

# ALMA 50-63

Book of Mormon, Adult Institute Class, Monday, 1 February 2010

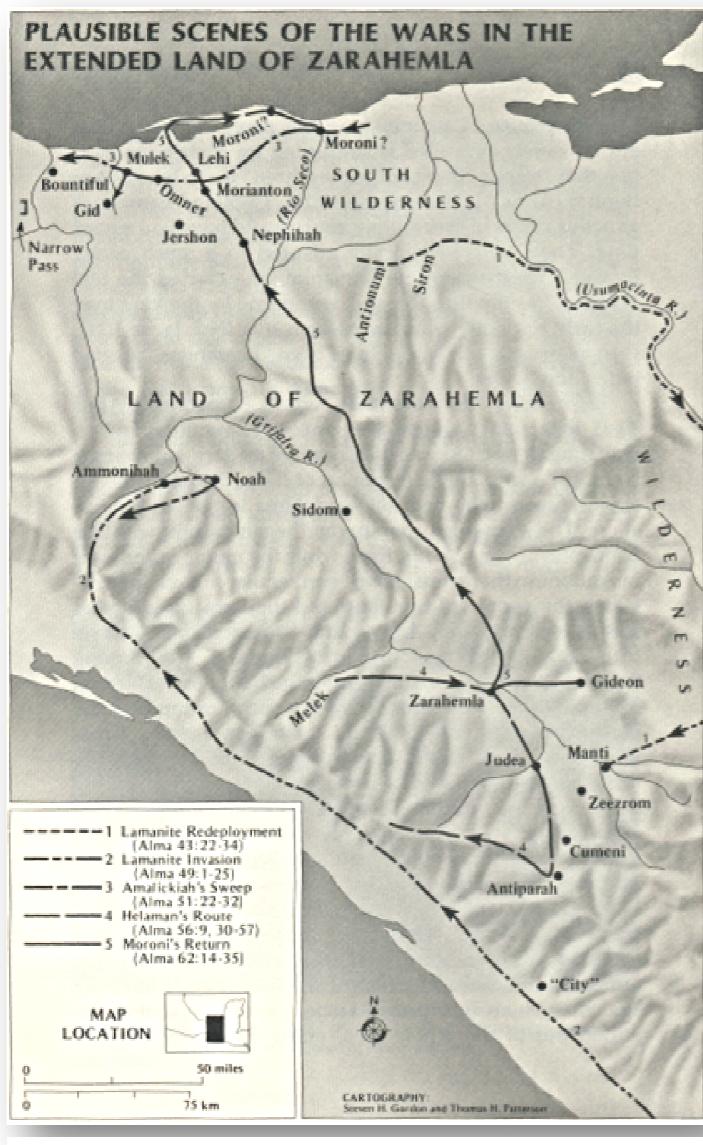
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## INTRODUCTION

This group of chapters continues and concludes a long section focused on war and conflict. As we have seen before, driving the conflicts are Nephite dissenters who want power and kingship and will use any resources at their disposal to achieve their means, including the Lamanites. This section, as we learned in Alma 45, is all the record of Helaman<sub>1</sub>, the oldest son of Alma<sub>2</sub>, which explains why we have the detailed account of Helaman and the stripling warriors included.

In the original text of the Book of Mormon, the chapter divisions were slightly different in this long set:

1830 Edition	1981 Edition
22	50
23	51
24	52-53
25	54-55
26	56-58
27	59-60
28	61
29	62
30	63

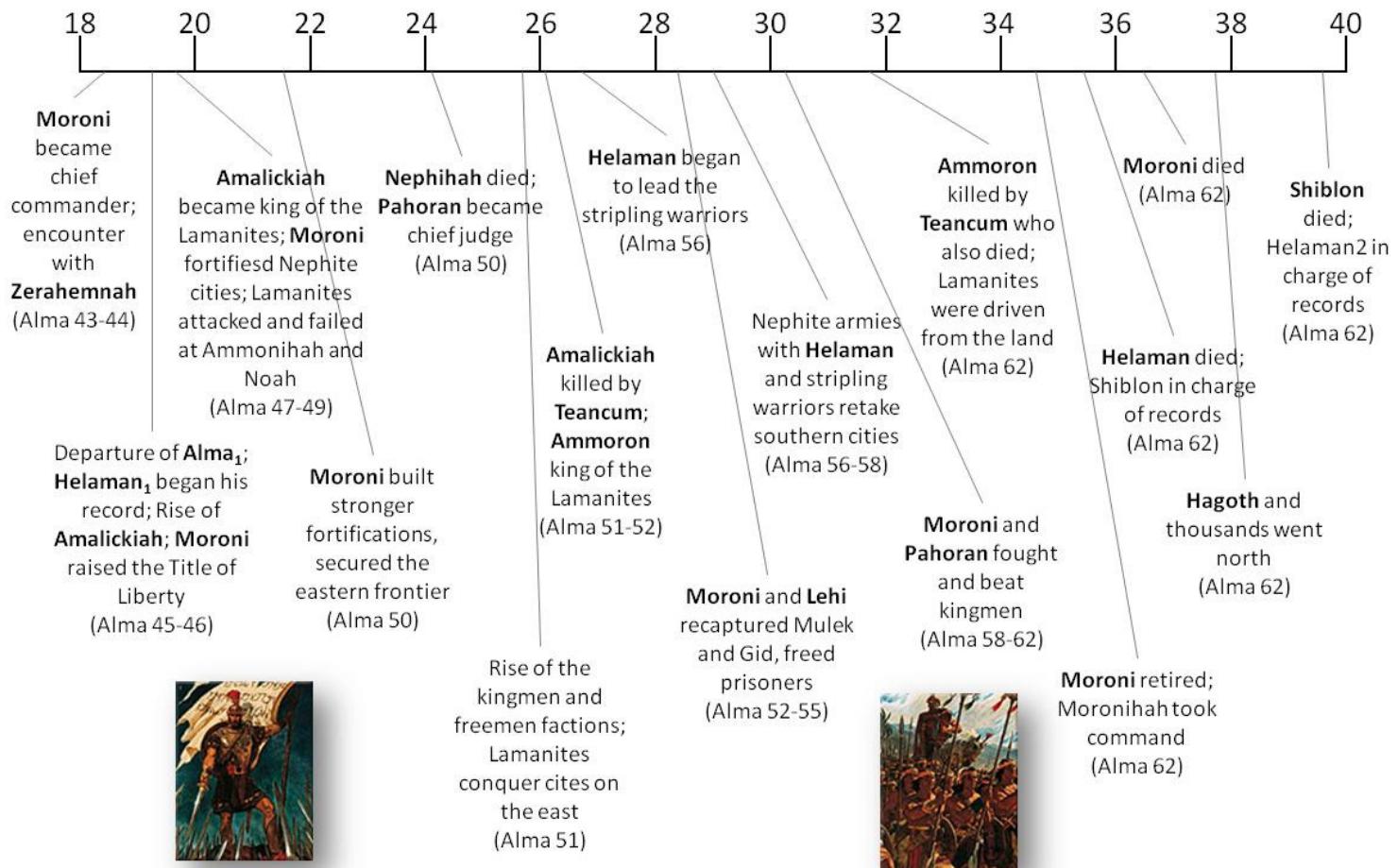


## ALMA 50 NEVER A HAPPIER TIME

**1 in the commencement of the twentieth year.** See the chart on the next page for a chronology of these chapters.

1-4 Moroni's fortification were stepped up from the previous ones he built around Ammonihah and Noah. Now besides the

## Major Events During the ‘War Years’ in Alma Years of the Reign of the Judges



banks of earth piled up, he added “works of timbers” and “a frame of pickets” to make the walls even stronger, taller, and harder to breach. He also put “towers” up and fortified them as both lookout places and locations to attack with stones.

**7 drove all the Lamanites who were in the east wilderness.** Lamanites had crept into the eastern side as ‘squatters’, encroaching on Nephite lands. Realizing these were a threat to his security, Moroni chased them out in order to better secure the eastern frontier. As we shall see, this was in vain at first as the Lamanites were able to quickly conquer this area, but without any Lamanite farmers or others to support them locally, they were forced to bring supplies from far away, so Moroni’s strategy paid off in the end.

**8 land of Nephi did run in a straight course.** Earlier (Alma 22), Mormon described the Lamanite boundaries as a U-shape, coming up on both the west and east side of the Nephite lands. Now with Moroni’s efforts, he had pushed that border back to something more like a straight line running from the east to west seas. Unfortunately, that border was very short-lived.

**9 caused that the inhabitants...should go forth.** Moroni not only drove out the Lamanites squatters but fortified the land with Nephite settlers who built cities and towns all through this area.

**13 *the city Moroni*.** Some of these settlers created a city that they named in honor of the chief commander. Other cities created at this time were Nephihah, named after the chief judge (v. 14) and Lehi (v. 15), named after one of Moroni's chief captains.

**23 *there never was a happier time among the people of Nephi*.** This fascinating statement is given in the middle of multiple wars. Why are they happy? Because they "were faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord (v. 22). But the result of their faithfulness was three straight years of peace, a long stretch for this period of history.

**25 *a contention which took place among them*.** Two of the new cities on the eastern frontier developed a contention about the land between them. Amazingly, this contention led to actual battle and one of the groups planning to flee to the north. But an abused servant woman snuck away and revealed their plan to Moroni, who sent Teancum and a small army to cut them off. In this subsequent battle, Morianton, the leader of the contentious group, was killed by Teancum, with the rest taken prisoner. Moroni had to deal with internal contentions during this time as much as external. In the end, "a union took place between them" and the two groups resolved their differences.

**37 *Nephihah, the second chief judge, died.*** Nephihah had taken over after Alma resigned to focus on the work of the ministry. He was the chief judge from 8 – 24 RoJ, or 17 years.

**40 *Pahoran did fill the seat of his father.*** Pahoran was elected by the voice of the people to follow his father in the judgment seat, starting in 24 RoJ.

## ALMA 51 THE KINGMEN AND AMALICKIAH

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**1 *twenty and fifth year.*** Only twenty five years since Mosiah resigned as king and set up a system of judges, that system is again being challenged in this chapter.

**3 *Pahoran would not alter nor suffer the law to be altered.*** On a first reading, this makes is sound like Pahoran is just obstinate, that he is not listening to the people. But as the story plays out, Pahoran is the defender of freedom as those who want to change the law go back to a system of kings—with one of them in charge.

**5 *called kingmen.*** Our introduction to this group, though the sentiment to put a king back on the throne has been around since Amlici (Alma 2). Their names describes their chief desire, though the point in supporting a king was to gain more power for themselves as well (v. 8).

**6 *took upon them the name of freemen.*** Those opposed to a king could have called themselves 'judgmen' or something similar, but instead went to the heart of the argument against a king, and choose this name instead.

**7 *settled by the voice of the people.*** It's not clearly spelled out how "the people" gave their voice to the debate—by vote, by popular acclaim, by representative voting, etc. But the voice was clear at that time to everyone involved—Pahoran should stay on as chief judge and the kingmen would not get their way.

**9 *Amalickiah had again stirred up the hearts.*** Having spent the last few years building his power and his army for an attack, Amalickiah began to move his troops into position. Unfortunately,

because of the internal strife caused by the kingmen, the Nephites were slow to respond to threats along their borders, resulting in their quickly losing control of the south (described in chapter 56) and east frontiers (described later in this chapter) and seeing their cities captured and their people taken prisoner.

**14 Moroni...was exceedingly wroth.** Here he was working so hard to preserve the Nephites against the aggressions of the Lamanites, and when the Lamanite army began to threaten them, the kingmen rejoiced, seeing it as an opportunity to overthrow the current government and give them an opening to step into power.

**19 four thousand of those dissenters were hew down.** Moroni was a tolerant person generally and tried to preserve life, but those who refused to support the will of the people and dissented against the government earned his strong opposition, because he knew firsthand how damaging such dissent could be. Those who fought him were cut down or “cast into prison,” but he also showed mercy by allowing anyone to make the covenant of liberty and thus be freed.

**21 not any known by the appellation of king-men.** For now—they show up again later and cause another uprising that is nearly the destruction of the Nephite civilization.

**22 Lamanites had come into the land of Moroni.** While the army was busy with internal dissent, Amalickiah led his army up the eastern coast and first captured the city named after his greatest enemy. The conquests continued, capturing Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid, and Mulek (v. 26).

**25 the city of Nephihah.** This is a rare ‘mistake of man’ in Mormon’s record. In this verse, he said that the Lamanites did not go up against Nephihah, but in the next verse it says they conquered it (Largey [602] resolves this by guessing there were two Nephihahs, but I see nothing in the text to suggest two locations). In fact, Nephihah was under Nephite control for five more years (Alma 59:5-9), and its conquest by the Lamanites was one of the things that drove Moroni to write his scathing letter to Pahoran in Alma 60). So the reference in verse 26 to it being taken by the Lamanites is an error. What appears to have happened is that the Lamanites captured the cities along the coastline but not the ones further inland, such as Nephihah.

**28 to the borders of the land Bountiful.** The Lamanite advance went right to the edge of the Nephite possessions leading to the land Northward—Bountiful. Thanks to Teancum, the line held there (vv. 29-31).

**34 put a javelin to his heart.** Sneaking into camp at night, Teancum found Amalickiah’s tent and was able to kill him without waking anyone. He returned to his own camp and had them all get ready for battle, assuming someone would soon find Amalickiah dead and start an attack.

**37 thus ended the twenty and fifth year.** Teancum’s stealthy execution was conducted on New Year’s Eve, the last night of the year 25 RoJ (see Alma 52:1)

## ALMA 52 NEPHITE SUCCESSES AGAINST AMMORON AND JACOB

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**2 retreated...into the city of Mulek.** Finding Amalickiah dead, the army fell back to the safety of the fortified city of Mulek. Based on the name, Mulek could well have been the initial home of those who came to the New World with Zedekiah’s son, just as the land of Nephi was the first home of Nephi and those with him.

**3 king Ammoron.** Amalickiah's brother was probably second in command and the heir apparent, since he appears to have automatically become the not only the leader of the army but the new king.

**5 Lamanites were determined to maintain those cities.** After spilling much blood to capture the new Nephite cities along the coastline, the Lamanites determined to do all their power to hold them and thus encroach greatly on the Nephite border. This must have been especially painful to Moroni who had worked hard for several years to clear the area of Lamanite squatters and integrate Nephite settlers in their place. He built up the cities with strong fortifications that fell because his forces were in Zarahemla dealing with the kingmen, and now those very fortifications were making it easy for the Lamanites to settle in and hold fast.

**10 strengthen the cities found about.** Moroni gave Teancum the task to fortify the cities the Lamanites had not taken, notably Bountiful.

**11 Lamanites are upon us...by the west sea.** The Lamanite army was sufficiently large to wage a three-front war, capturing Nephite cities on the east, attacking on the west (where Ammonihah and Noah were), and in the south near Manti (Alma 56-58). This stretched the Nephites thin as they had to defend themselves in so many places at once.

**15 established armies to protect the south and the west.** Moroni got control of two of the fronts so was speeding to Teancum in the east to try and get things moving there. Note that the army Moroni established in the south was partly made up of the stripling warriors (Alma 56-58; see especially Alma 56:20 to see the chronology).

**19 held a council of war.** Moroni and his leaders met together to discuss how best to make progress in the eastern sector. Interesting that the conclusion of the council process was to ask the Lamanites to meet them on the plain away from the defenses of the city of Mulek. To no one's surprise, they declined. So Moroni resorted to strategy, sending Teancum's army out as 'bait.'

**22-23 down near the seashore.** Teancum went on the east (the ocean side) and Moroni on the west (the wilderness side). Teancum marched "northward" toward Bountiful (v. 27), showing that Mulek was southward of Bountiful and near the ocean.

24-40 Moroni's strategy was brilliant—lead the larger part of the army away chasing after Teancum and his men. Then just as they were exhausted, bring out Lehi's fresh army to meet them. When they retreat to try to get back to Mulek, Moroni has already captured the city with its depleted numbers of soldiers, so the Lamanites have Moroni in front of them, Lehi behind them, and Teancum coming up fast to support Lehi. The Lamanites fought "with exceeding fury" but their leader, Jacob, was killed and the battle was won by the Nephites. Sadly, "Moroni was wounded," the only time that is recorded in the record. It could be that was the cause of Moroni's early demise (Alma 63:3).

## ALMA 53 REINFORCEMENTS

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1-9 Moroni left Lehi in charge of the recaptured Mulek and send Teancum with a huge group of Lamanite prisoners to fortify Bountiful to the north, causing it to be "an exceeding stronghold ever after." But as Mormon notes, "on account of some intrigue amongst the Nephites," they were losing

battles on the southern front. Saying that reminded Mormon of something else going on—actually already begun but not yet recorded.

10-19 Seeing the plight of the people, the people of Ammon said they would break their covenant and take up arms. But Helaman and the others wouldn't allow it, "lest by so doing they should lose their souls." But someone realized "they had many sons" who had not taken the covenant, and they could help with the war. So they entered into their own covenant: "to fight for the liberty of the Nephites, yeah, to protect the land unto the laying down of their lives." These two thousand young men selected Helaman as their leader—imagine organizing an LDS army today, led by President Monson!

20-21 These young men of the people of Ammon would have been in their late teens or early twenties. They were "valiant for courage", "true at all times", "men of truth and soberness", and "taught to keep the commandments of God."

22 **two thousand stripling soldiers.** This is where we get the name stripling warriors, a title not actually in the scriptures, but this verse comes closest.

## ALMA 54 NEGOTIATIONS

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This chapter consists of two letters written between Moroni and Ammoron about exchanging prisoners.

5-14 Moroni's letter: Moroni basically spent most of the letter telling Ammoron what a sinner he was, calling him a "child of hell," among other things. Then at the end, Moroni demanded a prisoner exchange on his own terms—one Lamanite prisoner for every Nephite family. There is a fair amount of hyperbole in these communications, with Moroni threatening to destroy the Lamanites "from off the face of the earth," which he never did nor showed any signs of doing.

16-24 Ammoron's letter: Ammoron played the old Lamanite party line—Nephi wronged his brethren in the beginning, and the government rightly belonged to Laman and Lemuel. But he agreed to Moroni's prisoner exchange. We learn that Ammoron is a descendent of Zoram, a former Nephite, who now called himself "a bold Lamanite" determined to avenge the wrongs done against what is now his people.

## ALMA 55 PRISONERS FREED

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2 **I will not exchange prisoners with Ammoron.** Even though Ammoron agreed to Moroni's terms, the chief commander hated the king's attitude, so he declined to do it. Instead, he determined to free the prisoners without an exchange.

3 **I will seek death among them.** As with the letter, Moroni's declaration is more hype than plan. In fact, the plan he executed resulted in no bloodshed.

4 **caused that a search should be made.** Moroni's plan involved an old trick—getting the Lamanite guards drunk. But to pull it off, he needed a true Lamanite to lead the group in. Several things are worth noting here. First, he had to search among all this army. This begs the question: if Lamanites

looked so different, why was it so hard to find one? Couldn't they just look around and see them? Why did they have to search the entire army?

**5 Laman.** The one they found was named Laman and was one of those servants of the king who fled when Amalickiah's soldiers tricked and killed the king. He was probably happy to settle a score with Amalickiah's brother.

**6 a small number of his men.** Moroni sent Laman with some of Moroni's soldiers. Again, if Lamanites looked different than Nephites, wouldn't the Lamanite guards immediately notice that Laman was the only Lamanite in the group and that the others were Nephites?

**8 he saith unto them: Fear not.** This appears to be the only reason they needed Laman—to get the accent right. The other men are not recorded as ever talking, just Laman. And it is recorded that "when the Lamanites heard these words they received him with joy." The wine helped their attitude, certainly, but it was Laman's words that gave him credibility.

13-24 Moroni's plan was to get everyone drunk then arm the people in the city, including women and children. To do this, they went to the city walls and threw weapons over the top. The people inside picked them up and were armed and ready—"and all those things were done in a profound silence." We're told again that Moroni "did not delight in murder or bloodshed," in spite of his heated words, and his action bear that out. Awaking in the morning, the Lamanites discovered Moroni facing them outside the walls and armed prisoners inside the walls, and quickly surrendered. Thus the prisoners were freed without an exchange and the Nephites recaptured the city of Gid.

**33 preparations to attack the city Morianton.** Mormon ends the account of Moroni's efforts for three chapters and instead provides a flashback to a related story on a different front of the war—Helaman leading the stripling soldiers in the battles in the south.

## ALMA 56 GATHERING IN THE SOUTH

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**1 thirtieth year.** Moroni received the letter from Helaman in 30 RoJ, but it starts the account of the gathering of the army in 26 RoJ (v. 7), meaning that it is a four-year letter, and that Moroni had little or no news from the southern front for much of that time.

**9 the city of Judea.** Helaman took his troops from Melek, where the people of Ammon lived (northwest of Zarahemla) south to Judea, which was evidently between Zarahemla and Manti.

**to assist Antipus.** Antipus was the commander in this part of the ward. He is only mentioned in this chapter.

**14 Manti...Zeezrom...Cumeni...Antiparah.** The war had not been going well in the south, with the Lamanites taking control of a number of cities and pushing the Lamanite-Nephite border further north and closer to Zarahemla. Helaman's arrival with this 2,000 brought "much joy" to Antipus' men who had been fighting by day and working to build reinforcements all night (v. 16).

**25 against the city of Zarahemla...over to the city Nephihah.** The Nephites feared two moves by the Lamanites that would turn the tide of the war—either an attack on the capital city, Zarahemla,

or the joining of the southern and eastern armies in the Lamanite-held Nephihah. Antipus and Helaman were determined not to let either happen.

**28 ten thousand men...their wives and their children.** As was often the case in ancient warfare, families were with the army, in the rear and away from the action, but close enough to help with food preparation or other tasks. In this case, the soldiers were likely drawn from displaced local residents, meaning that their families were exiles and fighting to return to their own homes and farms.

30-41 The plan was to use Helaman and his men to lure the Lamanites out of the city—similar to the plan Moroni had used up north. So the “strongest army of the Lamanites” followed them out of the city, and for three days they were closely followed by the Lamanites.

42-57 But on the third day, the pursuit stopped. Suspecting it was because Antipus’ army had caught them but not knowing for certain, the 2,000 nevertheless turned back to fight this huge Lamanite army. Though they had never before fought in battle (though they had been deployed for almost two years), they fought with valiance the faith. Antipus himself was killed and many other Nephite leaders and men, but the Nephite army won the day and took all the Lamanites prisoner. Amazingly, not one of the 2,000 striplings was killed.

**52 when Helaman came.** This is a letter written from Helaman to Moroni, yet in this verse Helaman’s name is mentioned in the third person. The letter must have been longer than Mormon wanted to include in its entirety, so he did a little editing and slipped in this summary.

## ALMA 57 ANTIPARAH AND THE LAMANITE PRISONERS

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1-4 Helaman was now the commander for the southern war, and he and Ammoron exchanged letters about prisoners. Helaman refused to negotiate, believing that he could take Antiparah without the exchange, which he did because the people simply fled.

**6 six thousand men, besides sixty of the sons of the Ammonites.** Reinforced with 6,000 new soldiers from Zarahemla and 60 more from Melek, the striplings now numbers 2,060.

**10 instead of being Lamanites, were Nephites.** As with the story of getting the Lamanite soldiers drunk, here is another indication that appearance did not matter, that Nephites and Lamanites looked very similar. Helaman’s army was apparently pretending to be the Lamanite army from Cumeni, so when those with supplies arrived, they didn’t realize they were handing them over to the wrong people. Granted, it was “by night,” but they don’t seem to have been able to tell the difference until it was too late, meaning they had to get pretty close.

**12 they yielded up the city.** Laying siege to Cumeni and cutting off their supplies did the trick—the people surrendered and the Nephites captured the city.

13-17 The Nephites had taken so many Lamanite prisoners that it was becoming impossible to guard them. So they determined to send them to Zarahemla to be guarded there in the larger population center. But the next day, the guards returned without the prisoners. There was no time to ask why—the Lamanites were attacking in force.

20-21 ***obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness.*** This is the only time in the Book of Mormon that “exactness” is used—in fact, the only time in all of scripture. What a marvelous description of the 2,060—everything they did was done to the best of their abilities.

25-26 ***not one soul of them who did perish.*** Though all were wounded and many wounded seriously, not one of the 2,060 died. This was “astonishing” to the other soldiers, because many of them had perished. They did “justly ascribe it to the miraculous power of God.”

## ALMA 58 CONCLUDING THE SOUTHERN CONFLICT

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1 ***could not decoy them.*** The Lamanites had learned their lesson, and marching past a city with a small band of Nephites was no longer reason to come out of the city and give chase. Ironically, however, that is exactly what happened.

4 ***we did wait to receive provisions and strength.*** Helaman asked for support from the government in Zarahemla but got nothing in return. This neglect was the cause of Moroni’s scathing letter in Alma 60.

10 ***did pour out our souls in prayer.*** With little support from Zarahemla and a dug-in Lamanite foe, Helaman’s army turned to God, praying for strength and deliverance.

11 ***The Lord our God did visit us with assurances.*** In the midst of war, God gave needed assurance to the Nephites that he would deliver them, and they found peace, faith, and hope.

13-30 Helaman took his army up to the city of Manti to prepare for an attack. But the Lamanites greatly outnumbered them, so determined that they might just have at these Nephites before any more trouble could be caused. Helaman put a small army on either side hidden in the wilderness, and when the Lamanites came out, he made out quickly for Zarahemla. Eventually, the Lamanites decided that was not a good plan, and turned back. But in the meantime, the two small armies under the leadership of Gid and Teomner returned to the city and captured it easily. Helaman then traveled all night and circled past the sleeping Lamanites to beat them back to the city. How surprised the Lamanite army must have been to arrive back at Manti and not only see it in possession of the Nephites but be guarded by the very army they had been pursuing! Having lost their last stronghold in the south, the Lamanites quickly retreated back home to Lamanite territory.

31-41 Helaman’s immediate point in writing the letter to Moroni was to let him know they were in need of help to hold on to the conquered cities and that he didn’t know why Zarahemla wasn’t sending reinforcements and supplies.

## ALMA 59 THE FALL OF NEPHIHAH

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1-4 Rejoicing in Helaman’s victories but seeing the great need, Moroni sent a letter to the chief judge, Pahoran, asking him to support Helaman. Then he turned back to his own needs.

5 ***the people of Nephihah...were attached by the Lamanites.*** As mentioned above, Nephihah was a still in Nephite possession, but not for long. The gathering place of the refugees from the nearby towns of Moroni, Lehi, Morianton, and even far-away Manti, which Helaman had recently liberated, the city found itself under attack.

**8 obliged to flee.** The Lamanite attack was so overwhelming that the people poured out of the city and fled to Moroni for protection.

**11 exceedingly sorrowful, and began to doubt.** This is the darkest hour of the war for Moroni. Though he had good news from the southern front, he had lost his key city in the eastern region to Lamanite attack. Now everything in this sector was under their control all the way up to Bountiful. With no help forthcoming from Zarahemla for either himself or Helaman, for the first time, Moroni began to doubt that they would survive the war, and attributed their failures to wickedness. He was correct, but the wickedness was not among his army, but back in Zarahemla.

## ALMA 60 MORONI TO PAHORAN

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This chapter is Moroni's letter to the chief judge, Pahoran, in Zarahemla. He was angry because the government was not supporting the soldiers in the field, and made it very personal against Pahoran. He condemned Pahoran for "exceedingly great neglect", "exceeding slothfulness", "and even wickedness." He accused him of "seeking for authority" and called those in Zarahemla "traitors." He calls Pahoran to repentance and says he will "smite" him if they are not "up and doing."

What is interesting about this is that Moroni was wrong. He made a mistake. As Robert Millet pointed out, if you were Joseph Smith writing the Book of Mormon and wanted it to support your claims to being a prophet-leader, why would you include a story about a prophet-leader who made a huge mistake? Wouldn't that open you up to potential criticism and allow people to say that you were wrong, too? (Which is what happened to Joseph Smith, as some members declared him a 'fallen prophet', especially after the Kirtland bank failure.)

## ALMA 61 PAHORAN TO MORONI

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Moroni was 37 during this exchange. We don't know how old Pahoran was but his reply exhibits remarkable maturity. Here Moroni had sent him a scathing condemnation, and his reply is honest, gracious, and even thankful for Moroni's passion.

**2 it grieves my soul.** Pahoran holds no rancor but immediately sets the stage—he feels for Moroni's challenges, and quickly explains who the real enemy is here—the revived band of the kingmen. Moroni had defeated this group years earlier, but now they were back, and with Moroni off fighting wars on the frontiers, were able to seize control of the capital.

**5 I have fled to the land of Gideon.** Driven out of Zarahemla by the kingmen (which means that Moroni's messenger was good at figuring this all out and getting the message to the right place), Pahoran set up temporary headquarters in nearby Gideon.

**9 I am not angry, but do rejoice in the greatness of your heart.** What an amazing display or support. Pahoran could have been angry back at Moroni and condemned him for false accusation and incorrect assumptions. Instead, he builds the relationship, offers support, directs the anger to the correct source, and calls on Moroni for assistance against their common enemy.

## ALMA 62 BATTLING KINGMEN AND LAMANITES

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1-5 Taking courage and finding great joy in the faithfulness of Pahoran from his reply, Moroni left Lehi and Teancum in charge of the war and marched toward Gideon to join forces with the chief judge. Along the way, he hoisted the “standard of liberty” and “thousands did flock unto his standard.” People clearly loved Moroni, respected what he was doing, and were willing to rally to him when called.

6 **Pachus, who was the king of those dissenters.** The leader of kingmen, Pachus, had not only taken over the land of Zarahemla and driven out the legitimate government, but he made himself king and made an alliance with the Lamanites (led by Nephite dissenter, Ammoron) that provided support for his position (see Alma 61:8).

7-10 Pachus and his followers were swiftly dealt with by Moroni and Pahoran.

12 **sent unto Helaman.** After putting down Pachus, Moroni send men and supplies to Helaman to hold onto the wins in the southern quarter.

13 **sent to the armies of Lehi and Teancum.** Moroni also reinforced the eastern troops with 6,000 men and food.

14-17 Heading toward Nephihah, Moroni and Pahoran encounter a Lamanite supply group, which they battled and defeated. Gathering the up the much-needed supplies, they offered the Lamanites a covenant of peace, which most took, and sent them to live with the people of Ammon in Melek.

18-26 Nephihah must have been a large city, for Moroni was able to discover in his personal scouting that the Lamanite army was mostly gathered on the east side near the main entrance. Getting “strong cords and ladders,” he took men and arms to the west side and let themselves over the walls. When the Lamanites awoke, there was Moroni and his men already in the city, so they fled. Instead of fleeing south, though, toward Lamanite territory, they fled north, probably hoping for the safety of one of the Lamanite-held towns there on the east coast.

27-29 Lamanite prisoners, who had no doubt heard of the earlier covenant, volunteered to join the people of Ammon, and after making an appropriate covenant, did so, becoming farmers to help supply food to the armies.

31 **they were frightened and fled before the army of Moroni.** On a roll now, Moroni’s very presence began to strike fear into the Lamanites, and they abandoned the land of Lehi without a fight.

32 **the land of Moroni.** The last stand of the Lamanites was the city of Moroni, where they had first started fighting in this area (Alma 52:22).

35-36 Teancum “was exceedingly angry” with Ammoron because of all the “war and bloodshed, yea, and so much famine” he and his brother had caused. Teancum had taken care of the brother, now it was time to do the same for Ammoron. Sneaking into the city, he went from Lamanite tent to Lamanite tent until he found the king, then threw a javelin at him like with his brother, Amalickiah. He did kill the king, but the man made noise and guards came, who captured and killed Teancum.

37-39 Teancum’s death greatly saddened Moroni but also appears to have cemented his resolve. He led his army against the city of Moroni and “did drive them out of the land,” at least for “the space of many years.”

**41 many had become hardened...many were softened.** Mormon captured the difference in how people react to challenging circumstances. Some become hardened, allowing bitterness or other feelings to set in that bring a negative influence in their lives. On the other hand, some become softened, allowing challenges to humble them and look to God for support. In this case, same war, same trials, very different reactions.

**43 and he retired.** Moroni was 38 years old when he “retired” and turned over command of the armies to his son, Moronihah (who, interestingly, is never mentioned in the previous accounts of battles, but who must have been there gaining experience, etc.). Moronihah must have been quite young himself, probably in his early 20s.

**46 they did establish again the church.** During the war years, regular religious practices seem to have been suspended, though faith was clearly evident in many examples in these chapters. Now with things returning to ‘normal,’ Helaman and his brothers Shiblon and Corianton went back to work getting the Church firmly re-established among the people.

**49 they were not lifted up in the pride of their eyes.** After the war, commerce returned and many Nephites became wealthy. But unlike other times, the people did not forget the Lord, but stayed humble and grateful for the blessing of deliverance.

**52 Helaman died.** In 35 RoJ, Alma’s oldest son passed away. We don’t know his age, but he had been the leader of the Church since his father disappeared in 19 RoJ (Alma 44:2-20), or for 16 years.

## ALMA 63 TRANSITIONS

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**1 Shiblon took possession of those sacred things.** Helaman’s brother and Alma’s other son, Shiblon, took leadership of the Church after Helaman’s death, and was the record keeper for three years. Mormon praises him as “a just man” who kept the commandments of God.

**3 Moroni died.** At the young age of 43, just five years after ‘retiring,’ Moroni passed away. The cause of his death is not stated, but it seems reasonable to say that years of battle and being wounded at least once had an impact and perhaps contributed to his early death.

**4 departed out of the land of Zarahemla into the land which was northward.** At least 5,400 men (and perhaps well over 10,000, counting wives and children) left in 37 RoJ to go settle in the land northward. Sorenson (265-269) has a great discussion about the northern movements in Mesoamerican history at this time and how it correlates to the Nephite record. Suffice it to say that putting this story in the Book of Mormon right at this time and place would be a wild guess if Joseph Smith had written it on his own. As a true history, it fits perfectly with what historians and archaeologists have found in the area.

**5 Hagoth.** See *Student Manual*, 261.

**10 Shiblon died.** In 39 RoJ, Alma’s second son passed away. Corianton was the next logical choice for custody of the sacred relics and records, but he had “gone forth to the land northward in a ship.” So Shiblon, before he died, passed them all on to Helaman<sub>2</sub>, the son of Helaman and Shiblon’s nephew, after whom the book of Helaman is named.

**12 were written and sent forth.** Helaman embarked on a mission to get more copies of the scriptures and the history out into the hands of the people. The result is that they were carried “throughout the land,” and all the scriptures except the Jaredite record that grandfather Alma had said should not be made known were broadly disseminated.

**14-15** After another group of Nephite dissenters joined the Lamanites, there was another small war. Under the leadership of Moronihah, the attackers were driven back.

**17 thus ended the account of Alma, and Helaman his son, and also Shiblon.** These are the record keepers of the Book of Alma, which covers 39 years of Nephite history in 160 pages, for an average of about 4 pages per year.

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