

“I’ll be back” - The Nephites, the Lamanites and the Great Underwear Wars

***“I’ll be back,”*** one of the most iconic lines in film history, spoken by the T-800, a cybernetic organism (cyborg), in *The Terminator* (1984). The phrase is a promise of return, delivered with a cold, mechanical certainty that reflects the T-800's nature as a relentless, emotionless cyborg assassin. Its emotionless precision, relentless determination, and unsettling human mimicry is ominous and assures with certainty it will return to complete its mission, no matter the obstacles.

In the beginning the T-800 is not immediately recognizable as a cyborg to the people it encounters. It is specifically designed to blend in with and pass as human. Its true nature as a cyborg only becomes recognizable as it sustains damage or interacts with those aware of its origins.

I’m guessing it’s Satan's favorite movie line of all time and for him and his minions has likely become a required refrain every time you defeat him - ***“I’ll be back.”***

However, what you really need to know about his repeated returns is found in the account of The Lamanites, Nephites and the Great Underwear Wars (CoC Alma 20). It happens in the 18th year of the judges’ rule. At the start of that year, the Nephites saw the Lamanites were coming to attack them so they made preparations for war and gathered their armies in the land of Jershon. The Lamanites then came with their thousands and entered the land for war. They were led by the human equivalent of the T-800, a man named Zerahemnah. As chief captains in his army he had appointed the most wicked and murderous men he could find - other T-800-like men. He did this so he could incite and inspire hatred and through war bring the Nephites under his control to have power over and enslave them.

Back then, the Nephites’ only aim, much like ours today, was to protect their lands, their houses, their wives and children, to keep them out of the hands of their enemies. Additionally, to preserve their rights, their privileges, and their liberty, so they could worship God according to their wishes was their quest, knowing that if they fell into the hands of the Lamanites, they would kill anyone who worshiped God in spirit and in truth.

As it turns out, the Nephite leader who was given the entire command, management and responsibility of all the Nephite armies was just a 25-year-old kid - Moroni (Captain Moroni). For most, at 25, the odds are stacked against them due to inexperience and the complexities of warfare. At 25, I'd rate chances of success low (maybe 20-30%), but history, and this Moroni, prove exceptions exist. When Moroni and his armies met the Lamanites for war, Moroni's armies were armed with swords, cimeters, and a variety of other weapons. When the Lamanite armies advanced, they saw Moroni had prepared the Nephites with breastplates and arm shields and helmets to defend their heads, and they wore thick clothing. The Lamanite army, on the other hand, wasn't prepared with any such things; they only had swords and cimeters, bows and arrows, and stones and slings; and they were naked except for their *underwear*, an animal skin that was secured around their waist. They didn't have breastplates or shields, and therefore were very afraid of the Nephite armies because of their armor, despite far outnumbering them. As the killing began on both sides, in a series of battles, the death was more dreadful on the part of the Lamanites, since their naked bodies, except for their *underwear*, were exposed to the heavy blows of the Nephites with their swords and cimeters, which killed with almost every stroke. On the other hand, men occasionally fell among the Nephites from wounds and blood loss, since they were shielded on the more vital parts of the body from the strokes of the Lamanites by their breastplates, arm shields and helmets. And so as the Nephites continued killing the Lamanites, the Lamanites became frightened because of their great slaughter which reached a point that they began to flee. Ultimately in this series of battles, the Nephites experienced a sound victory and the Lamanites retreated completely.

But, ask yourself this - even if you didn't/don't already know the rest of this story, do you think this would be the last time the Lamanites would come to battle? And, do you think they'd ever come only in their underwear (loincloths) again? No, of course not, the last Lamanite off the battlefield likely, like the T-800, probably uttered the phrase, **"I'll be back."** Moroni knew this as well so he had his armies prepare even more for future battles. He knew their weapons and breast plates and arm shields and helmets and thick clothing would no longer be enough to protect them from their enemies. In Nephite cities that had been rebuilt, after a series of Lamanite skirmishes and wars, Moroni stationed armies by the city's borders. They had also thrown up dirt around the city to shield them from the Lamanite's arrows and stones. The ridge of earth they had dug up was so high the Lamanites couldn't throw their stones and shoot their arrows at the

Nephites with any success, and couldn't attack them unless they did it through the controlled entrance which would be very difficult.

Of course, when one of the many future wars comes around, the Lamanite T-800 leaders were very surprised by the Nephite's thoughtful repairs and preparations for defense. Once again, the Lamanite leaders had thought that because of their large numbers, it would be a successful attack. In preparing for the attack, they armed themselves with shields and breastplates, and also with clothing made of leather and very thick clothing to cover their naked bodies. Having prepared in this way, they thought they could easily overpower their Nephite enemies to enslave, or kill and slaughter them at will. But to their complete surprise, they were prepared for them, according to Moroni's instructions, in a way unprecedented in all previous battles. The Lamanites' evolution from near-naked warriors to armored invaders underscores the point that adversaries learn and escalate, much like a cyborg upgrading its tactics.

I'll end the scriptural story there - by now you get the gist. If not, it is this. The forces of evil (whether literal enemies or metaphorical ones, like temptation) return stronger, adapting to previous defeats.

The Book of Mormon warfare isn't just physical but symbolic of spiritual battles. The Nephites' motivations—defending liberty, family, and worship—resonate with universal human struggles. Moroni's proactive preparations reflect the idea that complacency invites defeat. Satan is the ultimate "T-800." Evil doesn't quit after one setback; it regroups and returns, more cunningly.

When life serves you up a battle with your own T-800—be it personal demons, societal conflicts, or spiritual trials—remember Moroni's example: victory comes not from sheer force but from relentless preparation and righteous purpose. The enemy may retreat, muttering "I'll be back," but by fortifying your "cities" (your mind, home, and values) with innovation and resolve, you can turn the tables. In the end, as the Nephites discovered, true strength lies in defending what's sacred, knowing that with divine guidance, even the underdog (or the 25-year-old commander) can prevail against the odds. So, gear up—because the next skirmish is inevitable, but so is the potential for triumph.

Evil is relentless, adaptive, and will always return ("I'll be back"), therefore, your spiritual defense must be equally relentless, adaptive, and proactive.

Victory in the first round is a lesson, not an outcome -

“I’ll be back.”

Signed

John The-Not-So-Beloved