

Alma 3:4-19 – Mormon Discusses the Amlicites' Mark

In this passage Mormon has just finished discussing the outcome of the invasion of the Amlicites together with the Lamanites. The beginning of the discussion is that the Amlicites had marked themselves with red to distinguish themselves from the Nephites. Mormon discusses various prophecies about how those who rebelled against God would be marked, and then concludes, with respect to this mark – and all punishments:

Now I would that ye should see that they brought upon themselves the curse; and even so doth every man that is cursed bring upon himself his own condemnation.

Alma 3:19

The parallel that Mormon makes between the mark of the Amlicites and the mark of the Lamanites seems a little strange, since the former is temporary and the latter permanent. But I think the symbolism of it being a mark to show which side they were on in the battle, and that they demonstrated on their own, without meaning to, that they were in rebellion to God, is pretty strong. It is the statement in Verse 19, however, that really makes the argument.

The idea that we are free to chose our actions, but not free to chose the consequences of those actions, is central to the plan of salvation. Helaman 14:30,31 from the teachings of Samuel the Lamanite echoes this same theme:

And now remember, remember, my brethren, that whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself; and whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free. He hath given unto you that ye might know good from evil, and he hath given unto you that ye might choose life or death; and ye can do good and be restored unto that which is good, or have that which is good restored unto you; or ye can do evil, and have that which is evil restored unto you.

This principle, commonly referred to as agency, should not only make us responsible for our actions. According to Mormon, it should also make us aware that when something befalls us that is unpleasant, we also ought to be aware whether it is the consequence of one of our unrighteous decisions.