

RACISM IN MORMONISM

Brigham Young said,

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. The first man that committed the odious crime of killing one of his brethren will be cursed the longest of any one of the children of Adam. Cain slew his brother. Cain might have been killed, and that would have put a termination to that line of human beings. This was not to be, and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin. Trace mankind down to after the flood, and then another curse is pronounced upon the same race--that they should be the "servant of servants;" and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree. 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 (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, 290-1; c.f. vol. 2, 143 and vol. 11, 272).

Young also said, "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" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, 110).

Young meant for these words to be taken as the words of God when Young said, "I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call Scripture" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, 95).

These sources make it rather clear that either Young was a false prophet, or the prophets in the Mormon Church today are false prophets. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 says that when a prophet who presumes to speak for God is wrong, that prophet must die. If he says that the Lord said something will come about and it does not, then that prophet is obviously not a prophet of God. God does not make mistakes. So either Young is right, and the blacks

should not have the Priesthood and whites who interbreed with blacks should be killed on the spot, or the modern Mormon Church is right and the blacks should have the Priesthood and whites may be allowed to interbreed with blacks. And given the way Priesthood authority is passed on through the laying on of hands, if Young is a false prophet, so are those who receive their Priesthood through him.

It is also troubling what The Book of Mormon says about dark skins being given to the Lamanites and others as a curse for their own wickedness (2 Nephi 5:21 ff. and Alma 3:6 ff.). In the 2 Nephi 5 passage, verse 21 says that God did this so they would not be enticing to his people, and verse 24 says that this cursing of darkness on their skins drove them into idleness, mischief, and subtlety. Both 2 Nephi and Alma 3 passages also imply a forbidding of interbreeding between white and dark races with the resulting seed inheriting the same curse (2 Nephi 5:23 and Alma 3:9). Finally, 3 Nephi 2:14-16 says that as the Lamanites repented and joined themselves with the Nephites, their curse was removed so that their "skin" became "white" and "exceedingly fair" as the Nephites' skin.

Contrary to popular Mormon belief based on Moses 7:8, 21 and 22 in the Pearl of Great Price, the mark Cain received was for his good, not his cursing (Genesis 4:15). It was to protect him from anyone who wanted to kill him. Nothing is said about this mark being passed onto his descendants, nothing is said about it being a color of skin, and nothing is said of it barring him or his seed from Zion, the future abode of God. Nonetheless, Mormon General Authority Bruce McConkie said,

Those who were less valiant in the 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. ...The negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow therefrom, but this inequality is not of man's origin. It is the Lord's doing, based on his eternal laws of justice, and grows out of the lack of spiritual valiance of those concerned in their first estate (*Mormon Doctrine*, 24th printing [1978], 527-8; Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith basically said the same thing about blacks not being as valiant in the pre-mortal state in *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, 66-7).

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