

In addition, nothing has been said that changes the Book of Mormon scriptures that say that a white skin is a sign of righteousness and a black or dark skin is a sign of unrighteousness. Nor have Mormon scriptures Moses 7:8, 22, where blackness came on the children of Canaan, and they were despised, been changed. Although the LDS Church does not talk about them anymore, these teachings are all still in place. According to Mormon Scriptures, white is righteous, clean, pure; black or dark is unrighteous, dirty, impure.

There is no biblical support for these non-Christian teachings on pre-existence and skin color! In fact the Bible teaches otherwise. Contradicting the Mormon teaching of Pre-existence, the Bible says:

God formed man of the dust...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. (Genesis 2:7)

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. (1 Corinthians 15:46³)

...the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens:...and formeth the spirit of man within him.⁴ (Zechariah 12:1).

In Job 38:1-4, 18, 21 Job is asked where he was when the earth was formed, and in 40:3-5, 42:1-3 he doesn't know the answer. Why? Because he didn't exist!!! In John 3:6 we read "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Therefore, a god with a body of flesh and bones, as the Mormon God has, could not procreate "spirit" children!

The Bible teaches that all believers are equal before God:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (Galatians. 3:2)

And hath made of one blood all nations of men... (Acts 17:26)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

Although not excusable, it is understandable how self interest and sinfulness could lead whole churches and denominations to ignore these biblical principles. But would God's "one true church," led by true prophets of God for over 180 years ignore God's word and teach such non-Christian/non-biblical doctrine? And would God

wait until the Civil Rights movement finished its work before inspiring Official Declaration - 2?

We should note that while the past teachings of the top Mormon leaders and two of the canonized scriptures of the Mormon Church are clearly discriminatory against men of African heritage, it is my opinion that most members of the LDS Church are not. Many are not even aware of the historical information and/or have not considered in total the many LDS scriptures referenced.

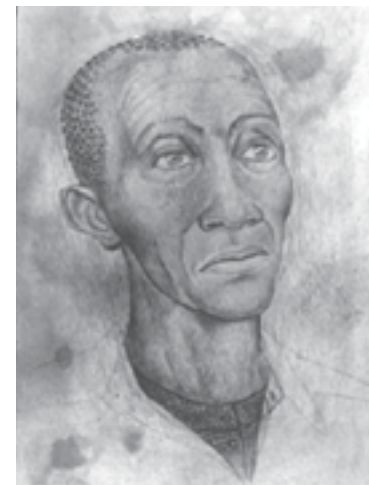
For additional study: *Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview, Dialogue*, by Lester E. Bush, Jr., Vol... 8, No. 1, Spring, 1973; *Neither White nor Black*, Lester E. Bush, Jr. and Armand L. Mauss, Editors, Signature Books, 1984; *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality*, pages 262-293.

— John Farkas

END NOTES

1. Before there was a hard fast rule barring blacks from the priesthood, at least one black man was given the priesthood. Elijah Abel (see cover) was ordained an elder march 3, 1836, and a seventy April 4, 1841. Today, the LDS Church refers to his ordination as "an exception" to the "general rule." (LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, vol. 3, p. 577, 1901-1936, Deseret News.)
2. August 17, 1949 First Presidency letter, in *Neither White Nor Black*, by Lester E. Bush and Armand L. Mauss, Signature Books, page 221.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 128:14 says the same thing, contradicting Doctrine and Covenants 29:32. The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible is similar.
4. *Not within or by a Heavenly Mother!* The piece is from *Mormons - How To Witness To Them*, by John Farkas and David Reed, Baker Book House, 1997, pages 117-123.

BLACK MORMON HISTORY



Portrait of Elijah Abel, first Black Mormon ordained to Mormon Priesthood, March 3, 1836

Prior to September 1978, no one of African racial ancestry could hold any of the Mormon priesthoods. On September 30, 1978 the first presidency of the Mormon Church presented what is now Official Declaration - 2 in the Doctrine and Covenants. It allowed all men to qualify for the Mormon priesthood, with all the rights and authority of that priesthood, without regard to race or color.

Over 150 years of Mormon Priesthood discrimination against men of African heritage came to an end. Even with this revelation, black people may not want to accept this at face value; they may want to examine the history of their people in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon). How have black people been treated, and what have Mormon prophets said about them?

It must be noted that when the LDS Church began in 1830, many white Christian churches held the view that black people were descended from Cain and therefore cursed to be slaves. Segregation was the rule. Some Christians ignored Paul's teaching, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28).



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Early in its history, after a short period of indecision,¹ the LDS Church instituted a practice of priesthood segregation. Black men could not hold the Mormon priesthood; they had no authority to act in God's name; they had no priesthood status, therefore could not take part in temple rituals and eventually become a God. But was there more than this?

It should be recognized that early Mormon prophets and presidents Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, and other top leaders who followed them, claimed to be more than clergyman. They claimed to be prophets of God. They led the "one true church". They were the only ones with authority to speak for God. Why did they ignore Galatians 3:28, or even their own special canonized scripture, the Book of Mormon? In 2 Nephi 26:33 we find: "... he inviteth them all to come unto him... denieth none that come... black and white, bond and free, male and female....".

Perhaps they were more influenced by other Book of Mormon references: 1 Nephi 12:23, 2 Nephi 5:21, Jacob 3:5, Alma 3:6-9, Mormon 5:15, and in the 1830 edition, 2 Nephi 30:6 — which portray a white or light skin as a sign of righteousness and a black or dark skin was a sign of unrighteousness. These scriptures are still used by the LDS Church. 2 Nephi 30:6 originally stated that skin color would change to "white and delightful" when one knows correct teachings. Subsequent to the alleged revelation in 1978 giving the priesthood to African-American men, this phrase was changed to "pure and delightful".

The following quotes from top Mormon leaders and official LDS Church publications are given to demonstrate the Church's position about black people in the past:

Cain conversed with his God every day, and knew all about the plan of creating this earth, for his father told him. But, for the want of humility, and through jealousy, and an anxiety to possess the kingdom, and to have the whole of it under his own control and not allow any body else the right to say one word, what did he do? He killed his brother. The Lord put a mark on him; and there are some of his children in this room. When all the other children of Adam have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, and have received their resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity. ...he is the last to share the joys of the kingdom of God... (Brigham

Young, Dec. 12, 1854, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:142-143)

You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind. ...How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them, and they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it until all the other descendants of Adam have received the promises and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof. Until the last ones of the residue of Adam's children are brought up to that favourable position, the children of Cain cannot receive the first ordinances of the Priesthood. They were the first that were cursed, and they will be the last from whom the curse will be removed. When the residue of the family of Adam come up and receive their blessings, then the curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will receive blessings in like proportion. (Brigham Young, Oct. 9, 1859, *Journal of Discourses*, 7:290-291)

Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so. (Brigham Young, March 8, 1863, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:110)

Brigham Young's successor, John Taylor, declared:

...after the flood we are told that the curse that had been pronounced upon Cain was continued through Ham's wife, as he had married a wife of that seed. And why did it pass through the flood? Because it was necessary that the devil should have a representation upon the earth... (John Taylor, August 28, 1881, *Journal of Discourses*, 22:304)

In the Mormon Sunday School publication, *Juvenile Instructor*, a black skin is portrayed as a sign of God's displeasure:

We will first inquire into the results of the approbation or displeasure of God upon a people, starting with the belief that a black skin is a mark of the curse of Heaven placed upon some portions of mankind. Some, however, will argue that a black skin is not a curse, nor a white skin a blessing. In fact, some have been so foolish as to believe and say that a black skin is a blessing, and that the negro is the finest type of a perfect man that exists on the earth; but to us such teachings are foolishness. We understand that when God made man in his own image and pronounced him very good, that he made him white. We have no record of any of God's favored servants being of a black race... every angel who ever brought a message of God's mercy to man was beautiful to look upon, clad in the purest white and with a countenance bright as the noonday sun. (*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 3, page 157, October 15, 1868)

Another LDS apostle said the following:

There is a reason why one man is born black and with other disadvantages, while another is born white with great advantages. The reason is that we once had an estate before we came here, and were obedient, more or less, to the laws that were given us there. Those who were faithful in all things there received greater blessings here, and those who were not faithful received less... There were no neutrals in the war in heaven. All took sides either with Christ or with Satan. Every man had his agency there, and men receive rewards here based upon their actions there, just as they will receive rewards hereafter for deeds done in the body. The Negro, evidently, is receiving the reward he merits. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954; 1:61, 65-66)

John J. Stewart in his book, *Mormonism and the Negro*, pages 46-47 quotes from a letter from the First Presidency of the LDS Church dated July 17, 1947:

From the days of the Prophet Joseph even until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, never questioned by the church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the gospel.

The late Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, in his popular compendium of Mormon teachings, *Mormon Doctrine*, says:

...Those who were less valiant in pre-existence and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality are known to us as the negroes. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark put upon him for his rebellion against God and his murder of Abel being a black skin. (Moses 5:16-41; 7:8,12,22.) Noah's son Ham married Egyptus, a descendant of Cain, thus preserving the negro lineage through the flood. (Abraham 1:20-27.) Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty. (1966 edition, page 527, under NEGROES; this statement has been taken out of the 1979 edition and has been replaced with the 1978 revelation.)

Do these statements sound like something one would expect from God's "one true church"? Since President Kimball's 1978 revelation, the only thing that changed was that black men could now hold the priesthood. Nothing has been said that changes the unique Mormon teaching on the pre-existence. The teaching that the conduct of spirits in the pre-existence (our pre-mortal state) affects the conditions and circumstances of their mortality,² is still in place.