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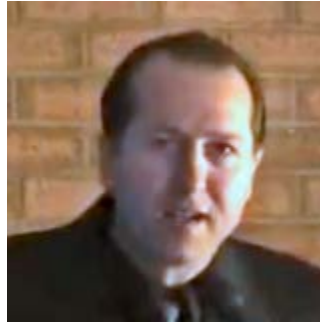
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# Nehors in the Land: A Latter-day Variation on an Ancient Theme



**L. Ara Norwood**

The Book of Mormon records descriptions of many peoples and their religious beliefs. Some of these beliefs are holy and others are evil. This is reflective of Lehi's teaching that there must needs be an opposition in all things or else the very purposes of creation itself would have been compromised.<sup>1</sup> The Book of Mormon tells of other champions of righteousness, Nephi and Jacob, Benjamin and Mosiah, Captain Moroni and Teancum, Alma and Amulek, to name a few. It also records various villains, such as Korihor and King Noah, Sherem and Amlici, Zemnarihah and Giddianhi. We learn of noble deeds as well as ignoble deeds done in Nephite society.

Hegel is credited with saying that history can repeat itself ("the first occurrence," Marx adds, "is a tragedy, the second as farce").<sup>2</sup> Latter-Day Saints continue to struggle against many of the same issues that the Nephite prophets struggled with in times past. Anti-religious atheists and secularists remind one of Korihor. Some political leaders of today, with their talk of "it's the economy, stupid" remind one of King Noah. The practices of many trial lawyers bring to mind Zeezrom and his wily tactics as he sought to question and entrap Amulek. Today's trained assassins remind one of Kishkumen. And terrorists along with leaders of rogue nations bring to mind the likes of Zerahemnah, Amalickiah, or Coriantumr.

This paper concerns one such villain and the order he spawned. The man is Nehor, and his order is aptly called The Order of the Nehors. It is the thesis of this paper that this ancient order has some qualitative parallels with modern-day critics of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## Nehor: The Murderer and False Teacher:

We first encounter Nehor in the opening chapter of the book of Alma. Shortly after the deaths of both Alma<sup>1</sup> and Mosiah<sup>2</sup> and when Alma<sup>2</sup> had assumed the political leadership under a new form of Nephite government, the re-restored Nephite church of Jesus Christ faced its first of many threats. Nehor is reported to have come among the people and preached doctrines that were antithetical to the Church of Christ, a false teacher, as it were.<sup>3</sup> We know nothing of Nehor's background, ancestry, parentage, or place of birth. What we get is a glimpse, a snapshot, as it were, of this enemy of righteousness. He was eventually brought to trial in the first year of Alma's reign as chief judge.

We learn first that Nehor was large and physically strong.<sup>4</sup> As a man "noted for his much strength" we understand that along with the God granted blessing of strength, comes the "eternal struggle between agency and force"<sup>5</sup> Nehor exercised unrighteous dominion over a physically weaker citizen. When he became "wroth"<sup>6</sup>with Gideon during a 'debate' he was losing, he murdered Gideon. This verse lays the ground work for supporting the allegation of not only the murder of Gideon itself, but also of Nehor's guilt of the serious crime against the church of priestcraft.<sup>7</sup>This begs the question: what message could be so powerful that a common murderer could be lifted to the level of a martyr amongst his believers; a figure so potent in its doctrine that we see this doctrine plaguing Nephite society for hundreds of years?

## The Priestcraft of Nehor:

Nehor's so-called "word of God" was hostile to the Church of God.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the atheist Korihor, Nehor was not opposed to religious trappings. Nephi defined his sin of priestcraft centuries earlier:

Priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion.<sup>9</sup>

Priestcraft could be said to be a spiritual disorder, standing in stark contrast to charity.<sup>10</sup> Nehor is remarkable in that he not only sought the glory of the world through his preaching (a central component of priestcraft),<sup>11</sup> but he was very candid about his views that glory seeking was a trait all enlightened people should aspire to.<sup>12</sup>

Nehor carried on a form of open elitism, proclaiming that the priests and teachers of the Church should be given special privileges and perks that come with being popular. This amounted to temporal support by the rank-and-file members of the Church, thus being relinquished of the need to

labor for their support, as was the common practice. And it's interesting that Nehor proclaimed this to the people openly, not just to the priests privately.

As to Nehor's specific theological teachings, we know very little. The Book of Mormon does not record in any great detail what Nehor believed or taught from a doctrinal perspective. The only record of Nehorite Doctrine deals with his view of the salvation of mankind. He felt that "all mankind should be saved", that "they need not fear nor tremble" for the Lord had created all men and also "redeemed all men; and in the end, all men should have eternal life". [emphasis added]. Compare Nehor's teaching to that plan of Lucifer, "Here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind,"<sup>13</sup> One wonders what "Lord" Nehor was referring to when he said, "the Lord had redeemed all men." In this Nehor had a sense of unbridled optimism. He encouraged his audiences to "lift up their heads and rejoice" which by itself is not necessarily a bad thing. After all, Nephi had, centuries earlier, intoned, "Rejoice, O my heart."<sup>14</sup> The critical difference between Nephi and Nehor was that Nephi encouraged rejoicing after parting company with sin. Nehor, by contrast, teaches that joy comes from sin without consequence [I see his teaching to rejoice linked with preposition "for" used as 'because of']. In all likelihood Nehor either didn't believe in the concept of sin, or if he did, he did not see sin as something that would prevent man from gaining eternal life.

Regardless of what Nehor's specific views of what constituted sin, the record is clear that Nehor believed in a universal redemption and eternal life. He believes in the reality of God (or at least he claims to), Nehor believes in a concept of salvation, but not in its opposite, damnation. Perhaps Nephi had something akin to Nehorite ideology in mind when he prophesied:

And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God – he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God.<sup>15</sup>

We know from the scriptural record that Nehor became very prideful, and this pride manifested itself in both materialistic ways (i.e., the wearing of very costly apparel)<sup>16</sup> and in tragically criminal ways (i.e., murder – when on the losing end of a doctrinal debate.) One other thing we know of Nehor that is quite significant: although the details are scant, Nehor established a church during the height of his popularity. This church was established "after the manner of [Nehor's] preaching."<sup>17</sup> It is the characteristics of the newly established church (called the Order of Nehor<sup>18</sup>) that will be examined. I

also wish to explore which elements of this ancient order of Nehor find commonality in modern-day critics of the Church of Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup>

Most of the cases of a false prophet/teacher falling from power lead to the fracture of their followers. For example, Sherem's minions returned to the true faith following the death of Sherem.<sup>20</sup> A similar occurrence came about with the demise of Korihor.<sup>21</sup> This did not happen in the death of Nehor. Perhaps this is because Nehor had established a church (presumably a formal organization) while Sherem and Korihor did not. Another possible factor could be that the demise of both Sherem (directly) and Korihor (indirectly) came as a result of divine cursing. This would have understandably had a dramatic impact on the people. Civil authority, on the other hand, brought about Nehor's death. There doesn't appear to be anything of the miraculous involved in his execution.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps as a result, his followers saw Nehor as a martyr. In any event, Nehor's death did nothing to stem the tide of priestcraft. Like a cancer, priestcraft spread throughout the land.<sup>23</sup>

We learn that Nehorism had great appeal to those who wanted a religion, but people who were spiritually bereft. Perhaps it was the message of Nehor, the message of Universal Salvation first sought by Satan after the creation that was attractive to his followers? There was a certain level of dishonesty in the Nehors. Mormon tells us "they durst not lie, if it were known."<sup>24</sup> The qualifying phrase "if it were known" is intriguing. It suggests that the Nehors *would* lie if they thought they could get away with it. The text also suggests that when they told the truth, it was not because they loved the truth but rather, because they feared the consequences of being found out. Mormon further details their character profile with this telling observation: "Others pretended to preach according to their belief."<sup>25</sup> This suggests they knew, on some level, that they were living a lie, that their love of "the vain things of the world" and their lust for "riches and honor"<sup>26</sup> was stronger than their love of the truth.

Other than this fundamental character flaw, we have no reason to believe the Nehors were unable to conduct themselves as stable citizens. They certainly were not outlaws as were the Gadianton Robbers. Alma 1:18 Initially, we see that, except for their founder, they did not steal, rob, or murder.<sup>27</sup>

To summarize what we have learned thus far: the early Nehors were a religious body of people among the Nephites in the land of Zarahemla who belonged to a church founded by Nehor about 91 BC. They believed in God, in universal salvation, in priestcraft, in a paid ministry, in materialism, and in conducting themselves as nominally responsible members of society (that is, not committing serious violations of the law.) They were not bashful about sharing their beliefs, and they were not bashful about manipulating the truth to suit their purposes.

## Nehorites, Attackers of the Church

One last trait Mormon tells is pertinent. We learn that these non-members of Christ's true church initiated an attack on the members of the Church of Christ. Although the exact persecutorial nature of this attack is not spelled out, it appears that during Nehor's time, the attack was not physical but was verbal. Mormon describes it thus:

But it came to pass that whosoever did not belong to the Church of God began to persecute those that did belong to the Church of God, and had taken upon them the name of Christ. Yea, they did persecute them, and afflict them with all manner of words.<sup>28</sup>

Although Mormon's description of whom the persecutors consisted of is vague, we can be sure that it included the Nehors among its ranks. In fact, a case could be made that the persecutors were almost entirely comprised of the followers of Nehor since virtually the entire chapter to that point has been describing either Nehor or his followers.<sup>29</sup>

What other manifestations of Nehorism do we find? Several events, all of which took place during Alma's ministry, are instructive in this regard. One of these events, which I refer to as "The Tragedy at Ammonihah," gives us some clues. Another set of clues comes to us from an account of the missionary labors of Aaron (one of the sons of Mosiah) in the Lamanite city of Jerusalem.

It is in the events surrounding Ammonihah that we learn just how far this violent spirit associated with Nehorism could go. The chief judge in Ammonihah, who "was after the order and faith of Nehor"<sup>30</sup> had not only destroyed the scriptural records of the true believers of that city, but he murdered many innocent believers and forced Alma and Amulek to watch that horrid scene. We also learn in the aftermath of that tragedy, where Alma and Amulek were miraculously delivered from a torture chamber prison, that the people of Ammonihah ascribed the miraculous deliverance to the power of the devil. The text is very instructive. It reads, "for they were of the profession of Nehor, and did not believe in the repentance of their sins."<sup>31</sup> It appears instead they believed in a form a cheap grace.

In the case of Aaron's exposure to Nehorism in the Lamanite city, Jerusalem, we learn a few telling things about the Nehors. Historically, we learn that they were comprised largely of two distinct groups of people, the Amulonites, and the Amalekites. We learn that Aaron soon discovered that, although the Nehors in this Lamanite land professed a belief in God and also built sanctuaries as places of worship, they were a hard-hearted people. During his preaching, an Amalekite who was after the order of Nehor stood up and interrupted Aaron's sermon, and with unbridled arrogance,

belittled and rejected Aaron's testimony. Aaron's appeal to scripture was met with anger and mockery.<sup>32</sup> This kind of rage at things holy eventually prompted these Nehorites to murder their own brethren and to spend an inordinate amount of energy fanning the flames of bigotry and prejudice throughout the Lamanite nation.<sup>33</sup> And yet, curiously, all this debauchery came from a people who professed a belief in God (see Alma 22:7.)

## The New Order of Nehor

There are a number of parallels between the ancient order of Nehors and the modern order of anti-Mormon bigotry. The four most obvious parallels are as follows: first, the doctrine of a type of universal salvation; second, the penchant for trying to appear to be a light unto themselves, to get the glory of the world (a component of priestcraft). Third, the need for Nehorites to persecute, to belittle, to attack and mock and criticize another faith will be explored. And finally, a fear of the truth, a disregard for the truth, all the while proclaiming loud and long a love for the truth will be compared to modern Nehorites.

## A 'Modern' Twist to the Nehorite Salvation from Sin

Much has been written in secular, non-church, and church literature about the doctrine of salvation from sin. By far the most prevalent doctrine can be loosely as that promulgated by Calvin, the 'U' in TULIP, Unconditional Election. Unconditional election is that salvation "is plainly owing to the mere pleasure of God that salvation is spontaneously offered to some, while others have no access to it, great and difficult questions immediately arise, questions which are inexplicable, when just views are not entertained concerning election and predestination.<sup>34</sup> Calvin's teaching is not a universal salvation, it is a salvation of all who are called and elected. In other words, those who believe in Calvin, by definition are called and elected to salvation. This detailed explanation has become so successful at repackaging the concept of a universal salvation that one writer states regarding the Calvinist doctrine regarding the sovereignty of God,

he emphasized it in such a way that it impressed itself upon the religious thought of his day and has continued to be the conception of God held by *all* Christian denominations and by many of whom it is made such a cardinal belief that the possibility of even doubting it is not even brought into question.<sup>35</sup>

Nehor would be envious or proud. The point of the doctrinal difference between Nehor and Calvinism, and The Doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is the concept of repentance from our sins formerly mentioned.

## **Modern Nehorites as a Light Unto themselves, or Glory Be To Me**

One manifestation of priestcraft (which is a core trait of Nehorism) is unbridled pride. Bordering on hubris, we see this kind of cocksure grandstanding in figures like the late Walter Martin, the late Wally Tope, the late Dee Jay Nelson, to name a few. But among the living, the examples are plenty. In James White's case, there is the need to win every argument, the fear of conceding even one single point to his Mormon opponent. White must score a shutout in every exchange. His insecurity in his own cause demands that he have a one hundred percent perfect record. One gets the impression that losing even one point would create doubt on his entire theology. This need to appear brilliant has been the cause of James White making some educational decisions that have embarrassed some of his evangelical colleagues. White decided to go back to school and earn a doctorate degree. The word on the street was that he was to attend Arizona State University and earn his doctorate in the field of history. What ended up happening with that plan is unclear. Suffice it to say that James didn't complete the program (and I'm not sure he ever even started it.) Instead, James opted to follow in the footsteps of people like Walter Martin, Dee Jay Nelson, and John Weldon for a non-accredited piece of paper that says he earned a Theologiae doctor. The value of the so-called degree is suspect and that's putting it mildly. But chances are James White achieved his goal of at least looking impressive on paper to his gullible constituency. If White's deep inner goal was to be in the business of preaching and setting himself up as a light unto the world, that he might get the gain and praise of the world, he has surely done well for himself. If his goal was to be a textbook case study in priestcraft, he has done equally well for himself.

Van Gorden, like James White only more so, has a need to grandstand when debating a Mormon. Years ago I was given a potential opportunity to participate in a discussion on Mormonism with Van Gorden. Professor Alan Gomes of Talbot School of Theology in southern California afforded me the potential opportunity. Professor Gomes had scheduled Van Gorden to address one of his religion classes as had been the pattern for a few years. With some gentle prodding from me, Gomes thought it might be beneficial to have some participation from me, but Gomes, who has some strong (though unexplainable) loyalties to Van Gorden, wanted to make sure Van Gorden was comfortable with the new arrangement. Well he wasn't. And he shunned my participation. But later on, he had a change of heart and I found myself in a negotiation of sorts with Van Gorden, discussing possible topics and



possible formats. Things seemed to be moving in the right direction until a few short days before the event, I received an overnight package from Van Gorden who had been traveling out of state. He sent all sorts of contractual forms demanding I sign them, giving him the rights to record and sell tapes of the event, etc.

When I started to change my mind about proceeding in that fashion, Van Gorden left numerous messages on my voice mail system at work, taunting me, alluding to my cowardly character, telling me that the entire school is planning on crowding into that one classroom to watch us go at it. Really, the whole thing reminded me of some fourth graders who were challenging each other to fight after school. Van Gorden seemed to think I was scared of him and this caused him to pursue my participation in the event with vigor and an aggressiveness I've rarely seen. If such behavior were to be exhibited in a society that does not have norms of decency, virtue, and law, I cannot help but wonder if Van Gorden's mannerisms may have displayed some of the wicked tendencies seen by the people in Ammonihah.

## **Modern Nehorites Need to Persecute**

Another aspect of James White that parallels Nehorism is the very notion of persecution. You will remember that in Alma 1:19-20 we see the tendency of the Nehorites to engage in vitriolic persecution of the true Church. I suppose it is the lot of the Church of Jesus Christ in any dispensation to be the target of persecution by evil influences. James White seems to get his sense of self as a crusading Christian hell-bent on obliterating whatever he sees as an affront to his version of Christianity. Mormonism remains to date one of James White's favorite targets, having written three books on the subject and a number of articles, and many hours of harassing Mormons who try to enter Temple Square for General Conference, or the Mesa, Arizona Temple Pageant. All this work is simply for the purpose of attacking the Mormons and their religion.

Well, as much as James White has in common with some elements of Nehorite faith and practice, an anti-Mormon bigot easily surpasses him by the name of Kurt Van Gorden. Van Gorden gained some of his training from the Walter Martin camp, which explains a few things, but only a few. Van Gorden seems to personify the darker elements of Nehorism. Not nearly as bright as James White or James Spencer, Van Gorden packages himself as an expert on Mormon things, even though his grasp of Mormonism is thoroughly twisted. Filled with a spirit of hatred and venom, Van Gorden is prone to belligerence rarely seen in modern-day anti-Mormon circles. The notion of taking his marbles and going home is simply not on his radar. Van Gorden will use every means possible to attack the Church he so loves to hate. Most recently, in addition to publishing an abysmally incompetent anti-Mormon

booklet that received several negative reviews, and in delivering hate-speeches to whatever Protestant congregations that will have him, he has spent much time trying to bring the Church down through various lawsuits. It seems that whenever something goes wrong in the life of this unsavory character, he appeals to the legal authorities. He currently has a lawsuit pending against a huge number of individuals (myself included) over a matter that most of the people he is suing have virtually nothing to do with. Indeed, it could be said that he is to Mormonism what Louis Farakon is to the particular demographic he targets.

## Modern Nehorites Flight from Truth

Although examples abound, James R. Spencer comes to mind. James R. Spencer runs an anti-Mormon ministry out of Idaho Falls, Idaho. , Spencer is fond of stating that his motives for his relentless and ugly attacks on the Church of Jesus Christ are purely out of his love for the Mormon people and his love of the truth.<sup>36</sup> Spencer and I met while I was an undergraduate student at Brigham Young University in the mid-1980s. Soon afterwards, we began a formal correspondence through the mail. Spencer wanted to begin a debate of sorts about Mormonism's unique truth claims. He began his end of the debate by proposing several ground rules. The first of these read as follows:

If I ask a question, you answer it. And if you ask a question, I'll answer it. Let's avoid red-herring maneuvers.<sup>37</sup>

Spencer's first letter containing questions included one that he believed was unanswerable. Quoting from yet another anti-Mormon publication, Spencer wanted to know how it is that 21 Book of Mormon place names were exact or near exact matches of actual place names in Joseph Smith's frontier New England area. Spencer even included a copy of the maps showing the parallel place names. Due to a trip I was about to take to overseas, I was not quick in responding to Spencer's challenge. But when I returned from my travels in the summer of 1985, I found a letter waiting for me from Spencer almost taunting me to respond. I went to work, did the necessary research, and was able to provide a cogent response to his charges. Like the Nehors, James Spencer refused to continue the debate when faced with the truth. He hid under the cloak of "The Mormon response is subjective but I, the true born-again Christian am objective,". Spencer discontinued the debate as soon as he sensed he was on the short end of the stick. Truth was not his interest. Like Nehor, winning the debate was his goal. Like Nehor losing the argument to Gideon, Spencer was upset. I am grateful he didn't lash out with violence. The Book of Mormon paints a picture of the ancient Nehors as a people who loved being right over being true. When on the losing end of an informal debate or discussion the typical anti-Mormon will either change the topic to one that may give the anti-Mormon some new leverage,

or will bring the exchange to an abrupt halt. Truth is not a virtue to the anti-Mormon; mocking true religion is. Yet, he could learn much from Albert Einstein who is reported to have said, "I am not interested in being right; I am interested in knowing whether or not I am right."

James White claim that his ministry is not at all based on bigotry and hatred but on love, a claim that has no more credibility than an ill-tempered father who beats his children but defends his actions by saying he is doing it out of love. In fact, James White denies he is what he is, which is an anti-Mormon. The very term is extremely offensive to him and when he is so aptly labeled, White will often make that one issue the sole issue. My own experience is that Mormons who refer to James White as *anti-Mormon* are usually not doing so in a pejorative sense. Mormon apologists see James White in a certain philosophical camp that is most properly identified with the term "anti-Mormon." We could, if the shoe fit, refer to James White as "post-modern", "neo-orthodox", "stoic", "liberal", "humanist", "sophist", "scholarly", or "totalitarian". But none of these terms are really accurate for the kind of posturing James engages in. The term anti-Mormon is most appropriate: *Mormon* referring to the religion and/or its adherents, *Anti-* indicating opposition to. Perhaps James White is opposed to the designation anti-Mormon because he (rightfully) feels a sense of shame, knowing on a visceral level that bigotry and hatred are not really in keeping with the spirit and tenor of the teachings of Jesus, whom White claims to be a disciple of. Yet it is this very denial that reminds one of Nehoristic tendencies. It would seem that if someone really believed something were evil (as White undoubtedly sees Mormonism) that person would not be so bashful about being labeled "anti-" that thing. For example, would White be upset to being labeled "anti-pornography" by sponsors of pornography? Would White object to being termed an anti-abortionist? White's insistence on arguing about the appropriateness of the label "anti-Mormon" does nothing to help us move forward in our on-going quest for truth as evangelicals and Mormons try to dialogue with one another. It only serves to clog the system of communication and get us off on a tangent that is not really useful. It is also another example of modern-day Nehorism.

By the way, just as James R. Spencer threw in the towel when unable to stand the heat of scrutiny that exposed the fallacies of his position, James White has also had his share of running for cover when the truth uncompromisingly stares him in the face. I am reminded of a lengthy exchange that James White had on the Internet with William Hamblin of Brigham Young University's Department of History. The debate centered around the proper interpretation of certain passages of scripture in Psalms 82 and John 10 in light of the doctrine of deification, the notion that man has the potential of being deified in the eternities ahead. Although James White started out strong, he was eventually overwhelmed by Hamblin's mastery of the subject matter. In short order, White was getting pummeled, and he knew it. Instead of offering to postpone the exchange until further research and

reflection could be obtained, James White allowed a side comment Hamblin made in jest to be grounds for terminating the discussion, under the transparent guise of James White not wanting to participate in an undignified forum. The entire notion of bigotry, so much a part of James White's practices in how he lives his particular religion, is in keeping with Nehorism. If James White to shun the name-calling, the strident denials of his anti-Mormon leanings, the sophomoric need to win every single point when discussing differences, the unwillingness to acknowledge the strength of his opponent's position when that strength manifests itself, or the tendency to run for cover when not faring as well as he'd like during an exchange with an opponent, he'd be a fairly bright and reputable contributor to the dialogues currently going on between Mormons and evangelicals. As it stands today, James White is unable to contribute anything even close to the level of, say, a Paul Owen or a Carl Mosser.

## Summary

We see that the spirit of Nehorism is alive and well in today's anti-Mormons. It is amazing to see to see the exactness with which the false teachers of both periods match:

1. They both believe in a type of universal salvation, taking the freedom of choice (and relinquishing the consequences as well) away from the believer.
2. They both have strong elements of pride and glory seeking.
3. Both ancient and modern day Nehorites persecute others who believe differently from themselves. This persecution is aimed not only at the Church, but at others as well.<sup>38</sup>
4. And they both have shown little interest in determining not only the truth of what they teach regarding another faith, but show a remarkable facility to ignore the truth when it is incontrovertible

The first attack by the Nehors was indeed a tragedy, but, as Marx says, the second repeat of the offense by modern-day Nehors is a farce.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> 2 Nephi 2:11-12

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852, 1

<sup>3</sup> Alma 1:15

<sup>4</sup> Alma 1:2

<sup>5</sup> Larry K. Langlois, "Marriage without Manipulation," *Ensign*, (March 1987); 42.

<sup>6</sup> Alma 1:9

<sup>7</sup> Alma 1:12

<sup>8</sup> Alma 1:7

<sup>9</sup> 2 Nephi 26:29

<sup>10</sup> 2 Nephi 26:30

<sup>11</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, "Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall," *Liahona*, May 1995, 10 (From an address given at a Brigham Young University 18-Stake Fireside, June 7, 1992 in Provo, Utah).

<sup>12</sup> Alma 1:3

<sup>13</sup> Moses 4:1

<sup>14</sup> 2 Nephi 4:28, 30

<sup>15</sup> 2 Nephi 28:8

<sup>16</sup> Alma 1:6

<sup>17</sup> Alma 1:6

<sup>18</sup> Just as there was an Order of Melchizedek, there was something called an Order of Nehor. Sometimes it was used in the plural as “Order of Nehors”, suggesting that their strength lied more in the numbers of their adherents than in the example of their ignominious and infamous founder.

<sup>19</sup> This is a daunting undertaking. There are no definitive studies currently published on the ancient order of the Nehors. In fact, very little has been said or published on the subject at all. Another hurdle is the text of the Book of Mormon itself. The details on the characteristics of the Order of the Nehors are not abundant. Still, there is information to be gleaned and inferences to be drawn. Any speculations made, shall be identified as such.

<sup>20</sup> Jacob 7:23

<sup>21</sup> Alma 30:58

<sup>22</sup> We are left to wonder what method of execution was used to kill Nehor. The text merely says that he suffered an ignominious death.

<sup>23</sup> Alma 1:16

<sup>24</sup> Alma 1:17

<sup>25</sup> Alma 1;17

<sup>26</sup> Alma 1:16

<sup>27</sup> Alma 1:18

<sup>28</sup> Alma 1:19-20a

<sup>29</sup> As an interesting aside, one might wonder why Mormon claims that the non-members of the church did not steal, rob, or murder (see Alma 1:18) and then later in the same chapter Mormon indicates that these same non-members indulged in thieving, robbing, and murdering (see vs. 32.) I believe the answer is based on the fact that Mormon is covering and summarizing developments in Nephite culture from the second to the fifth year of the reign of the judges. A degeneration of standards must have occurred during that roughly three-year period.

<sup>30</sup> Alma 14:16

<sup>31</sup> Alma 15:15

<sup>32</sup> Alma 21:2-11

<sup>33</sup> Alma 24:1-2, 28-29; 25:4-9; 43:6-44

<sup>34</sup> John Calvin, *The Mode of Obtaining the Grace of Christ*, Chapter 21, Section 1," [www.ccel.org/c/calvin/institutes/bookiii/bkiii25.htm](http://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/institutes/bookiii/bkiii25.htm), March 3, 2002

<sup>35</sup> Anonymous Author, "Calvinism," *The Encyclopedia Americana*, Volume 5, (New York & Chicago; Encyclopedia Americana Corporation, 1944, 240.

<sup>36</sup> Spencer's anti-Mormon newsletter, *Through The Maze*, has as its bi-line "Speaking the Truth in Love".

<sup>37</sup> Personal letter from James Spencer to L. Ara Norwood.

<sup>38</sup> Go to James White's web site to witness his public attack and denunciation of his own sister joining the Roman Catholic Church, [www.aomin.org](http://www.aomin.org)