

AMLICI BECOMES KING

(Alma 1:53-97)

The story of Nehor that was just concluded is a necessary prelude to the story of Amlici. Amlici is "after the order of the man that slew Gideon by the sword, who was executed according to the law." This reference to Nehor tells us much about Amlici before we understand any more about him. We know what his political/economic ideas are, and we know that they are considered subversive in Nephite culture. Mormon's rather unsubtle reference to Nehor's execution sets up Amlici as undesirable even before we truly meet him.

What we will find in the story of Amlici is that he is of far greater importance to Nephite history than Nehor was. While Nehor would appear to get top billing, Amlici has a much greater negative impact on Zarahemla. In addition to learning that Amlici is after the order of Nehor (without mentioning that name) we learn also that Amlici is a "wise man as to the wisdom of the world," a condition that appears directly related to being after the order of Nehor. It would appear that there is a tight correlation between the ideals of the "Nehors" and the learning of the world.

V53-62

In the greater land of Zarahemla there was no support for Amlici's kingship. Nevertheless, there continued to be support for him, in some locations. The solution was succession. Amlici's people "did assemble themselves together (v.59)." This would require a removal from other locations and a relocation to a new community. Within that community Amlici would both have the "voice of the people" necessary to rule, but he would have a location where he could rule and be obeyed. The Amlicite scenario doesn't work unless they become a separate community. This separation from the people of Zarahemla both indicates the reason that Amlici could function as a king over a people as well as the reason why they initiated military action against the Zarahemlaites.

V63-75

The very fact that Amlici is willing to consider military action suggests that there were a significant number of people in his community. This also reinforces the need to remove themselves from within Nephite society, as a military action requires a support base.

V76-86

After the Nephites had sufficiently prevailed in battle to force the Amlicites into flight. Alma has his army pursue them. This pursuit was necessary to make sure that the Amlicites were sufficiently driven from Nephite lands that they did not quickly regroup and attack again. In the valley of Gideon he calls off the pursuit, but he is not yet satisfied that they are out of danger. There is still the possibility that the Amlicites might regroup. To obtain intelligence as to the disposition of the remainder of the Amlicite army, Alma sends out spies to watch what becomes of the Amlicites.

For Mormon, the disadvantaged military position of the Nephites would have highlighted their reliance upon the Lord for their salvation. Just as Mormon discounted the Nephites' advantaged position in the battle with the Amlicites, here is emphasizes their disadvantaged position to highlight the necessity of their reliance upon the Lord as the true source of their success.

V87-97

The smaller Nephite army, led by Alma, gives them battle wherein Alma slays Amlici and leads the Nephites to victory.

What were the goals of the Amlicites?