

People of Color

People of hues other than so-called white people have for most of recorded history been viewed as cursed or races, which are diminished in their standing among the human population and discriminated against as inferior to those of a light pink complexion. So-called Christians seem to be the most strident in this respect, so one must ask why this should be true in the light that Jesus, who is Christ, had nothing to say on this matter? In the end, the purpose of this writing is to provoke thought and personal reflection. It will be left to the reader to conclude the Lord's intentions in this regard.

It all seems to start with Cain, the son of Adam.

King James Translation of the Bible: Genesis: Chapter 4:

1 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 ¶ And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13 And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

15 And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

16 ¶ And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

This story is one of the most familiar in the Bible. It is the first well-publicized, unjustified murder. There are some vague sayings in this translation of the account. What does it mean to be “cursed from the earth?” Also what is being driven out from the face of the earth? And what is sevenfold vengeance? It’s not known why or when Joseph Smith Jr. began suspecting the accuracy of the King James translation of the Torah. What is known is that Joseph felt it was necessary to learn to translate Hebrew for himself and in so doing began to find many mistranslations in this Bible to the effect that it became a fundamental understanding and statement in Mormon society that the King James Bible could only be accepted as the Word of God far as it is translated correctly. During Joseph’s day the King James Bible was the default source of English-speaking scripture. The only other readily available translations were in different languages, so there was not another version he could recommend as any more dependable to the general membership of the church. Today we have a much better selection of translations done by Hebrew linguists who are unrivalled at the subtleties of Torah expressions. The Stone translation gives a more meaningful and understandable version of the story of Cain.

Tanach – Stone Translation: Bereishis (Genesis) Chapter 4:

1 Now the man had known his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have acquired a man with HASHEM.”

2 And additionally she bore his brother Abel. Abel became a shepherd and Cain became a tiller of the ground.

3 After a period of time, Cain brought an offering to HASHEM of the fruit of the ground;

4 and as for Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and from their choicest. HASHEM turned to Abel and his offering,

5 but to Cain and to his offering He did not turn. This annoyed Cain exceedingly, and his countenance fell.

6 And HASHEM said to Cain, “Why are you annoyed, and why has your countenance fallen?”

7 Surely, if you improve yourself, you will be forgiven. But if you do not improve yourself, sin rests at the door. Its desire is toward you, yet you can conquer it.”

8 Cain spoke with his brother Abel. And it happened when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

9 HASHEM said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”

10 Then He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground! Therefore, you are cursed more than the ground, which opened wide its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.

12 When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. You shall become a vagrant and a wanderer on earth.”

13 Cain said to HASHEM, “Is my iniquity too great to be born?”

14 Behold, You have banished me this day from the face of the earth – can I be hidden from Your presence? I must become a vagrant and a wanderer on earth; whoever meets me will kill me!”

15 HASHEM said to him, “Therefore, whoever slays Cain, before seven generations have passed he will be punished.” And HASHEM placed a mark upon Cain, so that none that meet him might kill him.

16 Cain left the presence of HASHEM and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

This translation and rendering of the account is far more understandable in its meaning. It makes clear in answer to some things many people have wondered about and raises other questions, which require further study and analysis. Stepping through the account we see that there was an offering made to the Lord and Cain's offering was unacceptable yet, Abel's offering was accepted and Cain became angry. Cain kills his brother while they are talking in the field for no apparent reason other than he was upset. From what occurred before this incident it is usually inferred that it was out of jealousy and anger. The Lord afterward questions Cain. It should be remembered that when Adam was expelled from the Garden and the presence of God there was no longer face-to-face communion between man and God. Adam could only hear the voice of the Lord from the direction of the garden. That could still be the method of communication or the Lord's voice might have been heard out of the heavens or perhaps Cain personally experienced God's voice. At any rate, when questioned he lied to God denying knowing anything and rather sarcastically offered the alibi that Abel was not under his control. The Lord immediately pronounced a curse upon Cain that he be cursed more than the ground was cursed for Adam's sake when he was driven from the Garden. This was a great fall in status since humans were given a higher status and domination over the earth when they were commanded to multiply and subdue the earth during the creative cycle. So Cain was now not even respected by the ground on which he tread. Cain had been a farmer, but the ground would no longer grow his crops and he was destined to wander the face of the earth.

Next, there is an interesting difference between the translations. In the King James, Cain makes the statement that the punishment is more than he can bear. In the Stone translation, Cain asks the question of the Lord whether his iniquity is too great to be born? Here the implication is that Cain would expect the Lord to bear the crime and is questioning if it is too heavy for Him. Keep in mind that this is a translation by a modern Hebrew, not a believer in Christ. To his credit though, he is true to the most accurate translation as a scholar. It might be as though Adam and his family had already been taught about a redeemer and repentance. Again in the King James Version, Cain just states that he is driven out and shall be hid from the Lord's face. In the Stone translation,

Cain acknowledges his banishment but asks if it is possible to exist outside the presence of God considering He is omnipresent on the earth. Cain then states his real concern, which is that because of his crime he will be hated among the family of Adam and killed as soon as they run across him. In answer to this concern, in the King James Version, God placed a mark on Cain to identify him so others would not kill him and decrees that whomever does kill Cain they will be punished seven times more severely. The decree in the Stone translation is that no one is allowed to kill Cain for seven generations, which amounts to seven times longer than the life of anyone else. As will be seen later, an inference can be made that this also means that Cain must wander and not die for seven generations.

The points of consistency between these two translations are that there was an offering where Abel was accepted of the Lord and Cain was shunned so, Cain got angry, Cain killed Abel, God cursed Cain, and the Lord placed a mark on Cain for identification.

As time passed and Joseph worked at translating other ancient texts he began to realize that some of the apocryphal documents that related those same ancient stories contained more detail than was recorded in the Torah, so he began writing a more robust version of ancient events, which included things from other written accounts as well as his personal revelations through the Holy Spirit. The following is an expanded account of these events in Joseph's translation of the Bible.

JST Genesis 5:4

1 AND the Lord God called upon men, by the Holy Ghost, everywhere, and commanded them that they should repent;

2 And as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins, should be saved. And as many as believed not, and repented not, should be damned. And the words went forth out of the mouth of God, in a firm decree, wherefore they must be fulfilled.

3 And Adam ceased not to call upon God; and Eve also his wife.

4 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words. But,

behold, also Cain hearkened not, saying, Who is the Lord, that I should know him.

5 And she again conceived, and bare his brother Abel. And Abel hearkened unto the voice of the Lord. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

6 And Cain loved Satan more than God. And Satan commanded him, saying, Make an offering unto the Lord. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

7 And Abel, he also brought, of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof; and the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain, and his offering, He had no respect.

8 Now Satan knew this, and it pleased him. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

9 And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? Why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well thou shalt be accepted, and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door; and Satan desireth to have thee, and except thou shalt hearken unto my commandments, I will deliver thee up, and it shall be unto thee according to his desire; and thou shalt rule over him, for from this time forth thou shalt be the father of his lies.

10 Thou shalt be called Perdition, for thou wast also before the world, and it shall be said in time to come, that these abominations were had from Cain, for he rejected the greater counsel, which was had from God; and this is a cursing which I will put upon thee, except thou repent.

11 And Cain was wroth, and listened not any more to the voice of the Lord, neither to Abel his brother, who walked in holiness before the Lord.

12 And Adam also, and his wife, mourned before the Lord, because of Cain and his brethren.

13 And it came to pass, that Cain took one of his brother's daughters to wife, and they loved Satan more than God.

14 And Satan said unto Cain, Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear thy brethren by their heads, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it they shall surely die; and this that thy father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel unto thine hands.

15 And Satan swear unto Cain, that he would do according to his commands. And all these things were done in secret.

16 And Cain said, Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan; and he gloried in his wickedness.

17 And Cain went into the field, and Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, that while they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

18 And Cain gloried in that which he had done, saying, I am free; surely the flocks of my brother falleth unto my hands.

19 And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel, thy brother? And he said, I know not, am I my brother's keeper?

20 And the Lord said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground.

21 And now, thou shalt be cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.

22 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

23 And Cain said unto the Lord, Satan tempted me, because of my brother's flock; and I was wroth also, for his offering thou didst accept, and not mine.

24 My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the Lord, and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that he that findeth me shall slay me, because of mine iniquities, for these things are not hid from the Lord.

25 And I, the Lord, said unto him, Whosoever slayeth thee, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold; and I, the Lord, set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

26 And Cain was shut out from the presence of the Lord, and with his wife and many of his brethren, dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

With this rendering we get a far more detailed look inside the story, which exposes the motives and a much better understanding of the important issues involved. It also answers many underlying questions raised by the more abbreviated accounts. Starting

back a little earlier in the story, it becomes clear that they were taught of the plan of redemption through the Son of God and that the Lord communicated with them in the lone and dreary world. The teaching of the mission of the Son may explain the curious translation of verse 13 in the Stone edition. In Joseph's rendition we get key information, which shows the real character crime, the sin and the nature of the curse.

It can be understood that that Cain was older than a child when Abel was born; he likely was a man and had little respect for God. Evidently, Cain's disposition was to enjoy sinful pleasures more than righteous behavior. When it says Satan "commanded" Cain to make an offering, it may more easily be understood as "tempted." The Lord in counseling Cain previews for him what lies ahead of him if he doesn't change his attitude and repent. The Lord also tells him that if he persists, he will be cursed to become father and ruler over wickedness on the earth and that his spiritual character displayed those attributes in the preexistence. Cain will rule over Satan on the earth rather than Lucifer because Cain has a corporal body, which gives him greater power and glory. This highlights the reality that even though repentance and ongoing improvement is available to every soul, almost always individuals will fill the measure of their creation. Cain rejected the Lord's counsel and so became Perdition.

Next there is the introduction of the secret blood oath under the penalty of death, which is to commit murder to get gain and it persists to this day. Simply put, being driven out from the face of the Lord, or from the Lord's presence is permanently losing the influence of the Holy Ghost so there is no communion with the God.

Taking all these accounts together, a profile of Cain, his crime, the sin, the curse and the punishment comes into clearer focus. What is said is that Cain, and presumably those who would be identified as his followers or family, deliberately love wickedness more than righteousness and easily follow the temptations of the emotions; murder or shed blood for the purpose of getting gain or shedding innocent blood for any reason, or may be part of a secret society of murderers; will not be successful farmers of crops and are under the curse that once they commit these sins they are cut off from the presence or

Spirit of God. The men beyond Cain himself who are included in the secret covenant with Satan are Cain's brethren, which are those of like-mind and disposition.

What isn't said is that the mark that the Lord placed on Cain was placed on anyone else. It does not say the mark or the curse was passed on to his biological offspring. It also does not say what the mark was. It does not say it was a black skin or anything pertaining to the skin. It could have been that his hair turned green for all that is known. What can be rightfully surmised is that probably others easily saw the mark in passing. The protection of Cain against being killed for his crime extended for seven generations. Presumably these are human generations. It does not specify seven generations of Cain's progeny. Seven generations is likely just a measure of time. When Cain and his wife were banished from Adam's family they went to the land of Nod. Little is told about this land other than it was east of Eden. Since the factual location of Eden and the location of Adam's family after they were expelled from the Garden are not known, east of there is also not known. It has been suggested that the reference to "Nod" means "not" or "not a land at all," so it is the same as saying they began to wander, presumably east of Adam's family and Eden.

Is it possible that Cain had a dark or even a black skin since his birth? Could Abel and Seth have been dark skinned also? Perhaps, since it is possible that Eve was a person of color. Careful examination of the creation story reveals that Eve was not created in the same way as Adam. Joseph indicates that the translated word regarding Adam is "created" and the word for Eve's creation is "lives." There is a reason for this, but it must be left for a different treatise. The point being that a dark colored skin is not automatically an indication of a curse or unrighteousness. Bear in mind that in all likelihood Jesus was as olive-skinned as any other Hebrew of that era.

The story of the curse of Cain continues.

King James Bible: Genesis: Chapter 4:

17 And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

Just an aside; The Enoch spoken of here is not the righteous son of Jared, so for those who believe that Cain's curse follows his progeny or bloodline and believe in the product of visitations from an Enoch of the City of Enoch or those in communion with an Enoch, knowing which Enoch is visiting might be a very important distinction to be made.

Continuing on...

King James Bible: Genesis: Chapter 4:

23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

This reference seems confused at best. It's clear Lamech has murdered, but Cain was cursed, marked and punished, so what's the up-side for Lamech?

Tanach – Stone Translation: Bereishis (Genesis) Chapter 4:

23 And Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lamech, give ear to my speech: Have I slain a man by my wound and a child by my bruise?"

24 If Cain suffered vengeance at seven generations, then Lamech at seventy-seven!"

This translation seems to suggest that beyond admitting to have killed a man and a young man or he killed a man who was a young man or he killed a man and also a child, he desires to up-stage Cain in notoriety and possibly longevity. Obviously, Lamech saw this

as a great honor and understood that it made him a partaker in Cain's curse. Again Joseph's expanded version gives greater insight.

JST Genesis 5:

33 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech; hearken unto my speech, for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

34 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech shall be seventy and seven fold.

35 For, Lamech having entered into a covenant with Satan, after the manner of Cain, wherein he became Master Mahan, master of that great secret which was administered unto Cain by Satan;

36 And Irad, the son of Enoch, having known their secret, began to reveal it unto the sons of Adam; wherefore, Lamech, being angry, slew him, not like unto Cain his brother Abel for the sake of getting gain; but he slew him for the oath's sake;

37 For, from the days of Cain, there was a secret combination, and their works were in the dark, and they knew every man his brother.

38 Wherefore the Lord cursed Lamech and his house, and all they that had covenanted with Satan; for they kept not the commandments of God. And it displeased God, and he ministered not unto them.

Evidently, Lamech believed what he had done was a greater crime than that of Cain and he expected greater recognition and it shows he may have been right. He had made the same covenant with Satan that Cain had made and so became master Mahan. It's possible that what followed in the next verse is an explanation of whom Lamech killed in his admission to his wives and why it was done. Killing for the sake of the oath may indeed be a greater crime and sin than the homicide committed by Cain and accordingly the Lord cursed not only Lamech but also his house. This is the first time of record that God cursed a family and all those under Lamech's jurisdiction, including other men unrelated to him through blood, for the same reason He cursed Cain. Still there is no mention of skin color. Actually, the word "skin" doesn't appear in the text of the Bible until the Book of Exodus and then it isn't referring to human skin. There is no mention of a mark since the marking of Cain. What is becoming clear is that those people who

are partakers of the curse begun by Cain are those who murder and those who enter the covenant instituted by Satan of secret abominations. These are they who carry the curse of Cain.

The difference between Cainan and Canaan plays a significant part in this search of the curses God has pronounced on some people. There are two men named Cainan in the record of the righteous people chosen to hold and pass on the priesthood on this earth. The first is the son of Enos, the son of Seth who was the son of Adam. The other was Cainan the son of Arphaxad who came along later in this direct bloodline. This line is traced by Luke in the New Testament down to Joseph, the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus. Canaan was the son of the daughter of Egyptus and his father Ham, who was the son of Noah and came along later in time, after the flood, which came after the life of the righteous Enoch.

This Story of the righteous Enoch's mission and life in the inspired and expanded story in the JST contains the only reference to a black people to be found anywhere in the Mormon scriptures.

JST Genesis 7:26

26 And it came to pass, that Enoch talked with the Lord, and he said unto the Lord, Surely, Zion shall dwell in safety forever. But the Lord said unto Enoch, Zion have I blessed, but the residue of the people have I cursed.

27 And it came to pass, that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth, and he beheld, and lo! Zion in the process of time was taken up into heaven.

28 And the Lord said unto Enoch, Behold mine abode forever.

29 And Enoch also beheld the residue of the people which were the sons of Adam, and they were a mixture of all the seed of Adam, save it were the seed of Cain; for the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them.

This final statement is pretty straightforward, but there are several things to bear in mind. It does not say they were black because of the curse or mark of Cain. The "seed" of Cain

likely refers to those who partake of the crime, sin, curse, oath and covenant of Cain with Satan, notwithstanding their biological bloodline or color of their skin, than it refers to his biological progeny. It could also mean that Cain's progeny were black skinned, but it doesn't mean that all of them were wicked by nature, or the curse God placed upon Cain personally extended to them or that they were automatically possessed of Cain's sinful nature. It also seems to indicate that even in that time there was a discrimination against either black skinned people or maybe it was based on the fact that they were descended biologically from Cain. Actually it only states that they were black and did not mingle with the other families. Possibly the only reason they "had not place" among the children of Adam at that time was because they had been banished from Adam's community and association long before. This is a view of a future time. The Lord states the only people not under His curse are those taken up with Zion. He also doesn't say the seed of Cain is under any different curse than all the remaining of Adam's seed or family left on the earth who were not black skinned. It also doesn't say their skin was black or their appearance was black. It could mean their deeds and character were black. That said, undoubtedly there were black skinned people all through the history of this earth. It just cannot be automatically assumed they are all related to Cain and therefore have any part of a curse just because they have a dark skin. However, if a black skinned person or a person of any color murders for gain or sheds anyone's blood unrighteously, they definitely have adopted themselves to Cain as his spiritual "offspring" or "seed."

What one is always well advised to do is realize that quick and easy assumption, inference and innuendo are always born of fanciful imagination, not necessarily truth. The one thing that should not escape anyone's attention is that this is not standard Christian scripture. Enoch and his city being taken into heaven receive little more than a passing comment at best in Torah-based scripture. Also, all other Christian Bibles do not contain any reference to any people having a black skin – at all – anywhere. Consequently, there is no justification for any Christians to associate a black skin with the curse, or bloodline of Cain. It just ain't there.

The curse of Canaan is documented better than the life of Enoch in the Torah. Canaan was the youngest son of Ham, the son of Noah. After the flood subsided and Noah and his family began living again on dry land, the following happened.

King James Bible: Genesis: Chapter 9:

20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:

21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

26 And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

28 ¶And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

The Stone translation tells the same story, but with a different slant.

Tanach – Stone Translation: Bereishis (Genesis) Chapter 4:

20 Noah, the man of the earth, debased himself and planted a vineyard.

21 He drank of the wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself within his tent.

22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside.

23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and they walked backwards, and covered their father's nakedness; their faces were turned away, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24 Noah awoke from his wine and realized what his small son had done to him.

25 And he said, "Cursed is Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers."

26 And he said, "Blessed is HASHEM, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be a slave to them."

27 "May God extend Japheth, but he will dwell in the tents of Shem; may Canaan be a slave to them."

28 Noah lived after the flood three hundred fifty years.

In this translation the curse and punishment is much harsher. Being a slave is much worse than being a servant. It's not clear why, if Ham was the one to see his father naked in a drunken stupor, why did Noah curse Ham's son Canaan? Of all the imagined reasons, since there is no information explaining it, could the most reasonable one be that Ham had taken his youngest son in with him to see Noah in his embarrassing condition or might it be that Ham told Canaan about it later and Canaan then criticized his grandfather? We do have some amplification of the meaning of the curse and situation from Joseph Smith.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Four 1839-42 p.193

I charged the Saints not to follow the example of the adversary in accusing the brethren, and said, "If you do not accuse each other, God will not accuse you. If you have no accuser you will enter heaven, and if you will follow the revelations and instructions which God gives you through me, I will take you into heaven as my back load. If you will not accuse me, I will not accuse you. If you will throw a cloak of charity over my sins, I will over yours -- for charity covereth a multitude of sins. What many people call sin is not sin; I do many things to break down superstition, and I will break it down"; I referred to the curse of Ham for laughing at Noah, while in his wine, but doing no harm. Noah was righteous man, and yet he drank wine and became intoxicated; the Lord did not forsake him in consequence thereof, for he retained all the power of his Priesthood, and when he was accused by Canaan, he cursed him by the

Priesthood which he held, and the Lord had respect to his word, and the Priesthood which he held, notwithstanding he was drunk, and the curse remains upon the posterity of Canaan until the present day. (November 7, 1841.) DHC 4:445-446.

It seems that Ham is considered to have received the curse too because he laughed at his father's weakness and because a portion of his posterity had been cursed, thereby both are cursing Ham's "house." This is a valid curse and nowhere is it found in scripture that it was ever lifted or forgiven. This curse is a denial to hold the priesthood and has nothing to do with being cursed with a black or dark skin. There is pertinent information to be found in the Book of Abraham.

Abraham 1:21

21 Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth.

22 From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land.

23 The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden;

24 When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land.

25 Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal.

From this it is seen that the royal family of Egypt and all original Egyptians are descended from Canaan. So the Egyptians preserved the curse of Canaan in the land. If anyone is to be denied the priesthood because of their race it should logically be the Egyptians. There are some who believe that Egyptus, the wife of Ham and consequently their daughter who was also named Egyptus, was black skinned and therefore carried the curse of Cain. She may, or may not have been dark skinned; we don't know anything

about that. This idea is pure conjecture. Even if she was dark, there is no information that she carried and passed on any curse other than the curse upon Ham and Canaan. The only curse spoken of here is that curse. Given enough time, the gospel is always corrupted by the traditions of men and we are no exception to that reality. There is not the flimsiest connection with the curse of Cain or the black skin of the African aborigine, and yet somehow they got mashed together. This can be seen by what Brigham Young's feelings were on the subject during the civil war; at the time he spoke these words.

Journal of Discourses, Vol.10, p.249 - p.250, Brigham Young, October 6, 1863

Treat the passing strangers with kindness and respect; treat all kindly and respectfully who respect you and your rights as American citizens. "Peace on earth and good will towards men," is the design and spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; but when men are harnessed up by hundreds of thousands, and driven to the slaughter, it bespeaks a departure from God and from the popular institutions of freedom; and if Angels can weep, they weep over this human ignorance, blindness, depravity and cruelty. What is the cause of all this waste of life and treasure? To tell it in a plain, truthful way, one portion of the country wish to raise their negroes or black slaves, and the other portion wish to free them, and, apparently, to almost worship them. Well, raise and worship them, who cares? I should never fight one moment about it, for the cause of human improvement is not in the least advanced by the dreadful war which now convulses our unhappy country.

Ham will continue to be the servant of servants, as the Lord has decreed, until the curse is removed. Will the present struggle free the slave? No; but they are now wasting away the black race by thousands. Many of the blacks are treated worse than we treat our dumb brutes; and men will be called to judgment for the way they have treated the negro, and they will receive the condemnation of a guilty conscience, by the just Judge whose attributes are justice and truth.

Treat the slaves kindly and let them live, for Ham must be the servant of servants until the curse is removed. Can you destroy the decrees of the Almighty? You cannot. Yet our Christian brethren think that they are going to overthrow the sentence of the Almighty upon the seed of Ham. They cannot do that, though they may kill them by thousands and tens of thousands.

Before one ridicules Brother Brigham, his views were neither original nor exclusive to him. He didn't invent discrimination against the Negro race as the offspring of Cain and also of Ham after the flood and therefore under a permanent curse. Religious and profane history may well show this kind of discrimination was born long before the Europeans settled this country and may reach back to medieval times or before.

There have been those who have said, in connection to contamination of a white bloodline with Negroid blood by the example, that if one takes a bucket of white paint and puts one drop of black paint into it, it is no longer white. This bigoted opinion is ignorant of human reality. There is no such thing anymore of a "pure" bloodline of any description. If anyone who looks white feels their progenitors are all free of contamination by mixing with a supposedly a cursed, black, bloodline, they are invited to submit a sample of their blood to any credible study of human evolution that traces primary and mitochondrial DNA and time passage mutations and see if there are no markers of black people therein.

In the next selection Joseph doesn't identify the black race of slaves in this country with any particular curse, but shows something of an American cultural bias when talking off-handedly and drawing a comparison between the plight of the American slaves and an annoying situation that had to deal with at the time. Here he was clearly speaking as a man and not the prophet of God, which he was certainly allowed to do.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Five 1842-43 p.269

At five went to Mr. Sollars' with Elders Hyde and Richards. Elder Hyde inquired the situation of the negro. I replied, they came into the world slaves, mentally and physically. Change their situation with the whites, and they would be like them. They have souls, and are subjects of salvation. Go into Cincinnati or any city, and find an educated negro, who rides in his carriage, and you will see a man who has risen by the powers of his own mind to his exalted state of respectability. The slaves in Washington are more refined than many in high

places, and the black boys will take the shine off many of those they brush and wait on.

Elder Hyde remarked, "Put them on the level, and they will rise above me." I replied, if I raised you to be my equal, and then attempted to oppress you, would you not be indignant and try to rise above me, as did Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, and many others, who said I was a fallen Prophet, and they were capable of leading the people, although I never attempted to oppress them, but had always been lifting them up? Had I anything to do with the negro, I would confine them by strict law to their own species, and put them on a national equalization.

As the prophet of God, the head and leader of the restored priesthood and president of Christ's restored church, Joseph Smith did not discriminate against the black race in regard to membership, the conferral of priesthood, or the blessings of the temple. In this regard there is the record of Elijah Abel and his family.

Ezekiel Roberts baptized Elijah Abel, a black man, in September 1832. In March 1836 he was ordained an Elder in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That same year the evidence shows that Joseph Smith conferred the Melchizedek priesthood and ordained him an elder in the church. In December of 1836 he was ordained a Seventy and began missionary work in Ohio. He also served missions in New York and in Canada. The ordination to the office of Seventy in the third quorum of Seventies within the church was performed by Zebedee Coltrin. In 1839 Elijah Abel is made a member of the Nauvoo Seventies Quorum. On November 27, 1900, Enoch Abel, son of Elijah Abel, was ordained an Elder. The records also show that Enoch's son, Elijah, was ordained a Priest on July 5, 1934, and an Elder on September 29, 1935.

There are records of other Negro priesthood holders during the time Joseph was head of the priesthood and church. To wit: Joseph T. Ball, branch president in Boston in 1844-1845: Walker Lewis, an elder in Massachusetts.

There were also writings published in the church regarding black skinned people and the temple ordinances of the gospel.

Nondiscriminatory Rules Published for Governing the Temple in Kirtland

The rules provided for “old or young, rich or poor, male or female, bond or free, black or white, believer or unbeliever...” (*History of the Church 2: 368-69*)*

People of Every Color Anticipated to Worship in the Nauvoo Temple

“If the work roll forth with the same rapidity it has heretofore done, we may soon expect to see flocking to this place, people from every land and from every nation, the polished European, the degraded Hottentot, and the shivering Laplander. Persons of all languages, and of every tongue, and of every color; who shall with us worship the Lord of Hosts in his holy temple, and offer up their orisons in his sanctuary.” (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 1 No. 12 October, 1840. See also *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, Vol. 1, No. 9, January 1841 and in *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Vol. 4)* [* Copied from blacklds.org]

The only actual curse pronounced by God of a dark skin upon a family of people, found in scripture, is in the Book of Mormon.

2 Nephi 5:

1 Behold, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren.

2 But behold, their anger did increase against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life...

2 Nephi 5:

19 And behold, the words of the Lord had been fulfilled unto my brethren, which he spake concerning them, that I should be their ruler and their teacher.

Wherefore, I had been their ruler and their teacher, according to the commandments of the Lord, until the time they sought to take away my life.

20 Wherefore, the word of the Lord was fulfilled which he spake unto me, saying that: Inasmuch as they will not hearken unto thy words they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And behold, they were cut off from his presence.

21 And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.

22 And thus saith the Lord God: I will cause that they shall be loathsome unto thy people, save they shall repent of their iniquities.

There is a provision in this curse of a dark skin, or a “skin of blackness,” that they will remain loathsome until they, as a people, repent of their iniquities. Once again, “their iniquities” revolve around a bloodthirsty nature and seeking to shed innocent blood. The Lamanites, as they became known, did repent and in the course of time became the most righteous people of that era and region. They did not automatically turn white, but eventually were no longer loathsome to the Lord’s people as witnessed by the restored church’s embrace of their descendants, the American Indian. Consequently, and even though their skin remains dark they are not considered a cursed people any longer.

The overall policy of denying certain ordinances to people of color in the church changed with the following announcement.

June 8, 1978

To all general and local priesthood officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world:

Dear Brethren:

As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth, we have been grateful that people of many nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel, and have joined the Church in ever-increasing numbers. This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy

member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel.

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.450

Sincerely yours,

Spencer W. Kimball

N. Eldon Tanner

Marion G. Romney

The First Presidency

This announcement caused a great deal of controversy initially within the church and still does among those believers of Mormonism outside the church. Some believe it is unquestionably an error.

Some time after this announcement was made, a member of the church, who was a long-time family friend of Elder Neal A. Maxwell had occasion to meet with him at his office in the old church offices and a few doors down the hall from Elder Mark E. Peterson's office, and asked Elder Maxwell to see the text of this revelation concerning the reversal of the church's policy of denying blacks the priesthood and access to the temple and its ordinances, and effectively lifting the curse on the black blood since the time of Cain. Brother Maxwell explained that there were no words to the revelation. He then told how the revelation was offered to the leading quorums of the church. He explained that President Kimball said he received the revelation while in the Salt Lake City Temple and then offered it to the quorum of the twelve for acceptance. This meeting may have included the assistants to the twelve also, or they may have been present when it was offered in a subsequent meeting. That detail could not be clearly remembered. When President Kimball spoke about the feelings he experienced as an answer to his supplications of the Lord in the temple on this issue, feelings of joy, love and peace washed over the assembled leaders and many began to weep being overcome with the spirit of what had been presented to them. These occurrences were accepted by all as a witness of the Spirit of God and a confirmation of the correctness of what Elder Kimball had presented. They unanimously voted to accept and sustain these revelations as the will of God. A second similar meeting was described with the same outcome and following that meeting; the witness of President Kimball was presented as a revelation to the body of the church and was accepted by the general membership.

One might ask: How could there be no words to a revelation that ostensibly removed the curse of Cain from off the Negro race, which, if it were true, would be the most momentous revelation ever received? Words may not have been necessary since there likely was no such curse on the Negro's blood or race in the first place. The witness to

President Kimball was possibly just approval to reverse a policy of the church that was apparently instituted in error after Joseph Smith's murder.

What then are the real crime, sin and curse of Cain that are at large in the world? Is it a mark? We are told that only Cain personally bore the mark placed on him by God. Is it a black skin? God never said He caused Cain and therefore all his descendants to have a black skin as a result of his curse. What is made clear is that all those who murder for gain whether it is a financial gain or a gain in power or again status or reputation or of possessions, or who kill people unjustifiably according to the law of God, or shed innocent blood, are cursed by the withdrawal of His spirit from them as was Cain, and are excluded from the baptism of Christ's redemption as were some Hebrews, and if they commit this sin after having had the testimony of the Holy Ghost they are excluded from His presence for their eternal existence as those of the Telestial Kingdom, and if they commit this sin after receiving the fullness of the gospel, they will forfeit an exaltation as stated in the Law of the Priesthood.

Who then are the real cursed of Cain? Those of murderous secret combinations like the various gangs who roam the earth and murder for gain, domination, status, sport, or any other wicked reason? What about leaders of nations who invade other countries, and the soldiers under their command who kill innocent civilians because they want to help protect their nation's financial interests, or those who desire more territory, or who desire dominion over more people? The cursed of God are those individuals who have the will to defy God and His laws of righteous goodness. Some curses can be forgiven and overcome, others cannot. People are individuals and must viewed as such or through foolish bigotry one can offend the Maker and the Defender of all who wish to do right. May the Holy Father bless with the influence of His Spirit all those who seek Him and his Kingdom through His Son Christ, Jesus. Amen.

SOJ