

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

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Alma 2–3

Alma and Amlici

We are on this affair between [Amlici] and Alma, and it's a very important one. It's the second chapter of Alma. Now who is fighting whom here?

Things had been going very bad with the church because of Nehor, who had taken all the people away. They all thought they were the true church. Nehor did, and Alma did, too. A man by the name of Amlici thought he could "cash in" on the Nehor movement. He wanted to go all the way, become extreme right wing, and make himself king. So we have two factions facing each other. Here you don't have Nephites versus Lamanites at all. On both sides there are Nephites and Mulekites all mixed up. Already Amlici has planned to join up with the Lamanites. As far as the Nephites are concerned, it was not the good people and the bad people. It was not the church against the opponents of the church; they were both following Alma. Most of them didn't want to go as far right as Amlici went. All the church and most of the other people stuck with Alma, so we have a very mixed thing.

This is a typical Central America mix-up of things. Some guy wants to have power. He's a general and he wants to be the whole thing. We're on familiar ground here. All these wars take place on that scale amid great confusion. Who's on which side? Some of the people are going to start running away; some people are going to change sides. So this is not Nephites versus Lamanites, and it's not believers versus pagans. There are believers on both sides. Amlici got a lot of Nehor's people. He was [a follower of] Nehor himself, and they said, "We are the true church." On the other hand, most of the people that followed Alma didn't belong to his church. So it went that way, and it certainly wasn't the good guys versus the bad guys, as we will find out. You would think that it would be at least that, but no it wasn't.

We won't try to put a situation map on the board; it would be useless here. It's quite a complicated affair militarily, and a very interesting one, too. Amlici was a very shrewd strategist; he knew how to do it. He set up on a hill, which seems to have been a fortified hill. It is referred to at other times. It was apparently on the shore of the river, which made it impossible to surround him. That would give him one advantage at least. It was on a hill which was east of the river Sidon, which was the boundary of the land. The war was fought on both sides of the river. We don't need to worry about these particulars, but it's an interesting one if you try to analyze what they were doing here. On the east side of the river Sidon, "they began to make war with the Nephites." They took that as their post. That's where they raised their banner, and they invited combat there. Remember, ancient war was formalized and ritualized. Notice that there they chose the time and the place of the war. It was on a hill, a strong point on the river. The river didn't divide the land, but it "ran by the land of Zarahemla." It was more like a boundary.

Then Alma went up with his people and his captains at the head of his army. Notice his three-fold function. He was chief judge, head of the army now, and head of the church.

He was everything. He could have easily become a dictator, which was exactly what Amlici wanted to do. He wanted to make himself king. Verse 17: “And they began to slay the Amlicites upon the hill east of Sidon.” So the hill was on the east side of the river, and they attacked the base there. Then the Amlicites began to flee, and the Nephites pursued them that day and “did slay them with much slaughter.” So these were royalist Nehors versus a mixed group of Nephites. The political conflict was nastier than the war with their brethren, the Lamanites. Notice that the Nephite wars were always the dirtiest. They didn’t have much trouble with the Lamanites actually.

Verse 20: “And it came to pass that when Alma could pursue the Amlicites no longer he caused that his people should pitch their tents in the valley of Gideon.” Well, we could put a valley of Gideon [on the board]; that was going to be their base camp. Here’s a reminder of the original trouble. It all goes back to “Gideon who was slain by Nehor with the sword.” These things are all related; we go back to Nehor country again. It was the camp of Gideon against Nehor; now it was their camp against Amlici. These places apparently had strategic value. “And Alma sent spies to follow the remnants of the Amlicites, that he might know of their plans and their plots.” The plot was a clever one. He had an agreement with the Lamanites to get their support; you can see that. It was a chance for the Lamanites to get some support and a chance for Amlici to win the battle. They watched the camp of the Amlicites, and the Amlicites watched their camp “in the foul womb of night,” as Shakespeare said—the two camps watching each other. The camps could have been very close together, too.

On the morrow they [the spies] returned to the camp and were “greatly astonished” to find that the Amlicites had made contact with the Lamanites. It was a complete surprise. They had gone “above the land of Zarahemla.” Where was that? Apparently to the north, because when they fall back it’s always going to be toward the north. That’s where their supplies were coming from. That’s where their strength was—in the north and the west. Verse 24: “And behold the Amlicites have joined them.” This was a planned operation, as we read in Alma 2:15, “upon the hill Amnihu, which was east of the river Sidon.” He took up that position with contact with the Lamanites in mind all the time—perhaps to fall back on it, drawing the Nephites away from Zarahemla. It was a very shrewd action. That’s why the hill Amnihu was not in a central position. We are told in verse 27 that it was the hill on the Lamanite side of the river. But there were Nephites living on both sides. They discovered not only that the Amlicites had joined up with the [Lamanites], but the people who had settled [were fleeing because] the armies were fighting. You may have heard the lecture on the French Revolution the other day. In the French Revolution for the first time you find the people in arms. The people had just stood by and watched wars being fought before that. Moreover, they didn’t have uniforms before. They didn’t have that type of militarism before at all.

The Nephites were still living in the land and cultivating it there, but now they started to run away. Some very funny things happen in [these situations]. I remember going out with a person called Smith, who was a professional prize fighter and General Max Taylor’s aide. General Taylor wanted something fresh for a salad, and Smith had spotted a place where there was some lettuce growing near a farm house, which was deserted. We went out to get the lettuce by the farm house, which was on the German side of the line toward Arnhem. We crossed a canal and there was the lettuce. But as soon as we started to get the lettuce, they started dropping mortar shells. We hid behind the house because things got wild all of a sudden. The house was completely overgrown with vines, though the people had only been away for a couple of weeks. It was in that wet country, and there were wild

sheep running around. They were fierce. It was amazing. We could have gotten some good mutton. There was an embankment and a canal over here. On the green canal there were a dozen little Dutch boys playing soldier. All this bang, banging was going on, and these boys continued to play soldier. They paid no attention to us whatever. They were playing their game, and they weren't the least interested in our game. The civilians go their own way; they don't get involved in these things, until we involve them in war now and deliberately do all the sorts of things we do. But it was so interesting to see those little kids. They weren't interested in what we were doing. They had the real thing over there—the imagination is more important. And that happens on quite a number of occasions like that.

There were some little Polish kids having a picnic, and all this shooting was going on around them. They were right in between, but “these are the nicest trees,” they said, so they would have their picnic. They marched like Boy Scouts. Marvelous kids—they had such spirit! They were led by a little girl and were very neatly dressed, very proper. They were practically slaves; this was in Nazi Germany. There they were marching out to have their picnic, and she was telling them, “Now, watch your step, be proud, don't make them ashamed of you.” There are strange things.

It was the same thing here, and the people began to run toward the city. Verse 26: “The people of Nephi took their tents and departed out of the valley of Gideon,” which was their camp. They left there and made a race for Zarahemla, too. So both the army and the civilians were going toward Zarahemla to get there before Amlici could get it. They had to cross the river Sidon to get there. It was on the border, we are told, and this was the trap. It was there that [the Amlicites] “being as numerous almost, as it were, as the sands of the sea, came upon them to destroy them. They were waiting for them at the ford. It's very clear that the Sidon could be forded there.

Verse 29: “And it came to pass that Alma fought with Amlici with the sword, face to face; and they did contend mightily, one with another.” Now here, you might say, you have a good case of *Star Wars*, the good guys versus the bad guys. The wicked destroy the wicked. Reflecting on this, we can go to Alma 4:2–3 after this war. If you think these people were the good guys, it says: “But the people were afflicted, yea, greatly afflicted for the loss of their brethren, and also for the loss of their flocks and herds, and also for the loss of their fields of grain, which were trodden under foot and destroyed by the Lamanites. And so great were their afflictions that every soul had cause to mourn; and they believed that it was the judgments of God sent upon them because of their wickedness and their abominations; therefore they were awakened to a remembrance of their duty.”

That was the promise given to Nephi, that the Lord would always have the Lamanites breathing down their necks to stir them up to remembrance. This is another case where it happened when they were wicked. That's what brought on the war. As Mormon tells us later on, don't worry about the wicked. “But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished” (Mormon 4:5). They are going to be punished, but make sure it isn't by you, that you are not doing the punishing.

Then Alma “slew Amlici with the sword. And he also contended with the king of the Lamanites” and his guards. Then notice that they cleared the ground; they had to get over to the west bank for the big fighting. They had to clear the ground on the west bank “that thereby his people might have room to cross and contend with the Lamanites and the

Amlicites on the west side of the river Sidon [so a strong force was waiting for them on the west side of the river]. And it came to pass that when they had all crossed the river Sidon that the Lamanites and the Amlicites began to flee before them [so they didn't have the engagement after all when they got across]. And they fled before the Nephites towards the wilderness which was west and north, away beyond the borders of the land." Way up there. In fact it went so far that it went to Hermounts, which is a very interesting word. Verse 37: "Yea, they were met on every hand, and slain and driven, until they were scattered on the west, and on the north, until they reached the wilderness, which was called Hermounts; and it was that part of the wilderness which was infested by wild and ravenous beasts."

Now where does the word *Hermounts* come from? This is certainly not a Latin word. It's not a Greek word, a Hebrew word, or a Semitic word. Where was it? It was the land on the borders that was infested at times by wild beasts, at certain seasons of the year. It was way up in the borders. They went way up there. So it is the Egyptian word *ḥr-Mntw*, obviously. *Month* or *Monthis* was the Egyptian Pan; he was the god of wild places, wild animals, and the wild country. *Ḥr-Mntw* was the outmost part of Egypt where the land was sometimes visited by lions and crocodiles and things like that. It was under cultivation, but it was a place that was in danger from animals. They called it *ḥr-Mntw* because it was *Month's* country, wild animal country. *Ḥr[Mntw]* means "under the rule of *Month*, who was the beneficent lord of wild animals. *Ḥr-Mntw* was that ground in Egypt which was the part far removed and yet was visited by animals. So they called this area *Hermounts*, and no other word could match it so perfectly because it was infested at times by wild beasts. Is that a coincidence? That is the most fantastic word in the Book of Mormon because it has no philological connections until you recognize *ḥr-Mntw*.

So we go on. So we have a shattered host. They really were shattered, and they began to run. Alma's people could go home, and they did. But Amlici's people could not go home. Where were they to go? They all fled toward the north and the far west, as far as they could get—way up there to Hermounts. Amlici was dead, and naturally you would think the Lamanites would welcome in the poor Amlicites. They'd had an agreement with them. But no, the Lamanites said, we don't owe you a thing. Verse 38: "Many died in the wilderness of their wounds, and were devoured by those beasts and also the vultures of the air; and their bones have been found, and have been heaped up on the earth." They could not go home now. It was only an agreement of convenience with the Lamanites. The Lamanites didn't feel any responsibility for them; they just left them "hanging in the wind." The Amlicites had nowhere to go. They went up to the north woods and were not able to survive there, so they were destroyed.

We have been saying a lot about ethnology, and now we come to perhaps the most important ethnic chapter in the book. I must get out this book by Filmore S.C. Northrup. He has recently written an anthropology book on East and West, from which I am going to read in a minute. Verse 1: "They all returned to their lands, and to their houses, and their wives, and their children." All back to where they started. It was a sad affair. "Now many women and children had been slain with the sword, and also many of their flocks and their herds; and also many of their fields of grain were destroyed, for they were trodden down by the hosts of men." This is the perennial tragedy of Latin America, isn't it, this sad picture? Verse 1: "Now the number of the slain were not numbered, because of the greatness of their number—after they had finished burying their dead they all returned

to their lands, and to their houses, and their wives, and their children.” Then it says that nothing was gained by this political brawl. That’s what it was, you see.

Notice that this is interesting, too: “And now as many of the Lamanites and the Amlicites who had been slain upon the bank of the river Sidon were cast into the waters of Sidon; and behold their bones are in the depths of the sea, and they are many.” That was near the mouth of the river Sidon. It would be very unsanitary just to throw their bodies in the river, but it said they were swept out to sea. So it would be quite close. Remember, it’s a narrow neck of land here. This puts it into some sort of scale that they were swept out to sea. It shows the river Sidon was not only fordable, but it emptied into the ocean not far away.

The Amlicites had marked themselves. Where do we get the ethnic mark? What makes a race here? Well, they decided to be Lamanites. They identified with the Lamanites. This happens again and again. “They had marked themselves with red in their foreheads after the manner of the Lamanites; nevertheless they had not shorn their heads like unto the Lamanites. [So there were different degrees; they looked like Lamanites because of that mark.] Now the heads of the Lamanites were shorn; and they were naked, save it were skin which was girded about their loins.” Well, people who went around like that all the time would certainly have darker skins than the people who didn’t. This makes the blackness.

Notice he is going to tell us in this chapter that the Lamanites put the marks on themselves. They marked themselves, not knowing that they were fulfilling the promise of the Lord that he would mark them. A way of life produces this darkening of the skin, and it’s the same way all over the world. You have the *bayt al-shaîr* and the *bayt al-hajar*. The people that live in the stone houses have white complexions, and the people that live in the tents (the houses of goat’s hair) have dark complexions. Among the Arabs they always distinguished between these people. They are the same people, the same blood, but there is a great deal of difference between them. One is much lighter than the other. It’s the same thing in Greek vase paintings. The women were always painted with white faces because they were in the house all the time. They also used white lead. The men were always painted quite bronze, especially in those marvelous paintings from the various islands. They show these things very clearly—the dark and the light. The Egyptians were the same way, too. The women were always painted a very pale color, and the men were always a dark brown. It’s a matter of living outdoors. This would account for one part of their [color].

For example there’s Santorini, the ancient island of Thera, the one that blew up. There we find these marvelous paintings from 1600 B.C. They are gorgeous paintings. But always the men are dark, and the women are white. It’s the same thing here. They marked themselves and went around naked, so they were going to get that way. You’ll find if you go down and live with those people, you get that way. You very soon get that desert varnish on your face. You learn to walk with a drag of your feet because you are walking in the sand. And you don’t try to walk straight. Why should you when you are slogging through the sand? You get to look and feel just like an Indian there.

Verse 6: “And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression.” Well, who set it on them? Their fathers set it on them. It was a way of life and culture. Where do racial characteristics come from in the first place? They come from environment, don’t

they? Adaptation, segregation. Everybody agrees on that. People in the North want to get all the sun they can, so I have no pigmentation at all. If I lived in the South, I'd have to be protected from the sun, so I would be dark. This is the way it goes.

Question: So it was their fathers that placed the curse upon them, [because of] the way of life that they chose?

Answer: Yes, their way of life. They chose it; they took to this way of life by their own free will. And notice that this adaptation is very fast; this is a most interesting thing. (I guess I had better put Hrdlička's name on the board; you all know about Aleš Hrdlička.) Race is formed by adaptation to certain climatic conditions, etc., and also by separation. When groups separate, they go off at different distances and become different from each other. But in doing so, they also join up with others. Then you get segregation and the process of joining again, which is exactly what you had at Babylon, the so-called Tower of Babel. That was a place where people scattered in all directions, and the languages were scattered. But also people came together from all directions, and new languages were formed. Whenever you bring different people together, you get a new language. Whenever you separate one people, you get two languages. The dialects will start up just like that.

Again, the man who talked about the French Revolution said that until the French Revolution they didn't speak French—they spoke all sorts of things. They were dialects that melded into French. As soon as people separate, they get their dialects and different languages. Then came the revolution, they started a regular system of education, and within a generation they all began speaking the same French. The same things happened in the Book of Mormon when Mosiah taught the people Nephite and it made them much more efficient in their business, etc. Bilingual people are very common. You hear a lot of Spanish spoken around here now. When I came here you never would hear anybody speaking Spanish, let alone an Oriental language. That was absolutely out of the question. Now you hear it all the time. Things do change and they change rapidly. Hrdlička is a good example because of the way of spelling it. He was a Yugoslav Croatian who came over here from Yugoslavia. He was an anthropologist and became the most famous anthropologist of his time. He spent millions on an enormous project trying to prove the Alaska bridge [theory]—that the Indians came over the Bering Strait. He was never able to prove it because they didn't have the kind of evidence they do today. It's still a different story today; nothing has been settled up there. He settled in New York first and then went to Harvard. He was interested in immigration, and he started checking on immigrants and the children of immigrants here to see how they differed in bodily build, complexion, and everything from their parents. He went through thousands of cases; it became a very celebrated work. He became the "daddy" of American anthropology, specializing mainly in dark Mediterranean and Eastern people. He discovered that in the first generation, no matter which country people came from, all their children were noticeably taller. They were also noticeably blonder and had noticeably larger chest measurements and longer legs, etc. In one generation they started changing noticeably.

The Israelis found that, too; there are volumes about the Israelis. The short, swarthy Eastern European Jews would go to Israel and have tall, blond children. Everybody was just electrified. How come [people] change so suddenly like that? It was an amazing thing! You find all sorts of articles on that. These changes are by segregation, joining together, etc. But merely moving over into another environment? How could that work? Well,

nobody knows, but statistically it did work on a massive scale. Hrdlička's work was very convincing and made him very famous.

Verse 7: "And their brethren sought to destroy them, therefore they were cursed; and the Lord God set a mark upon them, yea, upon Laman and Lemuel, and also the sons of Ishmael, and Ishmaelitish women." They were also dark, you notice. Was it because they intermarried? We are told that Laman and Lemuel intermarried with the daughters of Ishmael. They all did for that matter. Remember, the Ishmaelites were Arabs of the desert. And, after all, Lehi was of Manasseh; he was just as much of the desert as they were. They all got mixed up here. "And this was done that their seed might be distinguished from the seed of their brethren, that thereby the Lord God might preserve his people, that they might not mix and believe in incorrect traditions which would prove their destruction." Notice that tradition has the priority here. And here again, there are the things that God does, but men may not do. He may give life; men may not. He may take life; men may not, as we are told in Ether 8:19. He may judge; men may not judge. God may smite; men may not smite. Mormon said, "Man shall not judge, neither shall he smite."

Well, there are all sorts of things that God does, but he segregates them [the people] here and he segregates them in his own way. He has this way of doing it. But notice that the tradition has priority. He doesn't want them to mingle with incorrect traditions, so he puts a slight mark on them to keep them apart and distinguish them. And yet they are going to be joining together all the time here. Then this is what happens: "Whosoever did mingle his seed [that is, his people—one people with another] with that of the Lamanites did bring the same curse upon his seed." They would share the same culture with them. They were not just Nephites, but anybody who did. Remember, there were more Mulekites than [Nephites], but anybody who mixed with the Lamanites "did bring the same curse upon his seed."

You can call the *curse* the *culture*; it depends on how you want it. "Therefore, whosoever suffered himself to be led away by the Lamanites was called under that head, and there was a mark set upon him." Marriage is not enough; you have to share their culture. It's not a physical thing; you have to be led away by them and join in their way of life, their culture. He was called by that name, and there was a mark set up on him. You set it on yourself actually. Verse 11: "And it came to pass that whosoever would not believe in the tradition of the Lamanites [notice it's the traditions that are being separated here—not the blood, not the people], but believed those records which were brought out of the land of Jerusalem . . . were called Nephites." No matter what your family was or anything else, you were called a Nephite. A Nephite or a Lamanite was one who accepted a tradition—the Nephite or the Lamanite tradition. Verse 11 makes that very clear. "And it is they who have kept the records which are true of their people, and also of the people of the Lamanites."

In verse 13 they start marking themselves: "Now we will return again to the Amlicites, for they also had a mark set upon them; yea, they set the mark upon themselves, yea, even a mark of red upon their foreheads." Notice that the Amlicites were Nephites who joined the Lamanites, and they set a mark upon their foreheads in imitation of the Lamanites. They wanted to be Lamanites. "Thus the word of God is fulfilled, for these are the words which he said to Nephi: Behold, the Lamanites have I cursed, and I will set a mark on them." Well, they were putting the mark on, and this fulfills the prophecy that the Lord said. When they did it themselves, then they fulfilled the prophecy.

I have a statement by a Yale professor and anthropologist. I don't have too much trust in Yale anthropologists—I've run into some of them—or Chicago anthropologists. I shared an office for four years with one of them. He was head of the American Society of [Anthropologists], Morris Opler. We had a lot of time together. He was an Indian man, and I may tell you some stories about him someday. But this is what Fillmore N.C. Northrup of Yale writes in his book *The Meaning of East and West*:

With the effects of the eighteenth century impigmentation on cosmological, highly formalized Christian dogma of the European Spanish invasion upon the people of Mexico, at the mid-point of North and South America and Central American continents, to which vast numbers of humans already had come from Asia across the Pacific and from the Pacific islands during untold numbers of earlier millennia [there's no reason in the Book of Mormon why there shouldn't be more than one migration]. These Pacific basin people whom the Spanish invaders found in Mexico showed a crossbred physiognomy embracing every physical feature and skin color known anywhere around the earth [they are all there]. They were so crossbred that they could no longer be spontaneously differentiated into separate color races. This crossbreeding is advanced in both Mexico and India today, but now embraces all European features as well. Every variety of angular pattern, of variation in physiognomy, is found in both countries, in every skin color—every shade from intensely dark to intensely light. Hair ranges through every known variety between straight and tight curly, in every hue from black to platinum blond.

About every tenth child among the Hopis was sometimes redhead and sometimes blond with blue eyes. It was not a case of being bleached or anything like that. I said, "There must have been some missionaries at large here back in the early days."

"No, no, it's always been this way," [they said]. If you go back to the vase paintings, you'll find it the same way. That same percentage of blondness was always there. Here you have these blonds among the Hopis in the same house [with the others], and it's quite surprising. You find it among the Greeks and other people, too. And, as he said, you do find platinum blond.

All varieties of hair adorn all varieties of skin color in all varieties of shading from dark to light, in which turn adorn all varieties of facial features and head shapes. Wherefore, few Mexican individuals can be identified as being of any hybrid race. They are simply "Worldians."

He calls them that because they have every race all mixed up together. So it was very necessary for them to make a special attempt at marking themselves. If they hadn't, you couldn't have distinguished them at all. They were all the same dark complexion, but no doubt there were plenty of blonds among them, as there are among certain Indian tribes. The blood types are very interesting there.

Verse 14: "Thus the word of God is fulfilled . . . [when he said], Behold, the Lamanites have I cursed, and I will set a mark on them [they were fulfilling the word of God] that they and their seed may be separated from thee and thy seed, from this time henceforth and forever [separated henceforth and forever, a permanent mark forever and ever? No,

he puts a limit on it here], except they repent of their wickedness and turn to me that I may have mercy upon them.” It is a reversible process. It’s their choice; they control it. Can they even reverse it? Can they do this with race? We can also initiate change in appearance ourselves.

Question: Could the skin color be a symbol of the atonement? When Jesus comes to visit the Nephites and they are praying, their faces turn white.

Answer: That’s light—they are shining. That’s a different thing. That’s like Moses’ face on the mountain and like Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. The shining is another level. Angels belong to a different race, but you get all kinds, I imagine, just the same.

You see, we are all cooperating in this thing, and it is a cultural thing. It all goes together, which makes perfectly good sense. And this tells how it was done. When the Nephites joined the Lamanites, they lived like them, dressed like them, and looked like them. We are told elsewhere in the Book of Mormon that those who changed their way of life and went back and lived with the Nephites became light again. So it’s obviously a cultural thing. It’s not a racial thing which is a permanent stamp or something like that because, after all, these people all had the same genes. Laman, Lemuel, Nephi, and Sam had the same genes, but certain ones were recessive. Certain ones will pop up at different times, etc. And they would be separated.

Verse 15: “And again: I will set a mark upon him that mingleth his seed with thy brethren, that they may be cursed also. And again: I will set a mark upon him that fighteth against thee and thy seed. [The marks he was setting were the marks they were setting on themselves.] And again, I say he that departeth from thee shall no more be called thy seed.” It’s the naming, the identification. The name is important, the way of life is important, the clothing is significant—everything about them and how they identify themselves. We would just call this *culture*, the single package. “And I will bless thee, and whomsoever shall be called thy seed [you are not his seed, but if you are called his seed, it is just the same as if you were; now we are dealing with the seed of Abraham], henceforth and forever; and these were the promises of the Lord unto Nephi and to his seed.” There’s that constant repeating of the word *seed*, and yet you can join in the seed and be called by that name forever after. Can you change your race back and forth? You don’t want to; you don’t need to. It’s this you change back and forth; we’re talking about the seed of Abraham.

“Now the Amlicites knew not that they were fulfilling the words of God when they began to mark themselves in their foreheads [this is it—they did not know that they actually were fulfilling the prophecy and the curse]; nevertheless they had come out in open rebellion against God; therefore it was expedient that the curse should fall upon them.” You notice that it was not according to affiliation. In the same way people mark themselves today; there’s a lot of that now. The SS all had tatoos on themselves. They would mark themselves as SS, and of course, it could never be taken off. They were scared to death. Don’t ask them to take off their shirts because it would give them away.

Then it gives this as a general rule: “. . . they brought upon themselves the curse; and even so doth every man that is cursed bring upon himself his own condemnation.” You need not fear the curse of the wicked; you need not fear the “evil eye.” If you are to be cursed, you will bring on yourself your own condemnation. You will put the mark on; nobody can force you to sin.

Verse 20: “Now it came to pass that not many days after the battle which was fought in the land of Zarahemla, by the Lamanites and the Amlicites, that there was another army of the Lamanites came in upon the people of Nephi, in the same place where the first army met the Amlicites.” Here it goes again! They [the Nephites] drove them out of the borders of their land, and there was peace for a time. “Now all these things were done, yea, all these wars and contentions were commenced and ended [all in just one year] in the fifth year of the reign of the judges.” Remember, five years ago Alma had founded a model community. Everybody belonged to the church; everybody was happy. They had all sworn the covenant under King Benjamin, etc. That’s how fast they had started to break up. Notice how many factions they had broken up into already. Here in the fifth year they were already engaging in these sordid wars, and here they had an echo war, a backup war, following through. The Lamanites thought they would come back again and take advantage of the Nephites’ weakness. But they drove them out of their borders, and there was peace for a time. All these things happened in one year, and it was just five years from Alma’s inauguration.

Verse 26: “And in one year were thousands and tens of thousands of souls sent to the eternal world, that they might reap their rewards according to their works.” Not according to their affiliation, not according to their flag or their uniform, but according to their works. I’ve known some very, very good Germans and Russians. I was attached to Russians in Heidelberg, some of the best people you could ever know. And some of the nastiest people you would ever know were in our headquarters. So there you go. According to their works they are going to be judged, “according to the spirit which they listed to obey [when they were here], whether it be a good spirit or a bad one.” It’s given to every individual to know with a perfect knowledge which is which. “For every man receiveth wages of him whom he listeth to obey.” With Nephite, Lamanite, and Amlicite it was all the same. The party, the nation, the church itself is not evil; it’s what you choose to do and how you choose to behave, etc. You can behave very vilely in any party. You can break all the Ten Commandments without being a Communist; you don’t have to belong to any particular faction or anything like that.

Now we get to chapter 4, and there is no glorious victory here. Some things I wrote down before class might be worth mentioning here. The royalist Amlicites were mixed; we saw that. The Nephites contained both those in the church and out of the church. These two mixed armies went against each other. You can’t make any distinction there—Nephite or Lamanite, Nephites versus Nehors, the church versus the persecutors. We find these repeated confrontations, as we mentioned the last time. What is this confrontation? Nephites versus Lamanites. No, we just saw it wasn’t that at all; you can’t make a clear—cut case for that. It is the kingdom against the world. The kingdom is always running away and getting beaten. It’s always losing the battle; this is the Rechabite principle. The righteous are always on the run in the Book of Mormon and everywhere else. It’s not the “Christus Victor” idea, “Onward Christian Soldiers” and Christ victorious. That is having a new revival in the Christian churches. There is a new liturgical revival in which Christus Victor is becoming the big thing: “We will be the victorious ones.” Well, that’s not it at all. The victory is on the other side. As Paul said, here we run the race and get beaten, but we will get rewards on the other side, not here. So we have the escape mode; we talked about the Fuga Mundi and the Rechabites.

In John 14:30 the Lord says, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” And they were not going to have it any

better. He said, if they have called the Lord of the house “Beelzebub,” what will they call the servants? if they slay me, that’s exactly what they will do to you. You have no better chance than I have. “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer [you are not going to get your reward here]; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). These two things are very clear.

Why this retreat? Why do we always retreat from the wicked into the wilderness, etc.? The church did in their last moves out of Missouri and Illinois. Well, in the first place they are hopelessly outnumbered. “He came into the world, and the world received him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not.” Those that received him were very few—one of a city and two of a generation, or two of a tribe, as it goes. Very few. As he said, you have tribulation here. They won’t follow him. “Broad is the way, which leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (3 Nephi 14:13–14). The multitude will all go in the other direction, so you are hopelessly outnumbered to begin with. It’s wise to withdraw, especially since you are not allowed to resort to violence. You are not supposed to fight back here. The Book of Mormon tells us a number of times, “Cursed is he who puts his trust in the arm of flesh,” who makes the arm of man his confidence. You’ll never win that way, and of course, they never did, even when they had great advantages, etc. It’s a great story; this is what the Book of Mormon deals with. The kingdom may not resort to violence; we are not allowed to do that. Then what do you do? Well, it was planned that way. We are going to be tried and tempted in this world.

The situation is plainly stated in Moroni 7:12 when he talks about *inviteth* and *enticeth*. Here you have them balanced. Moroni is the most instructive book in the Book of Mormon. He tells us that Satan is always inviting and enticing us in one direction. But at the same time the Lord is doing exactly the same thing; he is inviting and enticing us in the opposite direction. Who decides which direction you go in? Well, you do. The enticing and inviting are equally balanced. We allow Satan, our common enemy, [to tempt us]. Does he make himself overpoweringly persuasive so that you can’t possibly resist him? In that case you haven’t sinned. He’s not given that power; you are given the power to resist. He can only deceive. All the power you give him, as the Book of Mormon tells us, is by deception. If you want to follow, that’s why you’ll do it—that’s all there is to it. It’s up to you to decide. We are being pulled equally in two directions. Which orbit will you be drawn into? The one you prefer.

This is psychologically sound, too. Every moment of the day the mind must pick out and focus on one particular thing. All the rest becomes background. Who decides what the mind focuses on? You select it and it’s up to you. The things you wish to focus on and dwell on are the things which you choose. Talk about this life becoming a time of probation! The choices you make every minute announce where your preferences are. They make clear where you stand, what your values are, and everything else. You give yourself away every hour of the day. It’s marvelous because it goes on right to the end. As Nephi tells us, God prolongs our lives so we will have more chance to repent. That’s the great blessing of it. You have to make a choice. It’s not just the “two ways.” The ancients used to talk about the “two ways.” But the way of light and the way of darkness are before us at all times. You have the choice of the one or the other, and there is no middle way because they lead in opposite directions. As Heraclitus said, “The up road and the down road are one.” They lead in opposite directions. Being on the up road depends on the way you are facing, whether you are doing up or whether you are going down. To be righteous is to be facing up. You may be right at the bottom of the road and a miserable rat. To be

lost, to be wicked is to be facing down, no matter how high you may be. Jeremiah 38 tells us about that sort of thing.

So we have this choice to make all the time. Talk about a time of probation! It is in every motion you make. We talk about body language and things like that. Everything you do and everything you say gives away what you really want. You give yourself away all over the place. It doesn't take a trained psychologist [to see this] either. As time mounts up, the elements of what you have done all conform to a particular pattern, and you become a well-marked person. We can change it, too, and that's the nice thing—knowing that you can make a choice anytime. But you notice this idea of the one or the other. Can't we balance the two? No, it's an interesting thing that you can't. Remember, you can't serve God and mammon; you can't have two masters.

That's the principle of the computer now. Everything is based on just a double route. You can take one route or the other and that's it. On that simple basis, we build an infinitely complex mesh of problem solutions—just on a simple one two, which is what the Egyptians did. They counted to two and that was their whole thing; everything was twos after that. It's a marvelous thing. But we are faced with this one or the other business. I guess it really simplifies things for us. You get it in the Book of Mormon. But then it breaks down to divisions within divisions, etc. You may, for example, agree with a person on the subject of nuclear power and yet be against nuclear war, or something like that. You could favor part of the nuclear industry and not another part. You can divide yourself down.

What we were saying here that was so profound was this: Why the retreat? It was not the Nephites against the Lamanites then. The righteous Nephites willingly joined with the righteous Lamanites all through the book, especially later on. They willingly joined together, and there was no trouble at all between them; they became one in a community. Remember, it tells us that after the Lord came there were no more *-ites*. And when they were wicked, the Nephites joined with the Lamanites to gain support against the Nephites. They did that all the time. We get more dangerous people than [Amlici] coming along, like Amalickiah. He wanted to be king of both the Lamanites and the Nephites, and he nearly succeeded.

We have two rules, two economies which cannot compromise, the Law of Consecration (which they use) and the law of the marketplace. The Nephites must persecute, and the Lamanites must withdraw. There are great temporary disadvantages to the economy that Nephi established, Law of Consecration. Of course, there are eternal advantages. On the other hand, there are great temporary advantages to the law of the marketplace and eternal disadvantages. You run into that. We've got to learn that—not to lay things up on earth. This is another thing that surprises us: Because the righteous withdraw, the two kingdoms never contend in war. When there is a war, it is always the bad guys against the bad guys. I don't think you can find one in which that isn't the case. As Mormon said, "The justice of God will overtake the wicked." War is made by common agreement. We agree that we will wear uniforms and have flags, etc. We agree that we will fight each other.

We get to a marvelous thing a little later on when they play the Sebus game. It is just exactly the way it used to be arranged by the ancients. It is a formal game they played, in which you are allowed to kill so many and no more. Why do men contrive these formal ceremonies? Notice that war is a ceremony—war is formal. Civilians wear different

clothes, but in war we wear uniforms and have bands, which are Asiatic. We have banners to identify ourselves. (I've written a lot about this, incidentally.) In the open Steppes of the plains, you had to identify a person at a distance, so you have to have bright banners to identify tribes. And you had to have instruments that carry at a distance. There was the Roman trumpet, but especially the Asiatic trumpet. They had a whole brass band. That's why we have the military band, because outdoors it makes a big noise. You don't have stringed orchestras for that. They are for indoors, as you know, and they are for shepherds, who don't intend their sounds to be heard at a great distance. The Jews were great cultivators of stringed instruments, as we get from some interesting Egyptian documents. You have to form yourselves into brigades, etc. because in the Asiatic Steppes they are mounted riders. They move fast and cover vast areas. They have to be able to recognize people at a distance, etc. So they have all these signs and symbols. You have to have uniforms to be able to spot a person immediately and know who he is.

Incidentally, the 101st was to be the first division to land in Normandy. The general was very much worried about bugle calls because the Germans had certain bugle calls by which they would do signals. One of my jobs was to find out what the bugle calls were and what they signified. When your communications break down, you really get down to basics every time. And they used these bugle calls to locate each other or tell men to move in a certain direction. It only lasted for a week in Normandy there. It could have been effective, but there was too much noise to hear these bugles most of the time. It has to be a shrill brass sound that will sound above the outcry.

Why do we do these things? Why do we enter into this ceremony of war? It's very ceremonial, and that's the whole thrill of it. That's the obligation. It gets everybody; it gets me. We think it's great, though we shouldn't. It's our attempt to release ourselves from our individual covenants with God. I have an individual covenant with God, which is a very binding one. If I want to release myself from that and still feel good about it, I can say, "God wills!" That was the banner of the Crusades. On the other hand, it was *in sha'a Allāh al-Akbar* for the Arabs. When they clashed, each one was there doing the will of God. In 1095 at Claremont, St. Bernard gave his famous speech. It is recorded completely in Fulcher, who was the private secretary of Baldwin. We have the speech, and it's a marvelous one about the Crusades in 1095. Everything had broken down in Europe. The whole economy had broken down; everybody was fighting everybody else. Every great noble was out to grab all the land he could from his next-door neighbor, because that was considered a rule of chivalry and an obligation. Everybody was robbing everybody else. They were setting up towers along the road. He goes on and on. There was no unity and no peace in Christendom, so [they decided] they must make a common enemy and march against the East. The same pan-Hellenic oration was given against Persia by Isocrates way back in the fifth century B.C. for the same reason. "We can't unite, so let's unite against somebody." And that was the Roman idea: "Our troubles cease if we can only find an outside enemy." So they had the *ager hosticus*. "The enemy at the gates" became the one slogan which could unite the Romans. This is what we have here. Throughout the Book of Mormon they were forming these armies so they could escape [their problems] and go out and have some fun.

Question: You mentioned that the knights went around killing each other. Where can we read about that?

Answer: If you want that, you have to read Froissart. He gives a description of the complete collapse of the terrible fourteenth century.

Question: Was he a historian talking about that?

Answer: He was secretary to a duke under Richard II of England. He observed all these things and saw what was going on.