

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 2, Lecture 33
Mosiah 10–11
War and Defenses

We are on Mosiah 10:8, and things begin to happen that have a familiar ring. They try again here. Zeniff sent out his spies, and [the Lamanite king] is watchful and doesn't miss a thing. This attack doesn't go so well, but notice the situation and how they do it. He [Zeniff] has his spies watching because he has been burned once. Verse 8: "They came up upon the north of the land of Shilom, with their numerous hosts, men armed with bows, and with arrows, and with swords, and with cimeters, and with stones, and with slings; and they had their heads shaved that they were naked; and they were girded with a leathern girdle about their loins." You notice the standard equipment here—the leather clothing and the wild hairdo. They are like a motorcycle gang, aren't they? They had the equipment and their heads shaved, and they were naked except for the leather garments they had on. They were trying to inspire terror, of course, and this is a very important thing.

Dressing up is an essential part of soldiering. In any other line it would be considered overdoing it, but you have to distinguish rank and superiority. The dressing up and all this nonsense is just a necessary part of the uniform, as we read from Clausewitz. The purpose of the military, of course, is to break the enemy's will, not to destroy them. The Lamanites don't want to destroy the Nephites; they want the Nephites to work for them. That's the whole thing—they want to enslave them. There's no point to destroying them. That's exactly what Clausewitz teaches the Generalstab. This was the textbook for World War I. The important thing is to break the enemy's will. When he does what you want, that's all you want—the war is won then. There's no point to body count at all. It's utter absurdity and makes no sense, as the great Clausewitz said. His book is the standard work on war, as you know, *Kriege* by Clausewitz. You want to discourage [the enemy] and make him lose heart, so you make yourself look as terrible as you can when you approach. That will break his spirit sometimes if you look very awful, and they thought it would work. This is part of it. The posture of dominance requires this high profile and distinct superiority. You have to be able to distinguish rank at a distance, of course, in armies. That's why you have the banners and the trumpets. The banners are to distinguish particular units, etc. They all go back to the Steppes of Asia. We won't go into that, but you get more of it in the book of Ether. We'll get to that. As I said, their objective was to put the Nephites to work and not to destroy them. Intimidation is the quickest and easiest way of dominance, so you try that and see if will work. This was part of the policy of the German staff. They actually adopted *Schrecklichkeit*, and Hitler adopted it, too. *Schrecklichkeit* means *terror*, making yourself as terrible as possible, and they did. That was the idea of the blitzkrieg—be absolutely overpowering and absolutely merciless, strike and intimidate right from the very first. You look terrible, you sound terrible, you threaten, and all this sort of thing. So that's what these people are doing, and they do it all through the Book of Mormon. And it works, [especially] if the people are wicked, feel guilty, and that sort of thing.

So it's all out here, the worst possible case, as we see in verse 9. There's extreme danger for the Nephites, and it requires full mobilization of every bit of manpower they can possibly

get. The women and children are taken off and hidden in the wilderness, which follows a pattern, too—hiding them in the wilderness, taking them out of sight, etc. You can put them on ships or you can put them in the *syech*. When the barbarians invade, there are special places where they go and hide, certain woods, etc. You see a lot of this sort of thing. At a place called Wegel in Holland, where we were stuck, there was this huge grain elevator with its vast area underneath. All the women and children from the towns around were down there, and that's where we set up headquarters. They had to get them out of sight, and that's what was done. They [the Nephites] were mobilized and organized according to the pattern of Israel, as we read in the *Milḥāmāh Scroll*, the *Battle Scroll*. By age is the easiest, the most obvious, and the most natural and workable way—people of the same age groups working together. So that's what he did; “and I did place them in their ranks, every man according to his age.” So they went up to battle against the Lamanites, and they went up “in the strength of the Lord.”

Then we have this interesting thing. The odds are with the Lamanites “as to the strength of men.” Now this is an important thing—peace through strength, as to the strength of men. Of course, we have a marvelous discourse on that, and I'm very tempted to go into it. In the very first chapter, the opening of the Doctrine and Covenants, it deals with this problem very, very much to the point, right down the line. First of all we have an exposition of the situation in verse 17, and things are bad. “Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth . . .” He knows what it is, and in verse 35 he says what it is: “. . . the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion” (D&C 1:35). Knowing this, the Lord has taken certain steps, and notice what perfectly rational steps they are. What do we do about it? First of all, he called upon one man, as he always does. “Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments” (D&C 1:17).

Just one man in this case, as it has always been. Noah was the only man, Abraham was the only man, Moses was the only man, and the prophets. The knowledge is handed down. It is shared by all of them, as we read in Moroni 7:32. We won't go into that now. He lets others in on the information, too; notice D&C 1:18. “And also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world [let's spread the news around and get this going]; and all this that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets.” The ones he summons for this work are not the ambitious or the powerful ones; he mentions weakness repeatedly. He only takes them on when they are weak. “The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh” (D&C 1:19).

Do you tell everybody what to do and back it up with force, which is exactly what everybody is doing today? He says this should not happen; the Lord has what our best defense should be. What about [Moses] in the first chapter of the first book of Moses? Weak and helpless, he said, “Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed.” It took him hours to get his strength again. He was as weak as a baby, lying as if he were dead on the earth there. As he finally began to stir, that's when the devil struck. Satan chose that time to attack when [Moses] was at his weakest. It was the same thing with Enoch. “I am but a lad and the people hate me.” He was slow of speech and had no qualifications whatever when the Lord chose him. Moses was also slow of speech, and Aaron had to be chosen to do his speaking for him. And it goes on down

with the prophets. “I’m not the prophet nor the son of a prophet.” Of course, Jesus was “despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” A more lowly beginning than a manger could not be imagined. And then Joseph Smith’s story was the same way. He [the Lord] begins with the weak ones because they are the ones who will listen.

Everyone must have his own testimony [verse 20], and the first point is faith [verse 21] which is our best defense. It’s very interesting how President Kimball brought this out here. He said, “Few men have ever knowingly and deliberately chosen to reject God and his blessings. Rather, we learn from the scriptures that because the exercise of faith has always appeared to be more difficult than relying on things more immediately at hand [making yourself look terrible, etc.], carnal man has tended to transfer his trust in God to material things [we’ll be the strongest, have the most nukes, etc.]. Therefore, in all ages when men have fallen under the power of Satan and lost the faith, they have put in its place a hope in the ‘arm of flesh.’”¹ He is quoting here from the Doctrine and Covenants. This is what has happened here. He goes on here and tells us about ourselves, “Enoch, too, was a man of great faith who would not be distracted from his duties by the enemy: ‘And so great was the faith of Enoch, that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them’ [they were on the defensive]. . . . What are we to fear when the Lord is with us? Can we not take the Lord at his word and exercise a particle of faith in him? Our assignment is affirmative: to forsake the things of the world as ends in themselves; to leave off idolatry and press forward in faith; to carry the gospel to our enemies, that they might no longer be our enemies.” That was the mission of Ammon in the Book of Mormon. We’ll get to him; he was a great man.

So faith is the next thing that is required in D&C 1:21. Then we enter into the covenant “that the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers.” And in the next verse it talks about *weakness*: “Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness.” You have to qualify by being weak. Where is your “peace through strength” and that sort of thing? Then he [the Lord] explains how he can make us much stronger. The only safe defense you have is this, and it’s the perfect defense. It includes three things we find in Moses 7:32. He gave Adam all three things to defend him, and they are these things that follow next.

Imagine yourself wired to receive messages. You are out on a patrol, and you are in a terribly dangerous situation. It’s desperate. Unless you can get through, the division is sunk because we don’t know what side they are going to hit us on. It’s night, etc. But you are wired up, and you can receive messages from somebody who is not in a Piper Cub observing artillery. He is in a spy satellite that has magnificent electronic devices, such as they do today. They can read an inscription on a dime through a dense fog. He is up there, and he can see everything. Well, you’re safe then because he can tell you the three things the Lord says he is going to do. First, he says he will give you knowledge. In the Garden of Eden he gave Adam knowledge. That’s a good thing to have—knowledge of what’s going on. But even if we know what’s going on, what do we do about it then? This is the worst thing. The commanders get all the information, but they want to throw it away. They say, “Well, just plunge ahead; we never turn back or bother about this. We’ll go in and show them.” Then he gets “in the soup.”

But you need knowledge, and then you have to have instructions, advice. That’s what you asked for. The Lord gave knowledge and instruction, and then when they went wrong, he

gave them correction. That's what it says here. Verse 26: "And inasmuch as they sought wisdom they might be instructed [about what to do—first they received knowledge]. . . . And inasmuch as they were humble [there's your weakness again] they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time."

With that you receive instruction. But even in obeying the instructions you make mistakes; you always blunder or go the wrong way. "And inasmuch as they erred it might be made known." He tells you when you are making mistakes. So you have information, you have advice, and you have correction—and you have it from one who knows everything. If you follow that, you are perfectly safe. But what does everybody do? What would you do as a patrolman? What does the commanding officer do? He turns off the receiver. He says, "We know what's happening down here. I know the situation best. We'll hit them right now." As I said, he loses his shirt. This has happened quite a few times; you would be surprised. He [the Lord] says he has given them everything here, and this is how he helps the Nephites out. He says, if they are weak I'll give them knowledge.

Finally, in verse 30 of the Doctrine and Covenants he tells us that it is specifically the Church through which we receive this information. That's where we get the message conveyed. Through the Church we receive the knowledge and the instruction and the correction to act together and know what we are doing, you see. So we have to cooperate; that's what the Church is there for—to get these things going together.

Very interestingly, from verse 12 to verse 17 he gives a very fair, honest, and unbiased presentation of the Lamanite case. The Lamanites had a case, too. They had a reason. They felt offended and threatened. They saw the Nephite power building up, and King Laman started to get worried when he saw the Nephites getting too strong. That's why they began to make trouble for them. Then he stirred up his people to make trouble so they would do something about it. Here [in verse 12] it says, "They were a wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people." But they firmly believed "that they were driven out of the land of Jerusalem because of the iniquities of their fathers, and that they were wronged in the wilderness by their brethren." They blamed Nephi for everything. That [explains] the terrible pressure that Nephi was under at the end of 1 Nephi—his discouragement and absolute desperation. He was pressed all the time and held responsible for everything. They said Nephi was to blame for it all, and they firmly believed that because they were taught that by their fathers and would teach it to their children. And the basic thing is defense. Clausewitz also said, "All wars are defensive. You are always just defending; you never attack." That's the first rule. So the German staff changed themselves from the *Kriegsamt*, War Office, and *Kriegsschule*, War School, to *Wehrmacht*, "the Defense Power." Until World War II we called them the Secretary of the Army and Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of War. In World War I, Baker became Secretary of War. We changed that to Secretary of Defense. Now we are just defensive; we never make war anymore. Everything is defense. We took that hint from the Germans.

That's what they did here, and it's very important. That's necessary for morale and justification and everything else. Of course, they could understand this, and they had been wronged. Verse 13: "And again, . . . they were wronged while in the land of their first inheritance, after they had crossed the sea [you notice then that the author puts in parentheses the real explanation of what it was], and all this because that Nephi was more faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord [that's what their real 'beef' was about]—therefore he was favored of the Lord, for the Lord heard his prayers and answered them, and he took the lead of their journey in the wilderness [this is what they resented].

And his brethren were wroth with him because they understood not the dealings of the Lord; they were also wroth with him [poor Nephi] upon the waters [they tied him up] because they hardened their hearts against the Lord. And again, they were wroth with him when they had arrived in the promised land, because they said that he had taken the ruling of the people out of their hands; and they sought to kill him.” They felt they were robbed; the objection was that the Nephites had betrayed them. They were the real ones in charge, and the Nephites had taken away their birthright, their right to rule. This [feeling] was built up. This is like the case the French and the Germans built up against each other for hundreds of years. “They raided us; they burned our castles.” They said that on both sides of the line, and this went on for hundreds of years. The French and the Germans are finally beginning to see that sort of thing is not going to pay off. That was the big thing in Europe for centuries, as you know—the two divisions of the Frankish people.

So they [the Nephites] had taken the ruling out of their hands. We ought to rule. It’s our right, and you have robbed us of our right [they said]. Well, that’s what the Shi’ites say. They believe that Ali, the nephew of Muhammad, should be the head, and the Sunnis believe that Omar, his uncle, should be the head of Islam. That’s what all the fighting has been about. Because of bloody war, it’s not safe anywhere in Lebanon today because of this. They are both devoted, passionate Moslems, but all the fighting is about this [disagreement] over Ali and Omar. These feuds that continue are so absurd.

Verse 16: “And again, they were wroth with him because he departed into the wilderness as the Lord had commanded him [Remember, he broke off and left them; they said he shouldn’t have done that. That was betrayal; that was treason. You see how these things get started], and took the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, for they said that he robbed them.” They said he robbed them of their inheritance. They had no interest in those plates. What did they care about the plates until he took them? “And thus they have taught their children that they should hate them [They built this in, so really, if you were a Lamanite, you would have a good case. You could argue and pound the table and make your case very clear that Nephi was the younger son and had no right to those things he took. The other brethren went along, etc. You would build up a big argument], and that they should murder them, and that they should rob and plunder them [to get their birthright back], and do all they could to destroy them; therefore they have an eternal hatred towards the children of Nephi.”

We see those feuds in the world that have been smoldering for many generations everywhere. Of course, Ireland is a classic example. Ever since 1620 there has been no peace. The other side has always been guilty. My grandmother left Ireland when she was seventeen years old and said she never wanted to go back. All she could remember in Belfast was blood running in the gutters. That was a long time ago, they are still doing that sort of thing. It’s awful, but these things go on and on. In the Philippines the Moriscos and the Christians go on forever and ever. Of course, in Palestine it is just endless between the Jews and Arabs, the Shi’ites and the Sunnis, etc. This is the world we live in with these perpetual feuds.

After 150 years they are still digging up the same old stuff about the Mormons. They are still just as bitter as ever. And you will find that the people who write about this feel personally robbed by Joseph Smith. You find a great resentment among those people. I correspond with these anti-Mormon groups more than anybody, I think. They feel a personal bitter resentment against Joseph Smith—he’s the one to blame for all this. Poor

little Joseph there, just a farm kid trying to do his best, and 150 years later big powerful institutions blame him for something or other. They hold him personally responsible. But, as I said, the Lamanites had a case; it was the national myth. As we see in verse 17, they taught their children that. It was handed down to the little ones. What could they do but accept this eternal hatred?

What do we have here? As I said there's the IRA syndrome in Ireland. There are the Jukes and the Kallikaks, the feuds in the South. Well, we have the North and the South. They were never going to stop until the bloody settlement. It was still going on when I was in grammar school; we were still fighting the Civil War. The only songs we ever sang in class were Civil War songs, "Marching through Georgia," etc. These feuds are costly and exhausting. They are permanent and simplistic. They set policies between parties, as in Latin America, to destabilize and disrupt. That's their idea. Notice that the Lamanites did all they could to destroy them; that was the solution. They didn't just leave them alone; they tried to destroy them in this eternal hatred. They tried to destabilize, undermine them, strike them wherever they could, and keep constant pressure on them. These are the policies we see. This should all be over with after two world wars. We should have learned something about this sort of thing—instead it gets worse. That's why we have the Book of Mormon, why we are warned. I should have mentioned this in connection with D&C 1:17. "Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments." And gave him the Book of Mormon. This is a special handbook for these particular dismal times.

King Laman set his trap and bided his time all those years. Notice, "For this very cause has king Laman, by his cunning, and lying craftiness, and his fair promises, deceived me, that I have brought this my people up into this land, that they may destroy them; yea, and we have suffered these many years in the land." All these years this has smoldered. So Zeniff roused them up and stimulated them to go to battle. If you must fight, you do as he did. Verse 20: "And it came to pass that we did drive them again out of our land; and we slew them with a great slaughter. . . . We returned again to our own land, and my people again began to tend their flocks, and to till their ground." It was right back to square one again, which is an interesting thing. All wars in the Book of Mormon take place on Nephite territory, except the last one. We are told in Mormon 4:4, "And it was because the armies of the Nephites went up unto the Lamanites that they began to be smitten; for were it not for that, the Lamanites could have had no power over them." As soon as they did that, he knew "the jig was up." In the next verse he says, Don't worry about the wicked neighbors you have. "But behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished." If you feel you must punish them, you'll get right into it yourself. "It is by the wicked that the wicked are punished." At an early phase of the Korean War it was announced by our general staff that the North Koreans were virtually beaten, but they hadn't been sufficiently punished. So they decided to continue the war—because they hadn't been punished. "It is by the wicked that the wicked are punished." The Lord repeatedly says in the Book of Mormon, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." At the end it is climactic, but it is already [going on] at this time.

Then in the next chapter we see that Zeniff is not a man of very good judgment. You notice that he has done foolish things. In Mosiah 9:2–3 he got into trouble with the leader of the crew. He wanted to make peace, but he wasn't too tactful about it. He was partly responsible for the breaking up of that group. Then soon after he insisted on leading another expedition which was poorly equipped, and they suffered from hunger and thirst.

They had a terrible time because they weren't properly prepared. Then he gave the kingdom to a son who was [a poor ruler]. It shows at best that he doesn't have good judgment because the son was a rotter. But this is the most interesting thing. His judgment wasn't the best, but we overlook the fact that the wicked Noah was an extremely popular king. He was the most popular king in the Book of Mormon. We say, "He was wicked; terrible Noah." We look at pictures drawn by Arnold Friberg, and we say, "Ooh what a fiend he was!" But he wasn't that way at all. He was very popular, as I said. Notice, when it says, "Do that which was *abominable* in the sight of the Lord," that's a euphemism. That's when you use one word to cover another word, particularly a displeasing word. A good example of that is the *emerods* in the Bible. *Hemorrhoids* are not nice, so they used a totally different word for it. Where it is used here, *abominable* means *kinky sex* and *whoredoms* in the plural, all kinds of depravities. This is the idea. What's more, we read that the people went along with it; they joined him in it. "And he did cause his people to commit sin, and do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord." It wasn't just in his court that they were doing it; he set an example that was followed. "Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness." That covers a lot. Oh, yes, for *emerods* they used the word *ʿāpḏār* which just means *dust*. It was a complete coverup; you'd never guess what it meant from that. But this is the same thing, and it covered a lot of vices, you can be sure.

Verse 3: "And he laid a tax of one fifth part of all they possessed." Now that was a perfectly normal tax, twenty percent, in all ancient societies—Babylonian, Egyptian, everywhere. It was not oppressive; you could still prosper with it. But, of course, [the problem] was what it was used for—the waste it was put to. The next verse tells us that; he did it all to support himself. It was a whole new ball game, a new culture. Talk about a new *administration*! It says, "thus he had changed the affairs of the kingdom." He completely changed the whole thing. He put in new personnel all the way—his wives and his concubines and his priests and their wives and concubines. Remember, it was a sacral state, a priest state. He was the priest king. They were the priestly governors, and they were the highest court of law. He changed the whole personnel. He made a clean sweep and put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father. He removed all the priests that were in there and consecrated new ones to suit his own fancy, "such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts." They were proud and were going to take over and really do things—and note the kinds of things they were going to do!

Question: Where did Zeniff get his power to consecrate the priests?

Answer: They came out of [the land of Lehi-Nephi] and Mosiah was in charge. He got it from Mosiah. Mosiah's [authority] was passed down from the beginning. He was Nephite too and had it from Nephi; it came through that line. Imagine Joseph writing all this out with all these migrations. He never got mixed up, but I get mixed up all the time. He was writing this just cold with no notes, no references, no evidences of any study, no handbooks or sources available anywhere. He produced this, and it was "quite a trick"!

Well, I think of other administrations, like Alexander VI; Roderigo Borgia was a Spaniard who became pope. He put his son, the famous Cesare Borgia, in charge, and it was just such an orgy. Italy was completely in the hands of those people. It was divided between the scrupulous and bloody use of power and vast immorality—all sorts of ingenious devices for misbehaving. So we're getting that order of things now. The people joined him in the idolatry; they also became idolatrous. Notice, "thus did the people labor exceedingly

to support iniquity.” Now the fact that they worked hard doesn’t sanctify their wealth or the uses of it. Remember, Jacob said, you have worked hard, and by your industry you have acquired great wealth. But it’s vile; you shouldn’t have it. The fact that you have worked for the stuff doesn’t mean that it is sanctified at all. Here the people were all for the program. He was a very popular king and put on a great show. “Thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity. Yea, and they also became idolatrous, because they were deceived by the vain and flattering words of the king and priests [he told them what they wanted to hear; they joined in it and were won over by the official rhetoric, the flattering which the public loves to hear] for they did speak flattering things unto them.”

They joined with Noah in his excesses, too. We read in verse 15: “He became a wine-bibber, and also his people.” They joined him in all these things. And, of course, elegant and spacious buildings are the things we’re proud of; they are the things that make the civilization. They’re very showy and magnificent with all the work in the metal, etc. This reminds me of the Moche grave which was recently discovered in Peru, the great unlooted grave so far. That was from the fourth century, and this is in the second century B.C. It was five or six hundred years after this; that’s close enough. But you can see the lavishness on the wall and vase paintings, etc. Everything is overdone—the massive work, the feathers, the plumes, the jewels, the necklaces, the bracelets. You could be crushed with the stuff. It’s vulgar excess all over the place, just too much. This is characteristic of this civilization, and the Book of Mormon complains of it all the way through—the costly apparel. It’s not beautiful necessarily, but it’s costly. That’s the main thing about it. Verse 9: “And he also built him a spacious palace, and a throne in the midst thereof.” He got great public support on that too because they were proud of that and proud of their king.

I may have mentioned C. N. Parkinson, inventor of Parkinson’s law. He wrote a very good essay on the building of great buildings in the world. Always the great, magnificent, marvelous show buildings come right as the last gasp of a civilization. Just on the verge of collapse they build these tremendous buildings; he shows that this happens every time. I refer to the contemporary issue of the *National Geographic*, which is on the skyscrapers of New York. It is almost sickening. There are these enormous skyscrapers going up a hundred stories, right next door to each other with no air space in between them, just for show. The way it boasts about them, etc., is really astonishing. Where can we go from there? What would happen? I mean they are not practical. How can people get out of them all at once? Here you have a hundred thousand people right next to each other and one little, narrow street between them. How do they all get out in ten minutes? That sort of thing. It’s not going to happen.

But the palace and the throne are legitimate appurtenances of civilization—architecture, building, the temple, of course. Anciently they put it all on in the temple. This was the big thing. We are told that in the Greek and Roman orations, too. In ancient times the people were proud of the temple and their sacred buildings. Now it’s all in the private houses, and the poor old temple goes neglected. You get that in Aristophanes and others. Verse 9: “And he also built him a spacious palace, and a throne in the midst thereof, all of which was of fine wood and was ornamented with gold and silver and with precious things. And he also caused that his workmen should work all manner of fine work within the walls of the temple, of fine wood, and of copper, and of brass.” He was pouring it on because that’s the way it was. Here’s a nice touch of irony; there’s real satire in this one. We think of Matthew 6:2, where the Lord puts a touch of irony and humor in there—there’s more than you think in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. He talks about

the rich men going to give alms. They must go to give alms, so they have a trumpet sounding before them to show they are giving alms to the poor. Well, that's utterly ridiculous, of course. It's meant to be, and this is, too. Verse 11: "And the seats which were set apart for the high priests, which were above all the other seats, he did ornament with pure gold; and he caused a breastwork to be built before them, that they might rest their bodies and their arms upon while they should speak lying and vain words to his people." It was magnificent and impressive. They would sit there in their majesty and speak to the people. You know what they would speak to them. This brings up a very interesting parallel, but we'll go on.

Question: Was it the practice of the Nephites to construct their buildings out of wood rather than cement?

Answer: That's true; they only built with cement when they found a place that had been deforested. Deforestation was very important there. That's a thing the Book of Mormon takes a good leap on, too. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries deforestation was of great concern to scholars. They worried about that because once those forests go they never come back again.

It's very interesting that he [King Noah] built a tower near the temple. One thing we all remember from pictures of Central America and visits is that it was a tower culture. There are towers spotting the jungle everywhere you go. Verse 12: "He built a tower near the temple; yea, a very high tower, even so high that he could stand upon the top thereof and overlook the land of Shilom [the high land], and also the land of Shemlon [on the east], which was possessed by the Lamanites; and he could even look over all the land round about." Those of you who have been to Palenque know that's exactly the setting. Incidentally, the tradition of the Hopis is that they came from Palenque. It's a very interesting thing. (The parrot clan is the main clan, the mother clan, but let's not get sidetracked onto that.) The towers are very interesting here. They had both the round and the square towers. There were two civilizations anciently around the Mediterranean that coexisted. There was the *pyrgos*, like Pergamum, etc. That's the square tower on a high, safe place. So we get the words like *burg*; any safe, high place is a *burg*, or a *borough* as we spell it, or the German *Berg*. That's a mountain, *Heidelberg* or *Nürnberg*. A *burrow* is a hole in the ground, a place of retreat, a safe place. But the *pyrgos* is the square tower, and you find the square tower people all over. The Greek word for *tower* is *pyrgos*, completely unknown to the Latin. That is the other word, *turris*, which is *round tower*. The Latin word is *turris* in the feminine. All the Celtic people that came down from the north had the round towers, so our word *tower* means *around* or *circle*, and it's *dôr* in Semitic language, meaning a *round tower*. The main feature in the oldest city in the world is that huge round tower in Jericho. [Some] say it goes back as far as eight thousand years ago. So you have the *turris*, the *tower*, and our word *tour* means to "go around in a circle." All these things are very rich in meaning—*tour*, *turn* as against *pyrgos*, *burg*, *borough*. What other burgs do we have? *Bergen* means *to protect*.

They had both types of Mediterranean towers in South America; you'll find both types. But the round towers are astronomical towers—that's a different thing. The normal thing is square. Chichen-Itza has both, as you know, but the round ones are for the stars. They built these towers. At Palenque there's not only that magnificent tomb, but there's that high tower on a high place, and it was meant as a watch tower. You can go to the top and see the whole land, all the way down to Villahermosa there on the coast. It's all flat, but you can see other towers sticking up here and there. You can see everything from that

tower. All of a sudden the mountain is there with heavy jungle and magnificent trees, and there are these big towers up there. You can go up there and see everything from them. That was the purpose of them. Why would you bother to build a tower if you were going to build it lower down? Just for the symbol of the tower? No, you want to see as much as you can. Those are watchtowers at Palenque. You have all seen pictures of them. I guess we should show slides and things like that, but I never remember what I see in slides.

Verse 13: “And it came to pass that he caused many buildings to be built in the land Shilom; and he caused a great tower to be built on the hill north of the land Shilom [you can be sure that was a great square tower, a great defensive tower] . . . and thus he did do with the riches which he obtained by the taxation of his people.” Like fourth-century civilization, it was flashy, superficial, and very impressive. But it collapsed very quickly. In this security they lived the lifestyle of the rich and famous. “He placed his heart upon his riches, and he spent his time in riotous living with his wives and his concubines; and so did also his priests spend their time with harlots.” They had a high old time here. Then he planted vineyards, and this is an important thing, too. “. . . he planted vineyards round about in the land; and he built wine-presses, and made wine in abundance; and therefore he became a wine-bibber, and also his people.” See, he brought them along with him. Wine is native to America, as you know. You know where Vinland is? Martha’s Vineyard, etc.? In the year 986 Bjorni Haraldsson was a merchant who, along with Eric the Red, sailed along the coast of Labrador and New England. They came down as far as Massachusetts, reported grapes around there, and went back. Then exactly in the year 1000, which is easy to remember, his son, Leif Ericsson, visited the coast and came back with a lot of grapes. Then another merchant followed in 1002, just two years after that. He took 160 people with him in three ships, and they lived there. Then there was the usual thing, the big fight. They had the big squabble, broke up, and went back again. But the land was rich in grapes here. Who else do we have? That’s about it. Well, the Skraelings, the Eskimos. They did away with them; the colony disappeared after a while. The point is that they called it Vinland and they were good grapes, which are native to America. But they could have been planted by other people. A very important thing they are finding today is that the whole geographical face of the earth now is the result of man’s work to a far greater degree than we ever supposed, including even things like the Sahara Desert, vast as it is. It’s the result of our monkeying around.

Well, then what happens here? Ah, now look! This was the way they were acting, so against this rich and apparently strong kingdom, the Lamanites adopt a policy of terrorism—infiltration, but it’s terrorism. It’s not banditry which is just stealing. Bandits and pirates can be good-natured and even be friendly. There’s Bernard Shaw’s Captain Brassbound’s Conversion and stories about the good natured bandits of southern Italy, etc. But this isn’t the thing. These people are animated by hatred and by a policy. They are real terrorists, in other words. They think they are idealists, as it tells us here. Verse 16: “And it came to pass that the Lamanites began to come in upon his people, upon small numbers, and to slay them in their fields, and while they were tending their flocks.” Then it says in the next verse: “Thus the Lamanites began to destroy them, and to exercise their hatred upon them.” See, they were motivated to exercise their hatred; they were real terrorists. Remember they had the case that they were just freedom fighters for their particular cause, etc. This is terrorism, not just banditry. They didn’t just come in to rob them. “The Lamanites came upon them and killed them, and drove many of their flocks out of the land; thus the Lamanites began to destroy them, and to exercise their hatred upon them.” This is a very bad thing, this terrorism.

Then the Lamanites became bolder. They infiltrated en masse, and the army gave them an unexpected setback. Verse 18: “King Noah sent his armies against them, and they were driven back [they got overconfident; they had been getting away with this] or they drove them back for a time; therefore they returned rejoicing in their spoil.” With that easy victory, surprised and elated by their performance, they suddenly found themselves standing tall. They were very much pleased with the game. That was fun, and they began to enjoy it. The author deplores the situation; he holds the administration responsible. “And now, because of this great victory they were lifted up in the pride of their hearts [Well, why not? What is wrong with victory? They were enjoying the shedding of blood and having the upper hand; it tells us that here, you see]. . . . Thus they did boast, and did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren.” The Lamanites are their brethren, and they shouldn’t do that, even with the bad Lamanites. Moroni never refers to the Lamanites as anything but their brethren. They shouldn’t have done that. “They were lifted up in the pride of their hearts; they did boast in their own strength, saying that their fifty could stand against thousands of the Lamanites; and thus they did boast, and did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren, and this because of the wickedness of their king and priests.” Would he be responsible for that?

Now we get the story of Abinadi, which has a most striking parallel. You talk about recurrent scenarios; there’s nothing more striking than this story of Abinadi and the story we have of the Teacher of Righteousness in the Dead Sea Scrolls. His story is Abinadi’s story at the same time. This happened about the second century B.C. the same way. We find it in the Damascus Fragment, the Manual of Discipline, the Habakkuk Scroll, and the Thanksgiving Hymns from Qumran. So both of them are well documented, and they both go through the same routine, like this idea in Mosiah, “that they might rest their bodies . . . while they should speak lying and vain words to his people,” etc. The 1Q8 says, “But they did lead my people astray, speaking smooth things, practitioners of vain rhetoric. Lying speakers and vain seers [they are called]. In their insolence they would sit in judgment . . . and from the mouths of lying prophets led astray the people.” See, they were just like these people.

Then Mosiah says, “They did boast, and did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren, and this because of the wickedness of their king and priests.” And the Damascus Fragment says, “And they took the offensive against the life of the righteous and all who walked uprightly, and they hated in their hearts and pursued them with the sword, and rejoiced in controversy.”

Mosiah 11:26 “When Abinadi had spoken these words unto them they were wroth with him, and sought to take away his life; but the Lord delivered him out of their hands.” In the Hodayot Scroll, where he gives his autobiography, he says, “The ruthless ones sought my life. The gang of no-goods [bums], the conspiracy of Belial, they knew not that my security was in Thee and that through Thy mercy is my soul delivered. They sought to take away my life and shed my blood, but our God has helped the weak and the suffering out of the hand of the one who is stronger than he.”

In Mosiah 11:28 the king says, “I command you to bring Abinadi hither, that I may slay him, for he has said these things that he might stir up my people to anger one with another, and to raise contentions among my people; therefore, I will slay him.” In the 1Q8 the prophet says, “I became a man of controversy *ish rîb*, a troublemaker, to the

preachers of error.” And Joseph Smith says, “I was destined to prove a disturber and annoyer of Satan’s kingdom.”

Mosiah 12:1: “And it came to pass that after the space of two years that Abinadi came among them in disguise, that they knew him not, and began to prophesy among them.” Then here he says, “For they drove him out of my land and like a bird from my nest, and all my friends and relatives they turned against me.”

Then he talks about his disguise and all the rest of it, but it’s rather interesting, isn’t it? (Then let’s see what we have here now.) Abinadi comes into the picture. In Mosiah 11:22 we read that God is a jealous God and will not acknowledge the excuse of worldly temptation. Granted you are tempted, but you can’t use that as an excuse because he knows you are strong enough to resist. Their status as God’s people has passed, and it’s now a liability and not an immunity.

The seven earlier writers after the New Testament are the Apostolic Fathers. Especially in Clement, who wrote 1 Clement and 2 Clement, and in Ignatius (well, in all of them as a matter of fact), you find this theme: “They think because they are members of the church that God has invested so much in them so far that he can’t possibly go back on them now.” [The people said] “We are safe home because we are members of the church and it is established.” He said that’s the most dangerous thing you can do because “the greater the security you feel, the greater the danger you are in.” And then the Apostolic Fathers would cite, “For if the angels who kept not their first estate were cast out, what do you think will happen to you?” You feel secure because you have been blessed, but for that reason you are more responsible. You are in greater danger than anybody else. Can’t you see that? You are never safe home. Once you’ve got the blessings you are stuck with something, and you are under double obligation.

Verse 23: “And it shall come to pass that except this people repent and turn unto the Lord their God, they shall be brought into bondage . . . and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies.” The Lord will allow all this to happen; there comes a time of no return when even prayer won’t do. “And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God, I will not hear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions.” Once the shooting starts, that’s that. It’s too late then, and they’ve got to remember that. The people didn’t like that and were very much upset by it. “When Abinadi had spoken these words unto them they were wroth with him, and sought to take away his life.” Noah was in a rage and said, by what authority does this upstart speak? Abinadi is called a troublemaker and a subversive for stirring up the people to contentions—just making trouble. The more corrupt a government is the more zealous it is for law and order; it has to make a show of that.

They failed to see Abinadi’s point completely. Verse 29: “Now the eyes of the people were blinded.” They didn’t see the point of the real evil, and they were determined to root out the protestor, to condemn and fire the whistle blower. He was the one who was guilty [according to them]. The people were blinded, “therefore they hardened their hearts against the words of Abinadi, and they sought from that time forward to take him.”

The time is about up as we come to this interesting thing. He enters among them in disguise, and he appears among them saying, “Thus has the Lord commanded me, saying—Abinadi, go and prophesy unto this my people, for they have hardened their hearts against my words.” Well, that’s some disguise if he says “Abinadi.” No, that’s not it.

I should take it back to the Dead Sea Scrolls. He says that he was only able to enter into the town that way. They would have stopped him long before at the gates. He was in their midst when he cast off the disguise, as it says here. “And it came to pass that after the space of two years that Abinadi came among them in disguise, that they knew him not, and began to prophesy among them.”

Well, you see the same thing in the Old Testament and in the New Testament when Jesus went in disguise to the Passover so they didn't know him. In John 11:54 the Lord is disguised, and the prophets went about in disguise. Saul was in disguise when he visited the Witch of Endor, etc. Disguising is very common; Isaiah is an example. They go and hide themselves. Elijah hid and was fed by ravens. They hide and disguise themselves and circulate among the people. They are also hid by the people in their houses. That's the normal career with the prophets. He tells how he went and lived among the fishing people, then went out into the desert for a while, and then came back. To get into the town he was disguised. But when he was in there, he cast off his disguise and preached to them as Abinadi. It hit them like a bolt of lightning and there was more trouble. (You find in John 11:54 where the Lord is disguised.) So Abinadi came back and began to prophesy and really got things stirred up.

I see the time is up now, so we will start next time with Abinadi's sermon. Incidentally, these chapters 12–16 are one of the most important doctrinal parts of the Book of Mormon. Chapters 15 and 16 are probably the hardest chapters in the Book of Mormon. Abinadi turned out to be a tremendous teacher, and he was a nobody. Then we get to Samuel the Lamanite, who was even more offensive.

1. This quotation is taken from the speech by President Spencer W. Kimball referred to in an earlier lecture.