

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 3, Lecture 65

Alma 48

Warfare

World War II Memories

Now we have chapter 48. Do you think this going to be a letdown? This is on another subject, and it's a "dilly." It's on war. Why do we have to bother about that? We're beyond that sort of barbarism today, aren't we? Well, I think I can save trouble by reading the introduction to a section on war. I have [written] 42 pages on strategy and tactics in the Book of Mormon. Recently they had a symposium on strategy and tactics in the Book of Mormon. It was on the art of war, fortification etc., in the Book of Mormon, which is very sophisticated. There were 170 pages devoted to war. Here I notice in the book I have 42 pages just on the strategy and tactics.<sup>1</sup> The best excuse, I think, is in the introduction here. (Some people didn't like it at all; in fact, something happened about it.) The readers of the Book of Mormon sometimes are disgusted with all this preoccupation with these things. We talked about the sordid business of all the political finagling and the systematic assassinations launched by Amalickiah. That's not a very pleasant story. Now we come to this. Now we come to the actual engagements. As I said here, I survived three years of military intelligence at every level.

We talked about the four civilizations. Remember how they act in war? What does number one, the brotherhood, do? They are Rechabites. They flee to the desert. They do time and again in the Book of Mormon. They break off and go off by themselves. Sometimes they get overrun, etc. And war is the business of number three, the warlords. They fight until they exhaust their materials. Then they settle around along the edges. That's what you find around the periphery of Asia, both in China and everywhere else. You notice today that they expand so far and then the bubble breaks [such as] in all the places on the fringe of the Russian empire today—Estonia, Lithuania, Turkey, and Armenia on one side and the Tartars and Mongolians on the other side. Everywhere people are crying for independence now. They break off, you see. Then it has to start all over again. Of course, they are doing the same with our far-flung bases. Everywhere, the nations want to take their bases back and kick us out, whether it's in the Philippines, in Greece, in Spain, or even Australia and New Zealand. They won't have "nukes" there, for example. They are loosening the hold on these bases. Do we have any business trying to hold all those bases anyway? That's the point. That's the central thing. That's your warlords. This is the way they do. They make war with their resources. The thing is that they get along with the people who are conquered almost immediately. That's the whole idea. Well, we won't go into Clausewitz on this occasion.

Then there is number two—that's Babylon. How do they do? Well, they have professional armies do their fighting, of course. They have regular professional soldiers, and they stay home. This is marvelously illustrated in a chapter soon to come, where in a bitter letter Moroni is just fit to be tied. He is so angry at these people back home who have never had it so good while the army is suffering out there. That's the way it happens. You ask, "Why does this insanity keep up? Why haven't we made any progress at all since the Book of

Mormon? Why are we as determined to make war as ever?” Well, it’s profitable. It’s enormously profitable. My business for all of 1944, which was the most active part, was battlefield intelligence. I had to immediately find out what the Germans were up to and report it to where it could do the most good. In the end it went right up to SHAEF [Supreme Headquarters of the Allied European Forces], but first it had to be used at division level, then at corps, and in army groups. But the stuff I got was considered invaluable, pure gold. There was only one team that did that, a three-man team. The first two were killed on D-Day, and that left me as a one-man team. So I had to snoop into everything, and I found out all sorts of things I shouldn’t have found out. The whole thing was being run as a game for profits.

After that during all of 1945, I had my own jeep. Officers couldn’t drive jeeps because “gentlemen” don’t drive. They were very strict about that. So everybody was jealous because I had my own jeep. I could get all the gas I wanted when gas was pure gold. I had to drive all over Germany, France, Austria, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium interviewing and snooping into things. All the time I was finding out things I shouldn’t be finding out, I suppose. I tell you from the beginning the whole thing was operated, controlled, and orchestrated by the same interests on both sides. If you want to get enlightenment on that, read a book by the chief judge at Nuremberg, Joseph Borkin. It’s called *The Crime and Punishment of I. G. Farben*. I. G. Farben was up to all sorts of things and acted hand in glove (shared their secrets and their profits) with Standard Oil of New Jersey which became the beloved EXXON later on. They had an equal part on both sides in the war. I could tell you stories that would amaze the faculties of eyes and ears, chill your young blood, and cause “each particular hair to stand on end, like quills upon the fretful porpentine.” (it’s porcupine—a pig with spines on it, but Shakespeare uses porpentine.) That’s why we are going to continue to have wars, and it’s bigger business now than ever, as you know. After all, Brother Quayle spilled the beans the other day when he said we knew all along that Star Wars was a dream, but there are enormous profits in it. It’s not going to work, not for a long time at least. But look at the money. Look at the contracts you have, so it’s going to go on. Here we go still operating.

Let’s see what this says here: After surviving three years of military intelligence at every level from company to army group, with frequent visits to SHAEF on the one hand and a muddy foxhole on the other, and reading thousands of written reports on enemy dispositions (I had to make reports all the time when they came in. Then after that in 1945 I was moved from First to Third Army, and then the Sixth Army group. Then I was making reports for the whole front at that time. That was very enlightening too.) We have always been inclined to rush through the military parts of the Book of Mormon as painful reminders of an unpleasant past.<sup>2</sup> I have studiously ignored the war stories myself. “We’ll skip the wars,” I said. Alas, if we only could. The whole point of Alma’s (or rather Mormon’s) studies in the “work of death,” as he calls it, is that they are supposed to be revolting—they are meant to be painful. It is Mormon and Moroni, the tragic survivors of a nation destroyed by senseless war, who are editing this book.

Remember, there’s always this theme of destruction. Why can’t you leave that alone? The Book of Mormon is about as negative as you get, isn’t it? Well, there must be some reason for that. Don’t you get the hint? Why do you think people don’t like to read the Book of Mormon? Why do you think we rush through it? We take speed reading courses so it won’t slow us down, or else we pick our way through it daintily as through a mine field, avoiding all the unpleasant passages of which there are plenty. That will get you through the Book of Mormon in no time if you leave out all the unpleasant passages you

don't like.

They [Mormon and Moroni] are editing this book, and they have put into it whatever they think might be useful as warning to us. It's not their purpose to tell an entertaining or reassuring tale. War is anything but glamorous in the Book of Mormon. The campaigns and battles are described not as a writer of fiction would depict ancient warfare with all its excitement and color. (Like somebody writing in early New England. That would be popular. Mark Twain or somebody would write about it.) No, it is not what an author in America in the 1820s would imagine as the gaudy trappings of heroic derring-do. That's all missing. It is real war that we see here, a tedious, sordid, plodding, joyless routine of see-saw successes and losses—brutally expensive, destructive, exhausting, and boring, with constant marches and countermarches that end sometimes in fiasco and sometimes in intensely unpleasant engagements. The author writes as one would write—as only one *could* write—who had gone through a long war as a front-line observer with his eyes wide open. Everything is strictly authentic, with the proper emphasis in the proper place. Strategy and tactics are treated with the knowledge of an expert: logistics and supply; armaments and fortifications; recruiting and training; problems of morale and support from the home front; military intelligence from cloak and dagger to scouting and patrolling; interrogation, guarding, feeding, and exchange of war prisoners; propaganda and psychological warfare; rehabilitation and resettlement; (all these things are there and treated deftly and explicitly); feelers for peace and negotiations at various levels; treason; profiteering; and the exploitation of the war economy by individuals and groups—it is all there.

In the part we are coming to later, Mormon and his son are summing up the situation after spending most of their lives in the field—and they hate it. For them war is nasty, brutalizing, wasteful, dirty, degrading, fatiguing, foolish, immoral, and above all unnecessary. It is also inevitable, as long as men are running things, and as long as it is very profitable. So we have this Book of Mormon war business that we're going to be bothered with. If this were all behind us now [we could relax], but alas how much more is before us. The “nukes” could change all that, but not if it's more profitable not to use the “nukes.”

So we start with Alma 48. But first the relevant D&C 1:35: “. . . 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.” That is war, of course. Peace is going to be taken away. Is there any place which is relaxed and peaceful today? Everywhere is in tension. How is this going to break out? How is it going to be solved? The chances of coming to peaceful and friendly agreements based on love, brotherhood, charity, and all that sort of thing get fainter and fainter all the time, don't they? So that's the age you happy people are living in. I'm glad I'm clearing out.

We start out with public relations, and Amalickiah was a public relations genius. He knew how to get people behind him. You have to get them behind you in a war, and he is going to do it. Notice how he does it very cleverly. Notice how far the Book of Mormon is ahead of the times here. Amalickiah had obtained the kingdom. He's got what he wants. Thou hast it all now. What are you going to do? What is your next step? You have to get the Nephites under your thumb too. Why would you want to do that? Why would you want to bring people into bondage? This is another very interesting thing, isn't it? It's going to tell here why. We'll get to that in just a second here, but first of all “he began to inspire the hearts of the Lamanites against the people of Nephi.” You have to get them angry.

Remember, they had been very reluctant. They didn't want to do this. He has formed his army without any fighting at all. He got the loyalists together with the opposition on Mount Antipas there. They surrounded them and [the loyalists decided] let's get together here. They were following Amalickiah, and he got himself made king by treason. Then he had it all. Now he's got to make real war. The first thing is to put the people in mind for it, give them the fighting spirit and make them want it. The only reason he had been able to get what he wanted so far was that they didn't want to fight. They would do anything rather than that. Now he's got them where he wanted. Now his big problem is how can we make the next step. ". . . he began to inspire the hearts of the Lamanites against the people of Nephi; yea, he did appoint men to speak unto the Lamanites from their towers, against the Nephites."

Notice, how often the Book of Mormon talks about these towers. When you go to Central America or the Mississippi Valley, wherever the old Indian cultures are, [you find these], and also among the Hopis. What is a hogan but a reduced step pyramid. The big one at Hotevilla, for example, has the steps going up to it. Some of them are quite high and have a ladder. So they had their towers. What did they use them for? Some of them are absurd. They just stand there with these high, steep steps. They can be climbed all right, but why wear yourself out going up 150 steps? There's nothing on the top. Were they all Rameumptoms? Some of them certainly were. They were for announcements, and they were always at ceremonial places. Remember that Alma and Amulek preached at such a place. They were for public assemblies, announcements, preaching, and all the rest. But he had this systematically done from towers. As it were, we would say he had time on the air. He had all these stations that saturated the air with this. They were used as sort of a modern technique. Instead of broadcasting stations he had these towers spread throughout the whole country. They are the same thing as if you had broadcast stations. And he appointed speakers with their set talks. This is exactly what you do in public relations. You take a sample and find out what will sell. Then your people give that spiel. You hear the same program over and over again. You'd think people would get wise after a while, but the funny thing is they don't. I'm going to give you a talk on rhetoric one of these days, because it plays a very important part in the Book of Mormon. It may be a lie, it might be absurd, it may be unthinkable, but if you just keep saying it, they will go for it. They've found that out. We've had the same slogans going for years and years. It got to them. After all, if you have the guy shouting through the megaphone all day long and you hear the same message over and over again, you give in to it. "And thus he did inspire their hearts against the Nephites, insomuch that in the latter end of the nineteenth year . . . having been made king over the Lamanites, he sought also to reign over all the land, the Nephites as well as the Lamanites." That was the idea.

Why would he want to rule everybody? Remember Alexander the Great who wept because there were not more worlds to conquer. As long as there is something left to conquer, you've got to do it. It was the same thing with the Romans, as we said. There was *ager hosticus* [the hostile earth] and *ager pacatus*, the pacified earth—*Dār al-Islām* and *Dār al-Ḥarb*. The outer world, anything that hasn't submitted to you, has to be conquered and taken because it's a threat. You can't even sleep at night because these people haven't been conquered yet and they pose a threat to you. So you have to expand your world empire until everybody is knuckling under to you. How do those lines go? "That's what we have to achieve. Our rule has to reach to the oceans, as far as you can go. And our fame must reach to the stars."

This is the idea and there is no satisfaction until you rule everything. Then you weep like Alexander because there are no more worlds to conquer. And this was Nimrod. He wanted to be a cosmocrator. There's an interesting phenomenon that is very important in the books of Abraham and Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. A cosmocrator is somebody who has conquered the world. There have been ten cosmocrators, we are told. The three great ones include Alexander, and Nimrod. You have your pick of the others, but they are men who aspired to rule over everything. Caesar wanted to be that.

Amalickiah had accomplished his design. The first part was to harden the hearts of the Lamanites so they would be willing. In order to do that he had to tell them lies and blind their minds. Then you stir them up to anger. This is the process, isn't it? Win, win, win. Why do people act this way? As the Book of Mormon says, why do we? We are guilty of the same thing. First you harden their hearts. Then they don't want to listen to the facts. You blind their minds and they get emotional about it. We get all wrought up and we are ready for war. It's the silliest thing in the world, but we do it. Hitler was very skillful at that. He was working for the corporations, but he knew how to pull it off doing that very thing. Of course, he used the radio as we use the TV today, and [Amalickiah] used the towers. There's a very good book by Richard Nixon on that subject called *The Real War*. It shows how that's done.

Verse 4: "For he was determined, because of the greatness of the number of his people [it turned his head to see his power and glory], to overpower the Nephites and to bring them into bondage." Why would he want to bring them into bondage? Well, submission is the only form of obedience that a person like that can understand. They wouldn't obey willingly. That's what Islam means, submission, but submission to God. Submission to anybody else is wrong. That's what is called "bondage." If you submit to God, that's dandy, but not if you submit to anybody else.

That's the story of Nimrod. Remember, there was Noah, Ham, and Cush. Cush's son was Nimrod. He was a righteous young man until he was 25 years old. He became the king, and he had received the garment of Adam, which had been stolen by Ham when they were leaving the ark. It belonged to Adam and Noah had it. We mentioned that garment before, but there is great literature about this garment. Nimrod lost the garment later on, but when he wore it all people and animals assumed that he was a holy man and priest acting for God, and they submitted to him willingly. That was right. But then it turned his head, and he decided to become the great conqueror. Meanwhile, God gave him the bow to protect the human race against the depredations of the giant creatures that roamed the earth in those days—cave bears, mastodons, and things like that—which man was not able to cope with at all in his helpless state until God gave Nimrod the secret of the bow and arrow. It's a very sophisticated and efficient weapon, more efficient than any rifle. Read a book by Saxton Pope called *Hunting with the Bow and Arrow*. He wrote it at Berkeley years ago. It's an excellent book showing that the bow and arrow is the most efficient of all weapons in hunting or anything else. It's not only silent, but a stone arrowhead makes abrasions of the wound. It starts hemorrhages which don't stop. Even if you hit an animal not in a vital place at all, in the end it has a fatal effect. There are so many advantages to hunting with a bow and arrow. The experiments were made at Berkeley. They shot with high powered rifles into hanging hams, sides of beef, etc. to see which would penetrate. The arrow penetrated more effectively than most high powered bullets. Also it's silent, cheap, and all sorts of things.

Anyway God gave the bow and arrow to Nimrod to defend the human race, for

protection against their enemies. It didn't take Nimrod long to discover that he could use these arrows to put the human race at his disposal. It was put at his disposal to defend the human race. Now he discovered that if he turned it against human beings they were at his disposal. He was the boss. This is the famous bow of Nimrod. In the end he went crazy and turned it against God. He challenged God to a fight because he was ruler of the empire. He said, "I'm the creator; I'm the god." He built the Tower of Babel and went up to the top of it so he could shoot arrows into the sky and kill God. The Angel Gabriel, playing a trick on him, held up a fish. The arrow hit the fish and came back to earth with blood. Then Nimrod went stark raving mad. He said, "See, I've killed God; there's blood on the arrow."

There are various versions of the story. It is very old and circulates everywhere. So he went nuts. To get rid of him and show his utter contempt, God finally dispatched him with the weakest and smallest of creatures. He sent a little, tiny gnat. It crawled up the nose of Nimrod and started tickling his brain. Well, of course, it drove him absolutely crazy. He had two servants stand on each side of him with hammers and hit him on the head alternately so he wouldn't be tickled to death by it. If they hit him on the head, he went bongggggg, so that was better than putting up with this gnat. In the end that did away with Nimrod. He is supposed to have founded the first army and the first city. He got civilization going. This is class number two, Babylon. Nimrod was the founder of Babylon. All the old sources will tell you, wherever you get them, that Nimrod founded Babylon. He was the archenemy of Abraham, etc. This is type number two. He had to bring people into bondage; nothing else would do. We say the same thing. Talking about Central American countries, we say, "We'll make them say uncle." That amounts to, "Do what we tell them to do. Who are they who dare to defy us?"

Look what he does, that clever man. He appoints chief captains of the Zoramites. You remember from last semester who the Zoramites were, the people who went off by themselves. Very suddenly they had a new religion and everything else. They had adopted some of the prevailing, more ancient customs and religions that were in the country already. That's rather clear. Remember, Alma tells them they are just model people. They are smart and well dressed; they have dress standards. They're very pious. Every Sunday they all bear their testimonies. They go up in the Rameumptom and say, "We thank God that we are a blessed people and not like other people." Then he said they forgot about it the rest of the week. But he said they were the wickedest people he ever knew, because they cry unto thee, O God, and yet their hearts are upon their riches."

These were the Zoramites who left and went out by themselves. They were living in the area between the Nephites and Lamanites, and they were absorbed by the Lamanites. At the beginning of the long war they asked to become Lamanites. They were officially accepted as Lamanite citizens. They didn't intermarry though. They were the smartest people and the best warriors. They had the best offices, so they knew all the answers. They had been Nephites. As it tells us, the dissenters were the worst of all, and they were dissenters. So they were the people to trust. He put their captains in charge, who knew what they were doing. They knew all the weaknesses and strengths and the strategy and tactics of the Nephites. It says, ". . . he did appoint chief captains of the Zoramites, they being the most acquainted with the strength of the Nephites, and their places of resort, and the weakest parts of their cities [This is exactly what you would want to know if you were interrogating a prisoner of war. What is this? Does anybody watch the gate? Is it these hours? When do they change the watch? etc.]; therefore he appointed them to be chief captains over his armies."

He was very shrewd. The same thing is done by modern Third World countries when they invite observers from larger, stronger countries on both sides of the Curtain into Africa, Central America, or anywhere else. They come as observers, but they come in strength. Before you know it they are running the show. It's the same thing here. The Zoramites were there as observers, you might say. They were the chief captains, the ones in charge of the operation. So he had a pretty good thing going. He knew what he was doing.

Verse 6: "And it came to pass that they took their camp, and moved forth toward the land of Zarahemla in the wilderness." Now here's the contrast in verse 7: ". . . while Amalickiah had thus been obtaining power by fraud and deceit . . ." Notice, the Book of Mormon puts a thumb right on the thing. They know what it is. The whole darn thing is just fraud and deceit—all this patriotic rhetoric they have been having, all this fervor against the wicked Nephites. We're going to see what the argument was. They've robbed us of our birthright. They cheated—Laman and Lemuel were denied their rights. The people really believed it, and they had been working on that. But it was fraud and deceit. ". . . Moroni, on the other hand, had been preparing the minds of the people [their minds had to be prepared too. To go against the Lamanites? No] to be faithful unto the Lord their God." That would take care of it. What a contrast! No hate campaigns here.

Incidentally, the historian who said he searched all the works of Lincoln and Lee and they never mentioned the other side as "the enemy" was Henry Steele Commager. I remembered just after the class; I apologize. You can find it there. That's interesting. No hate campaigns at all, and this is very strong in the ideas of Moroni. He always refers to the enemy as "our brethren." That's the only title he uses to describe the enemy is "our brethren."

He did a very clever thing. This morning, gentlemen, our lecture will be on defense in depth. That's what this is on. This is a beautiful example of defense in depth. In September 1938 the German Nazis launched World War II into Poland with great effect using the pincher movement, the blitzkrieg, the double arms. First they would proceed with reconnaissance in force, which was much greater than our reconnaissance. We just used a squad. They used a whole regiment just for reconnaissance, to scout out the land. The men were heavily armed, so they practically had the battle won before they got there. Then they were followed up by the tanks, followed immediately by the infantry. When they struck they didn't strike the main objective. They struck around the sides. Before they [the Poles] knew it they were encircled. It was an encircling movement. You have them trapped that way. They did that again and again, and it worked almost every time. They used it in Belgium and especially on the plains of Poland.

That's what Amalickiah was doing. He was going to blitz them. Well, how do you slow down a blitz? You do it by defense in depth. You just put in a lot of little forts along here. You [the enemy] might get through here all right and surround them, but you haven't taken them. You cannot proceed unless you have subdued them, because otherwise you will have them in your rear. Then they will cut off your supplies and everything else. You can't do a thing. These must be subdued one by one. That always slows down the blitzkrieg. It has never failed to work because you have these little forts. You cannot feel safe and have this at your back. You have to wipe it up. Or you send the main force to do that. But meanwhile you have to go up here and wait for them. Then you are exposed, because you all have to be together. It's blitz. That means lightning. It has to move as fast as possible, and you have to be in there. You'll notice the Lamanites do that again and

again. Their attacks, it's going to tell us, are by surprise. Suddenly one morning they found the Lamanite armies were upon them, just like that. In some of these jungles you can get away with that too.

Here he had his defense in depth, and notice how nicely it's described here. Verse 8: "Yea, he had been strengthening the armies of the Nephites, and erecting small forts, or places of resort [places to fall back on, you see]; throwing up banks of earth round about to enclose his armies . . ." They didn't have the money or the time to build expensive places. There have been some very good papers on this. I think John Sorenson wrote a paper on the Nephite fortifications in view of the archaeological evidence. It's true, the earth forts were the commonest. There were earth forts along the Mississippi Valley all over the place. Then they could be improved by stone. It was usual to have timber palisades around the top to hold them, but not always. They add the timber a little later here, I think. ". . . and erecting small forts, or places of resort; throwing up banks of earth round about to enclose his armies, and also building walls of stone to encircle them about [see they added the stone after the dirt; if you've got the time you can do that], round about their cities and the borders of their lands; yea, all round about the land."

Notice, all round about their cities and in all the borders of their lands he scattered these little forts everywhere so that the Lamanite forces couldn't do anything. They had to move with caution. It took all the steam out of the charge. They couldn't bull through any more. "And in their weakest fortification he did place the greater number of men," which made them pretty equal. You want to knock over a weak one quickly. All right, we'll give it special support. ". . . and thus he did fortify and strengthen the land which was possessed by the Nephites." It was their own country. And you will notice throughout the Book of Mormon, the battles are always fought on Nephite territory; they never invade outside. Mormon tells us later exactly why that is. It's an interesting thing. American battles have always been fought outside. We've never had to do it inside. We don't believe it really can happen here because it has never happened to us. But remember, in other countries the wars have been fought inside of them again, again, and again. That means a different tactic and a different attitude toward things. You are not so ready to go into it, etc.

Remember the banners that they inscribed. These are the sentiments on the banners. You might call them "buzz words" because they do excite an immediate reaction. They do stir up your emotions, like the sight of the flag. It does whether you know it's just emotional or not. It always does with me. The Star Spangled Banner always makes me choke up. You could say I should be more rational. I'm sorry. That's the way it is.

Verse 10: "And thus he was preparing to support their liberty, their lands, their wives, and their children, and their peace . . . their God . . . [and] the cause of Christians." You'll notice the thing about this: it's the intimate things they are supporting. They are not supporting their resources, their minds, their businesses, their vacations, and things like that. They are supporting the things that are closest to them, the things that are intimate. Those are the things that are worth supporting. So many wars have been fought to gain a good harbor or to open a passage. There's the famous theory of the Trojan War, for example. Troy had closed the straits through which Russian grain went to the Mycenaean world. Troy had to be subdued for the grain rights, to let the wheat go through. There's something to all of these. Most wars are fought for strategic reasons like that, such as the Russians in the Crimean War. The terrible lack for the Russians is a warm water port. They are frozen in for the winter. Their navy can't operate in most places. That's why they fought the Sino-Japanese War. In 1904 they had to take Port Arthur so they would win,

but the Japanese won that war. The reasons we give for going to war aren't these at all. They are to get ports and strategic routes. The Kaiser wanted Berlin to Baghdad. Hitler repeatedly said he wanted the grain lands of the Ukraine. That's what he wanted. We say wars are fought for economic reasons, but this is a war of defense. They are fighting for their lands, their wives, their children, their peace, and their God.

Now here is the encomium of Moroni, what kind of man he was: "And Moroni was a strong and a mighty man." There are few of them, but when they appear they make the difference. Thomas Carlyle's famous work is on the influence of great men. Is history the influence of great men, or is it just the influence of the masses? Remember, Tolstoy said that great men don't mean a thing. He talked about Napoleon and whoever was great [and said] that's not it. It's the people, the masses, the general movements, the emotions of people that count. Yet the strong man makes an awful lot of difference after all, doesn't he? An Alexander, a Caesar, a Thutmose III—what a difference they make. And Hitler is a man who counts for something. He was able to stir things up; you have to grant him that. "And Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding [well, now that's something else; notice he always emphasizes this]; yea, a man that did not delight in bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country, and his brethren from bondage and slavery." They were actually threatened all the time. Remember, the Lord had promised that they would have to face this all the time.

Are there people who actually delight in bloodshed? You bet there are. I remember one person, General Johnson. He was a general and only twenty-five years old. He was Max Taylor's pet. Max Taylor was our division general in the 101st at that time. He later became chief of staff. When I knew him I can't say we were quite chummy because he was very aloof. But he talked with me a lot. Anyway, his pet was General Johnson. When you get to be a general at twenty-five, you must be pretty good. Well, he was all gung-ho for doing it, and so was Max Taylor. That's why he had to have a paratroop division and all this sort of thing. There was an assembly hall in a big wooden building up at Ramsgate, the field they took off from. The night they left for Normandy, General Johnson jumped up on the stage with a trench knife. His face was blackened. He held it up and said, "Do you see this knife? Before the night is over it will be red with German blood." Then he let out the most hideous rebel yell you ever heard in your life. Why didn't he get to be chief of staff? Because he didn't last more than a couple of weeks. You start acting like that and you are finished. He got bumped off in Holland. He and Taylor were standing on a canal, sizing up the territory just across from Arnheim there. Along came some .88 shells, and everybody fell flat. But not General Johnson. He stood up there proud as anything, and that finished General Johnson. He was too proud to fall flat on his face in the mud on the embankment. Taylor was fit to be tied that day. Just like Achilles, he sat in the door of his tent and brooded. Nobody would go near him. But there are people who get excited about this sort of thing [killing]—they love it.

Notice he's a great hearted man: "Yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God, for the many privileges and blessings which he bestowed upon his people." He doesn't complain and sorrow, but he is just thrilled by how good God has been to them, how they have been blessed beyond their deserts. His heart swells with this thanksgiving for the many blessings he had bestowed on his people. ". . . a man who did labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety of this people. . . . and he had sworn an oath to defend his people [notice, here's what we find on the banners of the Milhamah, the *Battle Scroll*], his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood." Notice

that's a worse case. An extreme case is the loss of blood, as it says in the next verse. "Now the Nephites were taught to defend themselves against their enemies, even to the shedding of blood if it were necessary [that's the extreme worst case; hold back as long as you can; it emphasizes that] yea, and they were also taught never to give an offense . . ."

Nobody gives offense today. After World War I the Germans changed the name of the War Department to Defense Department. We took the hint and changed too. In my day when I was in ROTC it was War Department. Now it's not War Department; it's Department of Defense. We just defend ourselves; we don't make war. It's all defense now, whether it's army, navy, or anything else—no matter what you do. All nations have done that now. Clausewitz is the classic work, as you know, on the military. He was the teacher in all war schools. In the eighteenth century he taught the Germans, and his book, *On War* became the bible for strategy, tactics, etc. You must read it. Anyway, every nation thinks of itself as being on the defense. No matter how ambitious you are, you must always approach your people with the attitude, "We must defend ourselves; we are threatened." That's the only way to get action. You never admit that you are an aggressor. Remember what Hitler said: "In the midst of the deepest peace we have been without provocation attacked." Hitler said that speaking of Poland when they had smashed it in a week. He fooled Chamberlain that way. Everybody thought he would be willing to settle if people would just give him what he wanted. He was a nice guy if you gave him just what he wanted. It was true. He was sweet as pie if he got just what he wanted. That's true with most of us. So you're on the defense. It's just the Defense Department today.

But he [Moroni] really meant it. As I said, [almost] every war in the Book of Mormon is fought on Nephite territory. As Mormon said in Mormon 4:4–5 when they finally changed that it was the fatal mistake. Then they were finished; they didn't have a chance. He saw, against all that the Lord had commanded, that they would go against them. Then he said, "But behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished." Don't you try to punish anybody, he says. God wants the wicked to be punished, and he will punish them. But he will punish them by the wicked.

So don't think it's the good guys against the bad guys at all. Whenever Nephites and Lamanites fight they are equally bad. After that personal duel between Amlici and [Alma] they fought face to face with the sword and ended that other war, you might say, "This is right out of *Star Wars*, the good guys fighting the bad guys." [Alma] appealed to God, and he was the victor. Then immediately after it says the people realized that all these troubles had come upon them because of their own sins, not because of the Lamanites. Even in what you would call a clear-cut case like that in which it [appeared to be] good guys against bad guys. ". . . even to the shedding of blood if it were necessary . . . never to give an offense, yea, and never to raise the sword except it were against an enemy, except it were to preserve their lives."

Joseph Smith said, "The man who carries a gun or a pistol will someday regret it. I have never carried anything larger than a penknife [to sharpen a quill pen] with me, even when I faced the mobs." I don't know what happens if he carries an AK 47, an assault rifle that will shoot twelve shells a minute. Well, you have to have those for hunting, of course. Those twelve bullets will really finish off a quail; you would really be surprised. He won't put up any fight after that at all. There's a good story about fighting quail, but that's from Greece. I won't tell you that.

This was their faith. Well, how can you do that? How can we expose ourselves, being a lot of wimps on the defensive like this—never to raise the sword, never to stand tall, except to preserve their lives. It was their faith in God. If they did that God would preserve them. They put their faith in him. What if he didn't? That's the point: he would if they were faithful in keeping the commandments. That's the promise that had been given way back in the beginning. It was given in the second chapter when the Lord told Nephi that his people would always have the others breathing down their necks. This is fulfilling the promise that the Lord made to Lehi and his sons: "And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher over they brethren. For behold, in that day that they shall rebel against me, I will curse them even with a sore curse, and they shall have no power over thy seed except they shall rebel against me also. And if it so be that they rebel against me, they shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in the ways of remembrance." (1 Nephi 1:21-24.) I want them always breathing down your neck. Don't think you can ever solve the problem by getting rid of the Lamanites. They insisted it was the Lamanite problem. If we can just go out there and knock them out, we will have it all made [they thought]. They came up against that again and again; they couldn't resist that. It's the John Wayne solution. The big man with the gun is the solution to the problem. They had to trust the Lord in that. Were they going to do it? Well, do we do it? No, we don't.

Verse 15: ". . . if they were faithful in keeping the commandments of God that he would prosper them in the land; yea, warn them to flee [fleeing is not a disgrace; they fled], or to prepare for war, according to their danger."

One morning going along a brick road, I turned aside to headquarters. We were completely disrupted; we were getting out. We lost our shirt, apparently. There was a little brick house by the road, and the whole headquarters, the general and his staff, were down on their knees praying. We were surrounded at that time. That's the thing you do. Usually, they were all drinking, not exactly drunk. But Colonel Cole was as drunk as a lord when he landed in Holland. He took two pearl-handled revolvers in his hands and said, "Come out and follow me. If anybody wants to follow me, I'll go up and take S'Hertogenbus." It was five miles away and was never taken at all. That was the last we ever heard of Colonel Cole. He commanded the 502nd. That was the best crack regiment we had. Colonel Cole was never heard from again because he did that silly thing. He was stewed; he had been drinking too much. He said, "Come and follow me, you So-and-Sos. I'll take S'Hertogenbus." Some of them did. We never heard of them again. That's the sort of thing we have here. The Lord will warn you to defend yourself. ". . . prosper them in the land; yea, warn them to flee, or to prepare for war, according to their danger." He would let them know. The Rechabite brotherhoods, as we mentioned, were always fleeing anyway—Lehi, Nephi, and all the rest of them.

Verse 16: "And also, that God would make it known unto them whither they should go to defend themselves against their enemies, and by so doing the Lord would deliver them." That was their DEW-line. We don't talk about the DEW-line anymore. We had this elaborate system of radar defenses all around the periphery of the United States and up in Canada and Alaska called the DEW-line. It doesn't exist anymore. I guess we didn't need it, though it was a big thing. But the Lord will tell you. He's your DEW-line. He's your line of defense. ". . . and by so doing the Lord would deliver them; and this was the faith of Moroni [he was a most unusual general, to say the least], and his heart did glory in it; not in the shedding of blood but in doing good, in preserving his people, yea, in keeping the commandments of God . . ." It keeps repeating that he did not like to shed blood. Fire

power is not the solution, strange as it may seem. We found that out. That's what strategy and tactics are for. Strategy is to save lives, not to take them. What were we reduced to in Vietnam? A completely bankrupt strategy, body count. The whole purpose of strategy is not to have body count, not to lose anybody if you can possibly help it on either side. As Clausewitz said, the whole purpose of your fighting is to have the enemy submit to your will. Once he has the war is over. It's not to kill him necessarily. There's no such thing as unconditional surrender. He'll surrender only on condition of his life being saved. It's got to happen. Sooner or later you've got to come to an agreement. It surprised me that one day after May 7, 1945, when we signed the agreement up in Rheims, we and the Germans became just buddy buddies. We were the best of friends. That had already been going on for some weeks before. I was in old missionary territory. I was talking it up with the people and the soldiers. That's fraternizing and that's dangerous. But there were no hard feelings or anything like that. Not at all. After all, the business was interrogation of prisoners of war. Battlefield prisoners were shocked, undone, and willing to tell you anything you wanted to know. It was sometimes embarrassing because they would tell you more than you wanted to hear.

I was a poor interrogator. I interrogated a lot of interrogators. I could never intimidate anyone. You had to be intimidating to be a proper interrogator. They would just laugh at me. I couldn't get anything out of anybody. All they had to tell me was name, rank, and serial number [according to] the Geneva Convention. That's all they had to tell me. There were no bitter feelings at all. Usually, prisoners would come in with a sigh of relief. Thank heaven this is over. They had their passbooks, and those passbooks were very instructive. They told where they had been, what the unit was and everything. It was the passbook you wanted, and you could always get that from them. They would write in the passbook [something like]: "This day the war ended for Hans Gelser. Three cheers! I'm going over to the Americans."

It was the same thing with the Japanese, who are our best friends now, but our economic rivals. It was MacArthur who rebuilt Japan. It was a very wise and generous thing he did. He proved his greatness by reinstating Japan without any rancor. As Lincoln said, "With malice toward none and charity toward all." That's the way you have to do it. Well, if you're going to end that way, why bother killing everybody in the meantime then? Why not decide right at the beginning what you are going to do? I repeat, because it [war] is very, very profitable. There I could a tale unfold, but I'm not going to. It wouldn't be healthy, actually. Well, we didn't finish the war story yet, but this is the time in which we are living. I hear a bell. I go. "The bell invites me. Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell that summons thee to heaven or to hell."

1. See Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, vol. 7 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 291–333.
2. *Ibid.*, 291.