

Three Diverse Opponents of the Nephites

Key Scriptures Jacob 7; Alma 1; 30

Explanation The trials of three major opponents of Nephite leadership—Sherem, Nehor, and Korihor—are documented in the Book of Mormon (see Jacob 7; Alma 1; 30). The situations and outcomes of those trials are compared in this chart. Although each of these men had his own style and persuasive tactics and each case is historically unique and distinctive, they were similar in their attempt to lead people down various “broad roads”—away from Christ and to spiritual death.

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	Sherem	Nehor	Korihor
Date	ca. 500 B.C.	91 B.C.	ca. 74 B.C.
Location	Land/city of Nephi	Land/city of Zarahemla	Zarahemla/Jershon/ Gideon/Antionum
Labeled anti-Christ	No	No	Yes
Theology	Theist, traditionalist	Theist, universalist	Atheist
Politics	Reactionary, royalist	Populist	Radical
View on priest	Should keep law	Should be paid	Oppress the poor
Religion	Pro law of Moses	Law irrelevant	Opposed law of Moses
Impact of preaching	Led away hearts	Many believed, gave money	Led away hearts; sin and whoredoms
Nature of legal action or offense	Blasphemy, false prophecy, falsely accused Jacob of leading people into apostasy	Killed Gideon; convicted of enforcing priest-craft with the sword	Reviled against priests and God, committed blasphemy
Arrested	No	Yes	Yes
Status	Plaintiff	Defendant	Defendant with counterclaims
Court	Divine justice	One judge	Several judges
Accepted scriptures	Yes	Unclear	No
Warned	Indirectly	No	Yes
Requested sign	Yes	No	Yes
Sign-giver hesitancy	Yes, tempting God	Not applicable	No, better one perish
Divine sign	Smitten to the earth but could still speak	None	Struck dumb but could still write and walk
Judicial verdict	No	Yes	No
Confession	Sincere, complete	Involuntary	Incomplete
Penalty	Divine justice	Capital punishment	Ostracism, trampled
Death	Nonhuman causes	Human, legal	Human, extralegal
Publicity	Public confession	Ignominious death	Result heralded
Precendent established	Legitimized Christianization of the law of Moses	Gave original jurisdiction to chief judge under the new reign of judges	Held that speech acts were still punishable under the law of Mosiah