

## The Long-suppressed Revelation on The Black Race and The Priesthood

### BACKGROUND

Until 1978 it was the policy and practice of the Mormon church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) to bar those with black African ancestry (even partial) from admission to the Mormon priesthood, which otherwise was open to all (non-black) male members of the church. This ban also applied to keep black members of the church from participation in the sacred temple ceremonies which Mormon doctrine says are necessary for admission to the highest degrees of the Celestial Kingdom. In other words, blacks would never get as high a place as members of other races in Mormon heaven.

Mormon theologians justified this racial prejudice by claiming that the black race is descended from Cain, who was cursed and marked (supposedly with a black skin; Genesis 4:8-15). His descendants, through Ham, the son of Noah who was also cursed (Genesis 9:18-27), continued to bear the mark (black skin) and the curse, in the Mormon view. This ban was further justified by reference to the Mormon belief in a great War in Heaven before the creation of the world, when the forces of good overcame the forces of evil; Mormons believe that one's position at birth in this life is determined by one's valiance in that struggle. Those human beings who were born to privileged and prosperous white Mormons were obviously very valiant. Blacks were (just as obviously) less valiant.

These ideas were widely taught by Mormon prophets, from Brigham Young's day to the late 1970's.

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie summarized the doctrine as follows:

"The Negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned, ...but this inequality is not of man's origin. It is the Lord's doing, is based on his eternal laws of justice, and grows out of the lack of spiritual valiance of those concerned in their First Estate [the pre-existence]." *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 527 - 528, 1966 edition

Typifying the attitude of Mormon leaders was Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen, who said, in an address at Brigham Young University on "Race Problems as They Affect The Church" (August 27, 1954, as quoted in Jerald and Sandra Tanner's book *The Changing World of Mormonism*, p. 307):

"Now, we are generous with the Negro. We are willing that the Negro have the highest kind of education. I would be willing to let every Negro drive a Cadillac if they could afford it. I would be willing that they have all the advantages they can get out of life in the world. But let them enjoy these things among themselves."

(For links to more information about the pre-1978 doctrine and practice, click [here](#).)

### The 1978 Change

In 1978, this policy and practice changed, and the Mormon leaders announced that, pursuant to revelation, black members of the church would have full equality: priesthood for worthy black men and temple privileges for all worthy black members. The change was incorporated into the Mormon book of scripture *Doctrine and Covenants*.

Critics of the church point out that, although the ban has been removed, and the practice has changed, the doctrine (that Blacks are cursed because they were less valiant in the pre-existence) has *not* changed.

This seems to follow the Mormon pattern of changing a practice without changing the doctrine on which the practice was based, such as when polygamy was abandoned in 1890, but retained as a church doctrine even today. Or when the practice of "blood atonement" (shedding the offender's blood to atone for certain sins such as apostasy or adultery) was given up, but retained as a pantomime slitting of the throat in the temple ritual until 1990.

It has always been a puzzlement to me that the 1978 change of practice in that church, allowing blacks to receive the priesthood, is not in the *Doctrine and Covenants* in the form of a revelation, but only as an "Official Declaration - 2" which reports that a revelation had been received. The text of the revelation, however, is not given, nor has there been any indication that it was recorded anywhere.

Through contacts I have with some former members of the office support staff at the Church Office Building, I have been able to obtain a photocopy of the only copy of the actual revelation. So far as I know, it has not yet been published anywhere. The text follows:

**REVELATION given to Spencer W. Kimball, March 6, 1978, Salt Lake City, Utah.**

**1. Hearken, my servant Spencer, unto the voice of the Lord thy God, and receive my word in answer to thy fervent pleas!**

**2. Lo, I am well pleased with thee and my servants the Apostles and with all the righteous Saints of my Church. Because of your righteous obedience you are blessed, and I now reveal my Word unto thee, to proclaim unto my Saints and unto all the World;**

**3. For thou hast oft inquired of me regarding the skin of blackness which marks many of my faithful children, because of which the blessings of my priesthood and of my exaltation have been denied to them;**

**4. And thy cries and the cries of my black children have ascended unto me, and I now reveal unto thee further light and knowledge in this matter.**

**5. For my Church is like unto your father Abraham, whom I did sorely tempt, in that I commanded him to take his beloved son and offer up his life as a sacrifice to me;**

**6. And lo, Abraham in the fulness of righteous obedience did take his son, and did bind him to an altar of rough stones, and did raise the knife to sacrifice him, according to the command which I had given him.**

**7. And by mine angel did I stop his hand, for his sacrifice of obedience was complete.**

**8. For human life is not to be taken as a sacrifice to me, except the sacrifice of the Only Begotten, of which Isaac was a type, for such a doctrine and practice is repugnant to me.**


**9. But it was for Abraham a test of obedience to my Word.**

**10. And lo, likewise the doctrine of the curse of Cain and the mark of blackness, as well as everything pertaining thereto, is also repugnant to me, but was given unto my Saints as a test.**

**11. And ye have been valiant and righteous in obeying the words of my mouth which were given not as true doctrine but only as a test for your benefit.**

**12. Now, therefore, rejoice in my blessing and receive my Word! For no more shall ye make any distinction among my Saints as to their race or as to the color of their skin; for I the Lord God am no respecter of persons, but all shall come unto me and all may be worthy to receive all the blessings of my Gospel without let or hindrance.**

My comment: If you are asking yourself at this point why this revelation has never been published, read the rest of the revelation [here](#).

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