

SYLVIA'S CORNER

MORMONISM-THE BLACK ISSUE

It was June 9, 1978. I was living in Salt Lake City at the time. I picked up a copy of the Salt Lake City Tribune. There I saw that the prophet of the church, Spencer W. Kimball, claimed to have received a new revelation allowing blacks to hold the Mormon priesthood.

I had been a member of the church for many years at that time, and had never seen a revelation of this magnitude given before. I don't quite know what I was expecting, maybe a rush of blacks to the church and to the temple, but I can tell you that in Utah I saw no change at all. There seemed to be no impact from what I thought was such a momentous revelation.

Thinking back to when I had joined the church, the issue of blacks not being able to hold the priesthood like everybody else bothered me as much as my objection to polygamy.

When studying with the missionaries before joining the church, they explained that there had been a war in Heaven where Jesus and Satan fought to decide who was going to come down and save the world. They claimed that all of us had lived spiritually in the same place before we were born down here and given spiritual bodies. They called this place the pre-existence, or first estate. The missionaries told me that during this war, there were those who fought valiantly with Jesus, and those who were passive or neutral. Because the neutral ones did not take a stand, they were still allowed to come down here, but were cursed with a dark skin.

Brigham Young, in the Way to Perfection, pg 43, said that Joseph Smith claimed that the posterity of Cain was black because he committed murder.

While researching for this article, an interesting thought occurred to me. All of the black race could not have come from Canaan. Ham had three other sons beside Canaan, namely Cush, Mizraim, and Put. If the curse was on skin color, what about the skin color of Cush and Put? Cush and Put also had black skin color. Ethiopians as well as the black races of Africa appear to have come from their line, yet the curse was on Canaan alone, and Canaanites came from the area of Palestine.

Looking at the word Ham, I found that it means black or dark colored. He was already black, so the curse could not have been in relation to the color of skin he possessed. Since Cain was Ham's son, he was already black along with his brothers.

In Genesis 9:25, it says, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Thus we see that the curse was really on his social standing, not his skin color. He was to serve his brothers, and obviously this has been the case throughout history.

Praise God that once again if we search His scriptures, the answers are all there in His word.