

The Epistle: Defending the Cause of Freedom

Amid the 13 years of war between the Lamanites and the Nephites, Chief Captain Moroni receives good news from his fellow soldier, Captain Helaman, in a form of an epistle or letter stating that they have fought and recovered land that was lost to the Lamanites. Moroni was glad since it was his goal to regain the lands and possessions that had been taken by the Lamanites. His strategy was to use his forces to take back those lands and then receive reinforcements from the capital city of Zarahemla to maintain the lands they had won. He wanted to make sure that the lands they had won would not fall back into the hands of the Lamanites since it was much easier to protect the land from the enemy than it was to fight to regain it. He only left a few soldiers to protect the lands assuming they would shortly receive the promised reinforcements from Zarahemla. However, the reinforcements never came and some of the lands were once again lost to the Lamanites.

This painting is of Chief Captain Moroni, leader of the Nephite army, writing an epistle to Pahoran, the chief judge and governor over the Nephites residing in the city of Zarahemla. In this epistle, he rebuked Pahoran for not sending food and aid to reinforce their army. The men are dying by the thousands in battle and are on the brink of starvation but have not received help from the government through sustenance or more soldiers. He also described the Lamanites' many atrocities as they sought to gain power and control over the Nephite people and their lands. He stated that the Lamanite soldiers were murdering women and children and they were also kidnapping them, and no one knew what kind of horrors they were subjected to. Moroni admonished Pahoran to repent and send more soldiers and food to help replenish the army or he will come and battle with him in the city of Zarahemla. He ended his epistle saying that he doesn't fight for glory or power but to protect and defend his country and his people.

When Pahoran received this epistle, he was grieved to hear about their suffering but glad that Moroni contacted him for he greatly needed Moroni's help. There was a large insurrection in Zarahemla which overthrew the government and caused Pahoran and his remaining followers to flee the city. He needed Moroni's aid along with as many soldiers as he could spare so they could retake the city. Moroni received the epistle and left straight away. On his way to Zarahemla, he stopped in every land inhabited by the Nephites and raised his title of liberty to recruit more soldiers. Thousands of men joined him. They met with Pahoran and his men and reclaimed the city of Zarahemla.

