteous sake, yea, because of the prayers of the righteous, they were spared.**

Finally the war was over and despite the length and loss of life, in the final analysis, it was the prayers of the righteous that spared the lives of the people.

Bryan Richards states,

"The war had been constant for the last 6 years (Alma 51-62), but Moroni had been fighting wars, off and on, for the last 14 years or so. An entire generation was raised amidst a continual revolution of war and bloodshed."  
([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-62](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-62)).

Alma 62:41

**41 But behold, because of the exceedingly great length of the war between the Nephites and Lamanites many had become hardened, because of the exceedingly great length of the war; and many were softened because of their afflictions, insomuch that they did humble themselves before God, even in the depth of humility.**

Spencer J. Condie states,

"Participants in that great [Nephite] war had all suffered similar deprivations and hardships. The terror of war had

impacted them more or less equally. But from the same experience, some of the people 'had become hardened' while many others were 'softened because of their afflictions.' We may not be able to change our current circumstances, our failing health, our economic challenges, or loneliness from being apart from loved ones, but we can employ our moral agency to change our attitude toward those circumstances and toward the future. There are many, many avenues to joy and fulfillment within the constraints our immediate environment, and one of the most productive courses of action is to forget ourselves and begin serving others." (*Your Agency: Handle With Care*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996, 21).

Alma 62:42-23

**42 And it came to pass that after Moroni had fortified those parts of the land which were most exposed to the Lamanites, until they were sufficiently strong, he returned to the city of Zarahemla; and also Helaman returned to the place of his inheritance; and there was once more peace established among the people of Nephi.**

**43 And Moroni yielded up the command of his armies into the hands of his son, whose name was Moronihah; and he retired to his own house that he might spend the remainder of his days in peace.**

**44 And Pahoran did return to his judgment-seat; and Helaman did take upon him again to preach unto the people the word of God; for because of so many wars and contentions it had become expedient that a regulation should be made again in the church.**

Moroni, Helaman, and Pahoran, were all older and wiser for the experiences that had. Helaman returned to the ministry and Pahoran to the government, but Moroni after years of dedicated military service to his country, returned to his home to live his life in peace.

Joe J. Christensen states,

"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. [Captain Moroni] is one taught us

powerfully of those values--those priceless blessings--worth fighting and even dying for.

"Our young people today need heroes who go beyond the popular musicians, comedians, great athletics, the rich, and the famous. They, and all of us, need to know of people like Captain Moroni, whose influence will live long after the applause of those who are currently popular has faded away.

"May we all emulate his example." ("Captain Moroni, An Authentic Hero," in *Heroes from the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995, [Seventh Printing, 1998], 132-133).

Alma 62:48-51

**48 And the people of Nephi began to prosper again in the land, and began to multiply and to wax exceedingly strong again in the land. And they began to grow exceedingly rich.**

**49 But notwithstanding their riches, or their strength, or their prosperity, they were not lifted up in the pride of their eyes; neither were they slow to remember the Lord their God; but they did humble themselves exceedingly before him.**

**50 Yea, they did remember how great things the Lord had done for them, that he had delivered them from death, and from bonds, and from prisons, and from all manner of afflictions, and he had delivered them out of the hands of the their enemies.**

**51 And they did pray unto the Lord their God continually,...**

As the temptation of prosperity occurred, it often caused the Nephites to forget the One from whom all blessings flow. This time, with the memory of war still fresh in their minds, they do not forget the Lord, but continued to remember his goodness and mercy to them. Adversity and prosperity are two tools Satan uses in order to cause the Lord's children to forget the One who gives all blessings to them. Prayer and reading the scriptures serve as two tools for us to use to offset his temptations and to assist us in always remembering Him.

Spiritual Lesson--Chapter 62: John Bytheway

"War is a horrible, messy, hellish business. War is almost always accompanied by famine, disease, immorality and wickedness, especially in ancient times. At the end of the war chapters, Moroni comments, 'because of the exceedingly great length of the war between the Nephites and the Lamanites many had become hardened, because of the great length of the war; and many were softened because of their afflictions, insomuch that they did humble themselves before God, even in the depth of humility' (verse 41). Isn't that interesting, some were hardened, others were softened. Same war, different responses. We can use our God-given agency to choose how we will respond to our afflictions and problems." ([www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/](http://www.ldsmag.com/article-1-11211/)).

**VII. Alma 63**

At the beginning of this chapter we learn that Shiblon, who is the second oldest of Alma, the younger's sons, became the keeper of the records, having received them from his brother, Helaman. We assume this transfer occurred upon Helaman's death.

Alma 63:2-3

**2 And he [Shiblon] was a just man, and he did walk uprightly before God; and he did observe to do good continually, to keep the commandments of the Lord his God; and also did his brother.  
3 And it came to pass that Moroni died also..**

Shiblon, like his brother, Helaman, were righteous men and were trusted by the Lord to care for the records. We also learn that Moroni had died. Moronihah was now the military leader and Shiblon is the keeper of the records.

Alma 63:4-5

**4 And it came to pass that in the thirty and seventh year of the reign of the judges, there was a large company of men, even to the amount of five thousand and four hundred men, with their wives and their children, departed out of the land of Zarahemla into the land which was northward.  
5 And it came to pass that Hagoth, he being an**

**exceedingly curious man, therefore he went forth and built him an exceedingly large ship, on the borders of the land Bountiful, by the land Desolation, and launched it forth into the west sea, by the narrow neck which led into the land northward.**

We know do not know why Hagoth determined to build a large ship at this time to transport people to the "land northward" or why the people were desirous to leave the land of Zarahemla. We do know that "this man built other ships. And the first ship did also return and many more people did enter into it; and they also took much provisions, and set out again to the land northward" (Alma 63:7).

It was the assumption of the people remaining that when they did not hear about the ships that had departed, "that they were drowned in the depths of the sea," [Notwithstanding] yet "one other ship did also sail forth; and whither she did go we know not" (Alma 63:8). We learn also that Corianton "had gone forth to the land northward in a ship, to carry provisions unto the people who had gone forth into that land" (Alma 63:10).

What happened to these people? Were they drowned? Did they survive?

Robert L. Simpson states,

"I would like to tell you young people that in a great gathering of Polynesians held right in Salt Lake City just prior to 1915, a prophet of the Lord, President Joseph F. Smith, addressing a group of Polynesians who had come to Salt Lake City to participate in their temple endowment work, made the statement that without a doubt this man Hagoth and his company were the progenitors of the Polynesian races, and that this migration was the beginning of the Polynesian population in the South Pacific." ("The Lord is Mindful of His Own," in *BYU Speeches of the Year, 1962*, April 4, 1962).

It is the position of many within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that among those who settled the isles of Polynesia were descendents of Hagoth and his company.

Alma 63:11-12

11 Therefore it became expedient for Shiblon to confer those sacred things, before his death, upon the son of Helaman, who was called Helaman [II], being called after the name of his father.

12 Now behold, all those engravings which were in the possession of Helaman [II] were written and sent forth among the children of men throughout all the land, save it were those parts which had been commanded by Alma should not go forth.

For sake of clarity, Helaman, the son of Helaman will be designated as Helaman II. It is inferred from the record that had Corianton not gone to the land north, that his brother, Shiblon, would have conferred the sacred records to him. The keeper of the records is now Helaman II.

The record of Alma concludes by noting that "some dissenters...had gone forth unto the Lamanites, and...stirred them up again to anger against the Nephites" (Alma 63:14). Moronihah, and his army had met them in battle and defeated them and drove them "back again to their own lands, [their] suffering great loss" (Alma 63:15).

#### **VIII. Conclusions**

This lesson concludes the "War chapters," and the lessons they have for each of us as we are involved in a battle involving the forces of good and evil. We have also benefited greatly from the "favorite spiritual lessons" included in each chapter by John Bytheway.

In Alma, Chapter 53-54, we learned about Moroni's efforts to build fortifications in order to strengthen the Nephite cities against attack from the Lamanites. Likewise, we also need to fortify ourselves from the wickedness around us. We are introduced to the two thousand stripling soldiers, who are the sons of the people of Ammon, but have not entered into a covenant not to wield the sword in battle. They select Helaman to be their leader. Their value to the cause of the Nephites becomes great. Ezra Taft Benson stated that the youth of today are the generation "who will help bear off the [Lord's] kingdom triumphantly" (*Ensign*, April 1987, 73). These two thousand stripling soldiers become Helaman's "sons" (Alma 56:10).

In Alma, Chapter 54, Moroni and Ammoran exchange angry letters. The lesson David Sorensen reminds us is that "you can't pet a rattlesnake." (*Ensign*, May 2001, 41).

In Alma, Chapter 55, we learn that the success of military victories is also dependent upon the righteousness of the nations citizens. It is also so important that we not be "slow to remember the Lord [Our] God" (Alma 55:31).

In Alma, Chapter 56, Helaman writes an epistle to Moroni regarding the performance of his "two thousand sons" (Alma 56:10). We are also reminded that righteousness does not mean that we will not be required to work and also suffer. It will, however, bless our lives if we are able to recognize the tender mercies of the Lord in our lives. (see 1 Nephi 1:20.) Their recognition helps us to realize that we are not alone during our mortal journey. The success of the two thousand stripling soldiers was based upon their trust in the Lord which they had been taught by the words and example of their mothers. We are again reminded that the antithesis [direct opposite] of faith is doubt. When we doubt, we substitute our faith with uncertainty, and our faith begins to waver.

In Alma, Chapter 57, Ammoron again sends Moroni an epistle with his desire to exchange prisoners. Moroni declines his offer as he does not want to give his enemy any advantage. He then goes to work to find a way to free the Nephi prisoners. We too should be careful not to assist Satan in our actions, by letting our guard down, but instead to use our strength to go forward with faith in the Lord. How do the two thousand sons perform under battle? They are firm and undaunted. They perform every word of command with exactness. Do we do the same in response to the direction of our leaders? We demonstrate our obedience to the Lord by our allegiance and obedience to those who are less than perfect who are called to lead.

In Alma, Chapter 58, we are reminded not to give up. After we have said our prayer, we must then act and do our best. As we act, we will receive increased assurance from the Lord that will serve to strengthen our faith and hope. This will then lead to an increase in our courage and determination to stay the course and remain true to the faith. As a result of their obedience and faith in the Lord, they were protected. All were wounded, and a thousand

of the Nephite army lost their lives, not one of Helaman's sons were killed.

In Alma, Chapter 59, Moroni wrote a letter to Pahoran, the Chief judge of the Nephites. We learn from his letter that we may doubt, and even get discouraged, but we must act and never surrender. We must use all of our means to communicate to those we serve, but we must also hold on to what we know, and help will come.

In Alma 60, when Pahoran did not respond to Moroni's first letter, he sent him a second letter. This was a scathing letter to him as he states that due to the lack of men and provisions, many have died. Moroni reminds Pahoran that those in the government are responsible for the loss of lives when they fail to fulfill their responsibility to provide support to the army. The Lord does suffer the righteous to be slain, so that the wicked may be punished. Men, not God, are responsible for war which often is the result of wickedness on the part of our leaders. Moroni reminds Pahoran and others in the government that if they are seeking greater power and authority, the Lord has promised that "the inner vessel shall be cleansed first" (Alma 60:23). Moroni threatens a military coup upon the government. He is not seeking power, but he has been given a divine mandate by the Lord to cleanse the inner vessel!

In Alma, Chapter 61, Pahoran responds. He has had his challenges. There has been insurrection in the land; the king-men had led away the citizens with flattery; they had driven Pahoran from the land; and, they had taken over the city of Zarahemla, and formed an alliance with the Lamanities, the enemy. Though Moroni had censured him, he was not angry. He also sought not power, but resisted evil and restored freedom in the land. He ended his letter to Moroni, "my beloved brother" (Alma 61:21). Pahoran could have taken offense against Moroni and replied with anger and indignation. He did not take offense, but instead reassured Moroni that despite the problems that had occurred in the nation, he does not seek power, but was also faithful to the cause of freedom. He sought to join him in his pursuit of freedom and justice against those who have undermined their efforts.

Alma, Chapter 63, Moroni again raised the "title of liberty" (Alma 46:12-13), and again thousands rallied to the cause of freedom and righteousness. The dissension

within the country and her citizens was put down and Moroni and Pahoran with additional provisions and men pursue the Lamanites. When the Lamanites were all gathered together, with King Ammoran present, in anger, Teancum went to his camp and kills Ammoran. Teancum was then killed. Moroni met the Lamanites in battle and they were driven from the land. Finally the war was over. While all have suffered in the war, some were hardened by their experience, while others were humbled and grateful.

Moroni remains as one of the great Heroes of the Book of Mormon and serves as an example to both young and old.

In Alma, Chapter 63, Shiblon, a son of Alma, the younger, became the keeper of the records at Helaman's death. Hagoth began to build large ships and many people boarded the ships and went to the north. Coranton, the younger brother of Helaman and Shiblon, departed on one of the ships in order to deliver provisions to those who had gone north. We learn through modern day revelation that the people of Hagoth are the progenitors of the Polynesian races in the South Pacific. Shiblon died, and the records were given to Helaman II, who is a son of Helaman.

In conclusion, John Bytheway offers the following reflection:

These lessons "testify of the power of faith in Christ, and the importance of standing as a witness of Christ. They teach the importance of keeping covenants, of staying in our stronghold, and of being cautious that no poison is administered among us and our families. They illustrate that the stratagems of war are similar to the stratagems Satan uses against us. While God invites and persuades in the spirit of truth and love, Satan deceives by using decoys, enticement and snares which conceal his real intentions.

"Why are there so many wars in the Book of Mormon? Look around. The war which began in heaven continues on earth, and the Lord's words show us how to prevail."  
([www.ldsmag.com/artile-1-11211/](http://www.ldsmag.com/artile-1-11211/)).

In our next lesson [BM#33], we will focus our attention on the importance of building our testimonies on the foundation of Jesus Christ. We will address the lessons to be learned in Helaman, Chapters 1-5.