

Introduction to War Chapters Alma 43 - 63

1 In Alma 1-42, Mormon emphasized priestcrafts, materialism, socio-economic inequality, and other social problems. This period is followed in Alma 43-63 by a period of war and civil disruptions. This dissension led to a corruption of civil government (as described in the book of Helaman) and to the eventual collapse of the government (see 3 Nephi 1-10). At this point, the Savior visited the people.

A similar pattern of social problems, priestcrafts, materialism, wars, government corruption, and disrupted life is prophesied for the last days leading to the Savior's second coming (D&C 45:16-48; D&C 87; Mormon 8:26-41). As indicated, Mormon and his successor, Moroni, saw our day (see Mormon 8:27-31) and took from the history and prophesies of the Nephites those events that would best help the readers of their record in the day in which it would come forth.

H. Dean Garrett; as quoted in *Studies in Scripture*, ed. by Kent P. Jackson [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988], 70.

2 If men of good will can bring themselves to do so, they may save the world from a holocaust, the depth and breadth of which can scarcely be imagined. We are confident that when there is enough of a desire for peace and a will to bring it about, it is not beyond the possibility of attainment.

First Presidency Statement, *Church News*, 20 Dec. 1980, 3.

3 I do not believe the greatest threat to our future is from bombs or guided missiles. I do not think our civilization will die that way. I think it will die when we no longer care—when the spiritual forces that make us wish to be right and noble die in the hearts of men.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Annual Boy Scouts Banquet*, Commerce, Texas, May 13, 1968

4 We recognize the battle-field as a reality, but it stands as a remote one. It is like a funeral next door. It attracts your attention, but it does not enlist your sympathy. But it is very different when the hearse stops at your own door and the corpse is carried over your own threshold.

A New York Times reporter, 1862, *The Civil War*, Burns, Burns, and Ward, p. 161

5 Latter-day Saints know this earth will never again during its Telestial existence, be free from civil disturbance and war.

Marion G. Romney, *Improvement Era*, June 1967, p. 77

6 War doesn't solve a single human problem, and yet the one place where our generation excels most is in its ability to make war. . . . Our failure has been that while we have perfected weapons, we have failed to perfect the men who may be asked to use them.

Sterling W. Sill, Conference Report, Apr. 1966, pp. 20-21

7 In our society today, we find that we are very well prepared for war. However, in that preparation for war we have lost the spiritual strength necessary to prevent it.

Dean Garrett, CES Book of Mormon Symposium, 1986, p. 52

8 There are, however, two conditions which may justify a truly Christian man enter—mind you, I say enter, not begin—a war: (1) An attempt to dominate and to deprive another of his free agency, and (2) Loyalty to his country. Possibly there is a third, viz., Defense of a weak nation that is being unjustly crushed by a strong, ruthless one.
David O. McKay, Conference Report, Apr., 1942, p. 7

9 A Latter-day Saint must give allegiance to (his) sovereign and render it loyal service when called thereto. This includes military service. The attitude of a Latter-day Saint should be fully to render loyalty to (his) country and to free institutions which the loftiest patriotism calls for. . . . 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.
Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark Jr., David O. McKay, Conference Report, Apr. 1942, pp. 92-95

10 Someone asked me once how I felt about amnesty for the draft card burner and the deserter. I told him that I thought every one of them should be taken before General Moroni to be judged.
Vaughn J. Featherstone, *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, pp. 7-10

11 There is great wisdom and restraint in turning the other cheek and in the process, trying to overcome evil with good. General Omar Bradley is quoted as having said: "We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.... Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living."
Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something* [New York: Times Books, 2000], 71.

12 Every gun made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.
Dwight D. Eisenhower; as quoted in *Studies in Scripture*, ed. by Kent P. Jackson [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987], 8:78.

13 Victory and defeat alike leave countries devastated and the conqueror and the conquered reduced. Wickedness brings war, and war vomits destruction and suffering, hate and bloodshed upon the guilty and the innocent. This impressive {the Book of Mormon} should convince all living souls of the futility of war and the hazards of unrighteousness.
Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. by Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 414.

14 I would like to share an incident which took place during the Vietnam War.... President Harold B. Lee was the President of the Church at the time. While at an area conference in another country he was interviewed by reporters from the international news services. One reporter asked President Lee, "What is your church's position on the Vietnam War?" Some recognized the question as a trap—one which could not be answered without a very real risk of being misunderstood or misinterpreted. If the prophet answered, "We are against the war," the inter-national media could state, "How strange—a religious leader who is against the position of the country he is obliged to sustain in his own church's Articles of Faith" (Articles of Faith 1:12). On the other hand, if President Lee answered, "We are in favor of the war," the media could question, "How strange—a religious leader in favor of war?" Either way, the answer could result in serious problems regarding public opinion both inside and outside the Church. President Lee,

with great inspiration and wisdom, answered as would a man who knows the Savior: "We together with the whole Christian world, abhor war. But the Savior said, "In me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33)." And then the Prophet quoted that other comforting scripture from John: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27), President Lee then explained: "The Savior was not talking about the peace that can be achieved between nations, by military force or by negotiation in the halls of parliaments. Rather, he was speaking of the peace we can each have in our own lives when we live the commandments and come unto Christ with broken hearts and contrite spirits.

Robert Wells, *Ensign*, May 1991 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1991], 86.

- 15 In the Church we are not neutral. We are one-sided. There is a war going on, and we are engaged in it. It is a war between good and evil, and we are belligerents defending the good. We are therefore obliged to give preference to and protect all that is represented in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we have made covenants to do it.

Boyd K. Packer, *Memorable Stories and Parables by Boyd K. Packer* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 23.

David A Bednar speaking to BYU-Hawaii graduates Dec. 2012:

- 16 "Many military historians consider General Jackson to be one of the most gifted tactical commanders in U.S. history," Elder Bednar said. "As a young man he fought in the Mexican American civil war, and during the Civil War he served with General Robert E. Lee and commanded confederate troops in a number of key battles with the Union forces." Once as General Jackson was discussing strategic options with his associates, a commander began his recommendation with the statement, "I fear we will not find our wagons tonight." General Jackson responded to the words, "I fear," in his colleague's observation with a penetrating truth that ultimately became the general's trademark: "Never take counsel from your fears."

We live in a world that grows increasingly confused and chaotic, ever more evil and dark," Elder Bednar said. "Nothing could have emphasized that truth more than the tragic events that occurred yesterday in Connecticut."

Elder Bednar shared the words of President Boyd K. Packer, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, by saying: "The world is spiraling downward at an ever-quickening pace. I am sorry to tell you that it will not get better. I know of nothing in the history of the Church or in the history of the world to compare with our present circumstances. Nothing happened in Sodom and Gomorrah which exceeds in wickedness and depravity that which surrounds us now. Words of profanity, vulgarity and blasphemy are heard everywhere. Unspeakable wickedness and perversion were once hidden in dark places; now they are in the open, even accorded legal protection. At Sodom and Gomorrah these things were localized. Now they are spread across the world, and they are among us.'

"The One Pure Defense," address to CES Religious Education.

- 17 We must realize that we are at war. The war began before the world was, and it will continue. The forces of the adversary are extant upon the earth. All of our virtuous motives, if transmitted only by inertia and timidity, are no match for the resolute wickedness of those who oppose us.

Russell M. Nelson, *The Power within Us* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988], 99.

- 18 In the mid-1930s, Hitler began to make his play for power throughout the European continent. Winston Churchill saw through Hitler's rhetoric and began tromping up and down the British Isles sounding an alarm about this madman in Germany who was determined to control all of Europe. At the outset, Britishers accused Churchill of war-mongering and ignored his warnings. In those early days, it was unfashionable to oppose the charismatic German dictator. But the young Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then serving as a missionary in London, found Churchill's petitions difficult to dismiss.

In June of 1935 at the conclusion of his mission, Elder Hinckley and two other missionaries being released left London and set out for a brief tour of the European continent en route home. For several days they saw the sights by

day and took overnight trains to their next destination. The trains in Germany were filled with Nazi troops, and Elder Hinckley was fascinated with their appearance and demeanor. They were spit and polish, their uniforms pressed and immaculate, their manner efficient and precise as they goose-stepped in unison and on command thrust their fists into the air in salute.

In Munich the threesome witnessed a company of Hitler Youth marching through the streets. "It was incredible to contemplate," Elder Hinckley said, that a people would take fourteen and fifteen-year old boys, put them in battalions, and raise up a generation of soldiers. If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I would not have been able to fathom the insanity of it all.

In Dresden, as they visited a memorial to an earlier war, an elderly woman approached the monument. Poorly dressed, her face wrinkled with age, she laid a bouquet of flowers at the Unknown Soldier memorial and then knelt to pray. As she arose, her eyes filled with tears, Elder Hinckley could hear the sound of drums and marching youth filling the air. "History is going to repeat itself," he said to himself. "In a coming day, men and women will kneel at this monument and mourn the loss of the youths marching just a block away."

When he and his friends crossed into France, the contrast was dramatic. The French troops were not as disciplined or precise in their dress or their movements. Their demeanor suggested that they weren't as concerned about or prepared for what lay ahead. Elder Hinckley later reflected, "Hitler had identified his object and knew what he was doing. But the rest of Europe was asleep. I sensed that I had a front-row seat on the bleachers of history" (*Dew, Go Forward with Faith*, 80).

Similarly, we have front-row seats on the bleachers of an era in which Satan is moving about largely uncontrolled and unchecked. When Britain could have opposed Hitler and stopped him early on, the Britishers were busy doing other less significant things. They didn't recognize their enemy, and as a result they didn't prepare or marshal their energy and resources to defeat him. Other Allied countries were similarly nonchalant. And the results proved fatal for thousands of soldiers.

Today we face an enemy ever so much more threatening than Hitler, for what we have to lose is our happiness and peace of mind here, and eternal life in the world to come. Satan's tactics are bold and brilliant in both their subtlety and their impudence.

Satan knows exactly what he is doing. But do we? Are we sleeping, or are we creating places of security where we may insulate ourselves from his advances?

If there ever were a time when the Lord needed righteous determined women who can distinguish between the adversary's deceptions and the voice of the Lord, it is now. If there were ever a time when the Lord needed women of integrity and purity who live in the world but rise above it, it is now. If there were ever a time when the Lord needed His daughters to be alert to what is happening in society and to defend the sanctity of the home and family, it is now. If there were ever a time when the Lord needed mothers and grandmothers, leaders and friends to safeguard their youth and children, it is now. If there were ever a time when the Lord needed us to have a clear vision of who we are, where we are, and what is important, it is now.

It is therefore urgent that we covenant, and covenant now, to work and watch and fight and pray. To work to strengthen ourselves spiritually every week of every month of every year. To watch over and fortify our families and our Church family so that within the stakes of Zion will exist the strength and unity to help us withstand Lucifer's minions. To fight the adversary in every arena. And to pray with increasing strength and confidence and faith. The Lord has never expected more of faithful women than He does now. But we would not be here if we were not up to the challenge.

Historian Wallace Stegner concluded his foreword to *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* with these words: "That I do not accept the faith that possessed [the Mormons] does not mean I doubt their... devotion and heroism... especially their women. Their women were incredible" (*The Gathering of Zion*, 13). Our sister

forebears were incredible. And so are we, we who have come trailing clouds of glory, we who have foreordained missions that only we can fulfill.

Captain Moroni raised a title of liberty and invited all who would maintain it to “come forth in the strength of the Lord” (Alma 46:20). President Hinckley has done likewise: “We have work to do... so very much of it. Let us roll up our sleeves and get at it, with a new commitment, putting our trust in the Lord.... We can do better than we have ever done before” (*Ensign*, May 1995, 88).

Among Mormon’s last words to his son Moroni were these: “Let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God” (Moroni 9:6).

It is our faith and our works that will qualify us, through the Lord’s mercy, for the exaltation of which Mormon wrote. May we labor diligently within our sphere of influence, large and small, to lead, guide, and persuade those we love and have stewardship for to come unto Christ, and to there partake of a goodness and sweetness that can be found nowhere else.

Taken from: Sheri Dew, *No Doubt about it*, pp. 231-235.