

Artist Statement—*Our Mothers Knew It*

Ashley Jensen

This piece explores the immense trust and emotion the families of the two thousand young men fighting under Helaman’s command may have felt as they sent their sons off to battle, with a special emphasis on how the mothers and sisters may have felt. When we think of Helaman’s army, we most often reflect on their characteristics, spiritual courage, and the physical battles they fought. But how often do we reflect on the feelings and personal battles their families may have been fighting in their own hearts?

Throughout Alma 56, we see the courage of these young boys and their unshakable trust in the Lord. We also learn where their testimonies and that trust stemmed from, for “they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them . . . [and] we do not doubt our mothers knew it” (vv. 47–48). Not only were their mothers a great spiritual support to them but also their fathers, who brought provisions and provided physical support during the war (v. 27).

These mothers raised children during a time of physical and spiritual turmoil. Not only had they faced watching the Nephites fight a war with a people they once belonged to, they had also been fighting the spiritual battle of personal change and redemption, learning about Jesus Christ, choosing to follow him despite the pushback and their natural weakness. They had been changing their hearts and leaving behind wicked traditions as they chose every day to follow the Savior. They knew how important it was to teach these lessons to their children. They knew the importance of “doubting not.”

I imagine they kept showing their children how to trust as they waited for their sons to come home. Do we have this same trust in the Lord when our lives seem overwhelming and heavy? Do we trust that everything will be okay and know in our hearts that God will deliver us, no matter what that deliverance looks like? As I've reflected on the Anti-Nephi-Lehies and the trust in the Lord they demonstrated, it helps strengthen my faith that the Lord is involved in my personal battles and aware of my physical and spiritual well-being. By turning my life over to the Lord and his care, I have faith he is micromanaging the details as I choose to trust in God's deliverance.

Ashley Jensen received her BA in art from Brigham Young University in December 2023. Born on the East Coast and raised in the West, Ashley creates a wide variety of work, with an emphasis on oil and acrylic paintings, with occasional pen, digital, and charcoal drawings. Her subjects circle around abstract shape and line, with a more recent focus on nature, human, and animal figures. She's especially inspired by the landscape around where she's lived: mainly Utah and Arizona. Ashley aims to further develop her cohesive artistic voice and enjoys commissions and challenging subjects to help further that process.