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Chapter XXXIII

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Abstract: The War in the South-west—Antipus—Helaman and His Two Thousand Sons—
Their Valor and Faith—The Repulse of the Lamanites

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE WAR IN THE SOUTHWEST—ANTIPI'S—HELAMAN AND HIS TWO THOUSAND SONS—THEIR VALOR AND FAITH—THE REPULSE OF THE LAMANITES.

THE WAR had been raging several years, and was working disastrously to the Nephites, when the people of Ammon, feeling that they were a burden rather than a help to their benefactors, though indeed they were not, desired to be released from their oath and covenant never again to take up deadly weapons against their fellows. They desired in this hour of extreme peril to take up arms in defense of the liberties of their adopted country. From this rash step Helaman and his brethren dissuaded them, lest by so doing they should imperil their eternal salvation. But they had sons who had grown far towards manhood who had not entered into this covenant, and consequently were not shut off from participating in the dangers and the glories of the war. So with their fathers' and mothers' consent, faith, prayers and words of encouragement, two thousand of these youths were mustered into the Nephite army (B. C. 66). These striplings were all men of truth, faith, soberness and integrity, and were conspicuous for their courage, strength and activity. Being organized they desired that Helaman, for whom they had great love and respect, should be their leader. He consented, and at their head marched to the relief of the forces of the republic that were struggling against considerable odds on the southern borders of the Nephite dominions, from the shores of the Pacific Ocean eastward.

Helaman found the Nephite forces, numbering about six thousand warriors, in a somewhat deplorable condition. The Lamanites, in the strength of greatly superior numbers, had captured the cities of Manti, Cumeni, Zeezrom and Antiparah, and held possession of the country round about. These cities had not been taken without much bloodshed on both sides. The Nephites especially had lost large numbers in prisoners, who were generally put to death by their captors, except the superior officers, who were sent to the land of Nephi. Antipus, the Nephite commander, was locked up in the city of Judea, where, despirited and weakened by excessive toil and fighting, his troops were making a desperate and painful effort to fortify the city. The arrival of Helaman and his corps brought hope and joy again to their hearts, and renewed vigor to their endeavors.

King Ammoron, learning that reinforcements had reached the defenders of Judea, ordered all active operations to be suspended for a season. This suspension was most providential for the soldiers of Antipus, as it gave them time to finish the work of fortifying the beleaguered city, and also to recruit their health and energies. By the commencement of the following year the works of defense were completed, and the Nephites became anxious for the onslaught they had so greatly dreaded a few months previous. But they were disappointed. The Lamanites did not feel sufficiently strong to renew aggressive movements. They contented themselves with occupying the Nephite cities they had already captured. In the second month of this year (B. C. 65) a convoy of provisions and two thousand additional warriors arrived from the land of Zarahemla.

The Nephites in the city of Judea were now ten thousand strong, with abundant provisions, and they were anxious for a forward movement in order, if possible, to retake some of their cities in the hands of the enemy.

Antipus and Helaman resolved on a ruse to entice the Lamanites from behind their fortifications. It was decided that Helaman and his command should march out of Judea with the apparent intention of carrying supplies to one of the cities in the hands of the Nephites, that was built near the seashore. In executing this manœuver, they purposely passed at no great distance from the city of Antiparah, in which was stationed the most numerous of the Lamanite armies, in the hope that the Lamanites would notice that their numbers were few, and thus be led to attack them. The stratagem proved successful. The garrison of Antiparah issued forth in pursuit of Helaman, who, with all haste, retreated into the wilderness northward, his intent being to draw his pursuers as far as possible from Antiparah. When the Lamanites had started in pursuit of Helaman, Antipus, with a considerable portion of his army, marched out of the city of Judea and fell in the Lamanites' rear. The retreat soon became a race. The Lamanites crowded forward with all possible expedition in the endeavor to reach Helaman before Antipus caught them. Helaman, on the other hand, used his utmost energy to keep out of their clutches. Neither of the three bodies turned to the right or to the left, but kept straight on in the effort to out-march their foes. Night came and went, and on the morrow the double pursuit was still kept up. Another night fell, but neither dare turn from its course.

On the third morning the race for life and victory

was again renewed, but before long the Lamanites, concluding they could not overtake Helaman, suddenly stopped, and awaited the coming of Antipus and his weary soldiers, whom they unexpectedly attacked with great fury, slew Antipus and several of his captains, threw the Nephite troops into great confusion and forced them to commence a retreat.

In the meantime, Helaman discovered that he was no longer pursued, and not knowing the reason, was in doubt what course to take. He called a hasty council of war, at which it was determined to return at once, and risk the chances of being caught in a trap by the crafty Lamanites.

The statement which Helaman makes regarding the conduct of his young soldiers at this council is very interesting. After he had explained the situation to them, he inquired, What say ye, my sons, will ye go against them in battle? Without hesitancy they answered in the affirmative, saying: Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we shall fall; then let us go forth; we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone; therefore let us go lest they should overpower the army of Antipus. Here Helaman remarks: Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more of the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers that if they did not doubt that God would deliver them. And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying, We do not doubt our mothers knew it.

Helaman and his sons arrived none too soon on the field of battle. The soldiers of Antipus were already fleeing before their more numerous foes, but the

valor and impetuosity of the youthful Ammonites was irresistible. They fell on the Lamanite rear with a daring and miraculous strength possessed only by men who put their whole trust in God. Thus attacked in the rear, the Lamanites immediately halted, changed front, and threw their whole force against the Ammonites. The surviving officers of Antipus' army, finding that Helaman had come to their rescue, stopped the retreat, re-organized their scattered bands, and renewed the attack. The Lamanites were compelled to succumb; they could not resist the desperate courage of the Nephites that was driving them in at both front and rear. Their legions all surrendered, and, by Helaman's orders, were sent as prisoners of war to Zarahemla.

And what about the young warriors of Ammon? So great was their faith, so potent its workings, that when, after the battle, Helaman called the roll of his youthful heroes, not one was missing. The faith sown by their mothers' words had borne fruit—they were all preserved. To their undaunted prowess, for they fought as if with the strength of God, the Nephites unhesitatingly accorded the glory of the day.

Still the hardly-contested war continued. Six thousand men, with provisions, reached Helaman from Zarahemla and the regions round about (B. C. 63), besides sixty more young Ammonites who had grown sufficiently vigorous to assume the hardships of military life. The city of Cumeni shortly afterwards surrendered through the want of provisions, their supplies having been continuously cut off by Helaman's troops. This surrender threw so many prisoners on the hands of the Nephites that they were unable to

guard or feed them. An officer named Gid, with a sufficient force, was detailed to convey them to Zarahemla, but on their way, passing near to an invading body of Lamanites, the prisoners made a desperate attempt to escape. A few succeeded in getting away, but the greater number were slain by their guard. Gid and his command returned to headquarters, as it proved, just in time, for the Lamanites had made a sudden and unexpected attack at Cumeni, and but for Gid's timely arrival the Nephite forces would probably have received a severe defeat. As it was, defeat was turned to victory by their coming.

In this desperate battle every one of the young Ammonites was wounded, but not one was slain. According to the promise made to them they were preserved by the marvelous power of God.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE RELIEF OF MANTI—THE OVERTHROW OF THE KINGMEN—PACHUS SLAIN—THE STRUGGLE AT MORONI—TEANCUM SLAYS AMMORON, BUT AT THE COST OF HIS OWN LIFE—TEANCUM'S NOBLE CHARACTER.

AFTER THE battle at Cumeni, the Lamanites retreated eastward to Manti, which was situated on the upper waters of the Sidon. Nor was it for several months that this city could be taken, as owing to internal dissensions at the Nephite capital, and the attempts on the part of some of the people to overthrow