

Purpose: To help us see how the Nephites’ attitudes and actions in times of war can serve as a pattern for dealing with our earthly conflicts and the battle against Satan.

Why do you think Mormon included so much information about war in the Book of Mormon?

Alma 62:41 “because of the exceedingly great length of the war ... many had become hardened ... and many were softened” †1. Kathleen S. McConkie †2. Steve Dunn Hanson and his great-great grandparents

1. The Nephites fight Zerehemnah’s army to defend their families and their liberty. ([Alma 43 – 44](#))

- Alma 43:5-10 Zerehemnah’s designs were “to gain power”; Nephite designs were to ... (See verses 9-10)
- Alma 43:16-21 Moroni “prepared his people with breastplates and with arm-shields”. Lamanites feared their armor.
- Alma 43:23-26 Moroni asks Alma to ask the Lord about Lamanite army movements and he acts on Alma’s counsel.
- Alma 43:42-47 The Lamanites “were inspired by the Zoramites and the Amalekites ... and Zerehemnah.”
- Alma 43:48-51 The Nephites “began to stand against the Lamanites with power ... in that selfsame hour that they cried unto the Lord for their freedom.”

†3. Principles that governed the attitudes and actions of the righteous Nephites in times of war
How can we apply these principles in dealing with conflict in our personal lives?

2. Captain Moroni raises the “title of liberty” to inspire the people. ([Alma 45:20-24](#); [46](#))

- Alma 45:20-24
- Alma 46:1-7, 10 Amalickiah desired to be king; “a man of cunning device and a man of many flattering words”.
His supporters “were seeking for power”
- Alma 46: 11-13, 18-20 Moroni “prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren”.
- Alma 46:29 Amalickiah “fearing that he should not gain the point, took ... his people ... and departed”.

3. Amalickiah becomes king of the Lamanites and incites them to battle. ([Alma 47 – 48](#))

- Alma 47:1, 4 Amalickiah “laid the plan in his heart to dethrone the king of the Lamanites”.
“Some of the strongest opponents of the Nephites had once been Nephites themselves” (*Lesson Manual*)

Why do those who have left the Church often fight so strongly against it? †4. Joseph Smith

Compare [Amalickiah](#) (Alma 48:1-5) and [Moroni](#) (Alma 48:7-13, 17)

“Just as one wicked person can cause much wickedness among the people (Alma 46:9), one righteous person, like Moroni, can inspire much righteousness.” (*Lesson Manual*)

- Alma 48:14-16 The Nephites’ “faith, that by doing so God would prosper them ... year, warn them to flee” etc.

4. War continues between the Nephites and the Lamanites. ([Alma 49 – 52](#))

How can the accounts of war in the Book of Mormon apply to our fight against the influence of Satan?

- a. The Nephites built walls to protect their cities from the Lamanites’ attacks (Alma 48:7-9; 49:2-4, 13, 18). What defenses can protect us from Satan’s influence?
- b. The Nephites continually strengthened their defenses (Alma 50:1-6). Why must we continually strengthen our defenses against Satan?
- c. The Nephites kept the commandments of God and followed their Church leaders (Alma 44:3-4; 49:30; 50:20-22). How do the commandments and the counsel of our Church leaders help us fight wickedness?
- d. The Nephites thanked God for protecting them in battle (Alma 45:1; 49:28). How can gratitude to the Lord protect us against Satan?
- e. Contention caused the Nephites to fight among themselves and allowed the Lamanites to gain power over them (Alma 51:2-7, 12-23; 53:8-9). How does contention allow Satan to gain power over us? How can unity and support from other people help us as we fight wickedness?
- f. The righteous Nephites were prosperous and happy even in times of war (Alma 49:30; 50:23). How can we find peace and happiness even during times of terrible wickedness? (*Lesson Manual*)

(*Book of Mormon Manual – LDS Institute* (Religion 121-122). (You can download a free PDF manual.)

Next Week: Lesson 32: “They Did Obey ... Every Word of Command With Exactness”;

Alma 53:10-19; 56:1-8; 56:9—58:41; † •

†1. **Kathleen S. McConkie:** “Whenever we got into those detailed accounts of the wars between the Nephites and the Lamanites, our enthusiasm for daily scripture waned. Mormon’s extensive treatment of the subject of war, though informative and even inspiring at times, just did not seem to apply to us personally...”

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

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

“Then it hit me. That was it! *This* was the war that applied to me—not a war of swords and spears, but the eternal war for my soul and those of my family... If we expect to avoid becoming casualties ourselves, we desperately need the Lord’s guidance—and there is no better place to find it than in that book of scripture specifically prepared for our day: the Book of Mormon! (“[Defending Against Evil](#),” *Ensign*, Jan. 1992, 19)

†2. **Steve Dunn Hanson:** “When my great-great grandparents joined the Church in Sweden over one hundred years ago, they were faced with a long ocean voyage to America, a train trip from New York to Omaha, and then a trek by wagon to Salt Lake City. But when they boarded the train in New York, they discovered that they were to ride in stock cars that had been used to haul hogs to market—and the cars were filthy and filled with hog lice.

“Grandmother accepted the inconvenience, but the humiliation was almost more than grandfather could bear. “To think we are no better than hogs,” he grumbled. Reluctantly he made the trip anyway.

“Grandmother was expecting another child, and when they reached Omaha to begin their long trek west, grandfather was concerned about her health and the safety of the baby. The wagon master assured him that there were competent midwives available and that everything would be all right, so they commenced their journey.

“Somewhere on the plains of Nebraska, a healthy baby was born. But a few days later, the three-year-old son contracted cholera. In the middle of the night, grandfather went to a neighboring wagon to borrow a candle, but was told they couldn’t spare one. This angered him, and he fumed as he sat in the dark with his son’s limp, feverish body in his arms. The boy died that night.

“The next morning the wagon master said they would hold a short funeral service and bury the boy in a shallow grave, apologetically explaining that they were in dangerous Indian country and didn’t have time to do anything more. But grandfather couldn’t accept this, and insisted on staying behind and digging a grave deep enough so the animals wouldn’t get the body.

“Throughout the day and into the night he worked, building a strong wood coffin and digging a grave five feet deep in the hard soil. Finally, exhausted and sobbing, he

buried his son and then walked all night to catch up with the wagon train. He was heartbroken and he was mad—mad at the wagon master for not waiting to give his son a proper burial, and mad at God for ‘allowing’ his son to die. When he arrived at his wagon and vented his feelings to his wife, she spoke to him tenderly:

“‘Father, we have to make the best of it. The baby and I are all right and, thank the Lord, the rest of us are well. If we get to our journey’s end without any more trouble, we must be very thankful to our Heavenly Father. We have joined the Mormon Church because we believed it was the only true one and I have faith that it is. We are not the only ones that are having sorrow and trouble on this trip’”

“This wasn’t the end of their difficulties; they continued to suffer serious hardships and adversities throughout their lives. [But although they both went through identical experiences, each was affected differently by them.](#) Grandfather became withdrawn, cantankerous, and bitter. He stopped going to Church and found fault with Church leaders. He became caught up in his own miseries, and the light of Christ grew dimmer and dimmer in his life. On the other hand, grandmother’s faith increased. Each new problem seemed to make her stronger. She became an angel of mercy—filled with empathy, compassion, and charity. She was a light to those around her. Her family gravitated toward her and looked to her as their leader.” (“[What to Do with Adversity](#),” *Ensign*, Feb. 1981, 54–55.)

†3. Principles that governed the attitudes and actions of the righteous Nephites in times of war:

- Fight only for righteous reasons, such as self-defense (Alma 43:8-10, 29-30, 45-47; 48:14).
- Have no hate toward your opposition; seek their best interests as well as your own (Alma 43:53-54; 44:1-2, 6).
- Live righteously and trust in God (Alma 44:3-4; 48:15, 19-20).
- Follow righteous and wise leaders (Alma 43:16-19; 48:11-13, 17-19; D&C 98:10).

†4. **Joseph Smith:** “Before you joined this Church you stood on neutral ground. When the gospel was preached good and evil were set before you. You could choose either or neither. There were two opposite masters inviting you to serve them. When you joined this Church you enlisted to serve God. When you did that you left the neutral ground, and you never can get back to it. Should you forsake the Master you enlisted to serve it will be by the instigation of the evil one, and you will follow his dictation and be his servant” (in “Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” *Juvenile Instructor*; 15 Aug. 1892, 492).

Recommended Reading:

“[What to Do with Adversity](#),” Steve Dunn Hanson, *Ensign*, Feb. 1981, 54-55.

“[Defending Against Evil](#),” Kathleen McConkie, *Ensign*, Jan. 1992, 19.

Visit www.stephenmbird.com/library/gospel-doctrine †

Further Enrichment Resources:

The First Presidency's Statement on War during World War II:



“Members must give allegiance to their sovereign and render it loyal service when called thereto. [This includes military service.] But the Church, itself, as such, has no responsibility for these policies, as to which it has no means of doing more than urging its members fully to render that loyalty to their country and to free institutions which the loftiest patriotism calls for.

“... There is an obligation running from every citizen or subject to the state. This obligation is voiced in that Article of Faith which declares:

“We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.’ ...

“Obedient to these principles, the members of the Church have always felt under obligation to come to the defense of their country when a call to arms was made....

“Thus the Church is and must be against war.... It cannot regard war as a righteous means of settling international disputes; these should and could be settled—the nations agreeing—by peaceful negotiation and adjustment.

“But the Church membership are citizens or subjects of sovereignties over which the Church has no control....

“... When, therefore, constitutional law, obedient to these principles, calls the manhood of the Church into the armed service of any country to which they owe allegiance, their highest civic duty requires that they meet that call. If, harkening to that call, and obeying those in command over them, they shall take the lives of those who fight against them, that will not make of them murderers” (Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark Jr., and David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 92-94; also cited in Boyd K. Packer, Conference Report, Apr. 1968, 34-35. Also cited in the *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121-122*, 248-249).

Elder David O. McKay: “There are ... two conditions which may justify a truly Christian man to enter—mind you, I say *enter*, not *begin*—a war: (1) An attempt to dominate and deprive another of his free agency, and, (2) Loyalty to his country. Possibly there is a third, [namely], Defense of a weak nation that is being unjustly crushed by a strong, ruthless one” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 72).

The Whole Armor of God

President Harold B. Lee: “We have the four parts of the body that the Apostle Paul said or saw to be the most vulnerable to the powers of darkness. The loins, typifying virtue, chastity. The heart typifying our conduct. Our feet, our goals or objectives in life and finally our head, our thoughts.

“... We should have our loins girt about with truth. What is truth? Truth, the Lord said was a knowledge of things as they are, things as they were and things as they are to come [D&C 93:24].... ‘Our loins shall be girt about with truth,’ the prophet said.

“And the heart, what kind of a breastplate shall protect our conduct in life? We shall have over our hearts a breastplate of righteousness. Well, having learned truth we have a measure by which we can judge between right and wrong and so our conduct will always be gauged by that thing which we know to be true. Our breastplate to cover our conduct shall be the breastplate of righteousness.

“[By] what shall we protect our feet, or by what shall we gauge our objectives or our goals in life? ... ‘Your feet should be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.’ (Ephesians 6:15)....

“And then finally the helmet of salvation.... What is salvation? Salvation is to be saved. Saved from what? Saved from death and saved from sin....

“Well, now the Apostle Paul ... had his armoured man holding in his hand a shield and in his other hand a sword, which were the weapons of those days. That shield was the shield of faith and the sword was the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God. I can’t think of any more powerful weapons than faith and a knowledge of the scriptures in which are contained the Word of God. One so armoured and one so prepared with those weapons is prepared to go out against the enemy” (*Feet Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the year [Nov. 9, 1954], 2-3, 6-7; see also Ephesians 6:13-17; D&C 27:15-18).

Neal A. Maxwell, *Miracle in the Military*: “After graduating from high school towards the end of World War II, Neal joined the army. He had a life-changing experience while in a fierce battle on Okinawa, Japan. During a battle, Neal’s mortar position was under fire. Three shells in a row had exploded, each closer to his foxhole than the previous one. He realized the enemy had determined his position. The next shell would land on top of him. He prayed “one of those selfish, honest prayers,” asking for protection from the next bomb. In his pocket he carried a copy of his patriarchal blessing that said his life would not be shortened and that he would not be deprived of fulfilling every assignment that was given to him in the premortal existence.

The shelling stopped. He later wrote: “I am sure the Lord answered my prayers. ... The following night they began to pour shells in, but almost all of them were duds—either the ammunition had gotten wet or they were not exploding in the very thick, oozing mud. ... I felt preserved, and unworthily so, but have tried to be somewhat faithful to that promise that was given at the time.” (“[Neal A. Maxwell: A Devoted Life](#),” *New Era*, Sept. 2004)