

# Following the Evidence: Race, Scripture, and Prophetic Authority in Mormonism

## An Examination of the Church's Official Claims Versus Its Own Historical Record

Mrs. Mary W. E. ...  
November 12th, 1832.

Dear Sir,  
I cannot have so long  
along in the church from of it entirely  
then better of with various houses  
in the town received both our efforts  
in which case of any way. There  
have brought with an interest in  
those the place and persons in which,  
but I also the various to which part  
from now what to encourage of both what.  
Respectfully,  
H. Johnson



OFFICIAL RECORDS  
It has stated in the Church's official records and in the various  
of prophetic doctrine... and in the various  
and generally clarified the fact that the various  
some of the English... and these are the various  
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# The Modern Dilemma: **Disavowal vs. Doctrine**

Today, The Church Proclaims...

“Today, the Church **disavows the theories advanced in the past** that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse... Church leaders today unequivocally **condemn all racism, past and present**, in any form.”

- *Gospel Topics Essay, “Race and the Priesthood”*

Yet, Its Scriptures Still Teach...

“...for behold, they had hardened their hearts against him... wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto people the Lord God did cause **a skin of blackness to come upon them.**”

- 2 Nephi 5:21, *The Book of Mormon*

How does the Church reconcile its modern position with its canonized scripture?  
This presentation follows the evidence to find the answer.

# Apologetic Claim #1:

## “Skin doesn’t actually mean skin.”

“What if our interpretation was a cultural artifact of the mid-1800s...? What if we have misunderstood words like ‘skin’ and ‘black’ and ‘dark’? Could there be another interpretation?

...Ethan Sproat... explored the idea of **‘skin’ or ‘skins’ referring to clothing and not to human skins**, pointing to the verses in Alma 3:5-6.”

**The Logic:** This argument reframes the issue as a modern misunderstanding of an ancient text, suggesting “skin” could mean clothing, aura, or countenance.

SKIN  
SKIN  
SKIN  
SKIN

# The Textual Evidence: A Closer Look at Alma 3:5-6

5. Now the heads of the Lamanites were shorn; and they were naked, save it were a skin which was girded about their loins, and also their armor... and their bows, and their arrows, and their stones, and their slings...

## Point 1: Sentence Structure.

The text lists “a skin which was girded about their loins,” then itemizes five other pieces of equipment (“armor, bows, arrows...”) *before* starting a new thought: “And the skins of the Lamanites were dark.” The structure clearly separates clothing from the curse on their bodies.

6. And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them...

## Point 2: Logical Flaw

The argument that dark *clothing* would make someone “not enticing” is nonsensical. Furthermore, it implies God magically turns every animal skin they wear dark upon contact, a concept unsupported by any text.

# The Prophetic Context: How Leaders & Revelation Defined 'Skin'

## Prophetic Interpretation

“I saw a striking contrast in the progress of the Indian people today... The day of the Lamanites is nigh. For years they have been growing delightsome, and now they are becoming **white and delightsome**.”

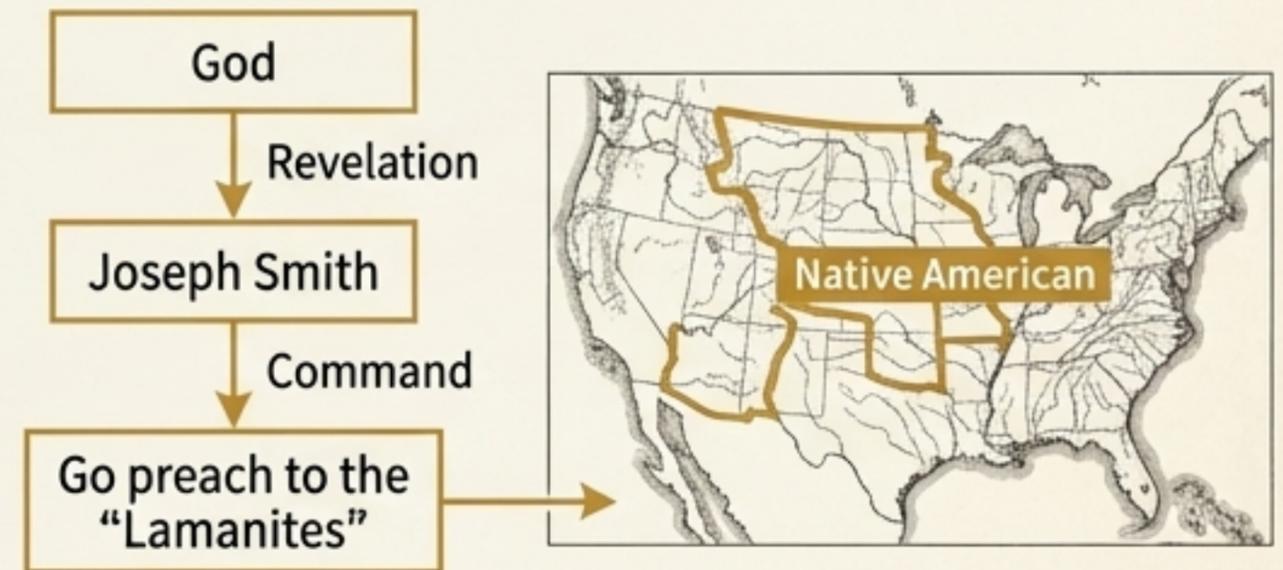
– Spencer W. Kimball, Prophet, General Conference, 1960

Church leaders repeatedly spoke of literal pigment changing as a sign of righteousness.



## Revelatory Confirmation

“If you believe that Joseph Smith was getting revelations from God, God told Joseph Smith to have Oliver [Cowdery] and some of the early members go preach to the Lamanites. Where does God tell them to go? Where the Native Americans are... If skin doesn't mean skin, then why in the world is God giving Joseph a revelation to tell them to go find people with darker skin to go preach to?”



## Apologetic Claim #2: “Prophets were just products of their time.”

“In 1852, Brigham Young announced a policy restricting men of black African descent from priesthood ordination... The justifications for this restriction echoed the widespread ideas about racial inferiority that had been used to argue for the legalization of black servitude... According to one view, which had been promulgated in the United States from at least the 1730s, blacks descended from the same lineage as the biblical Cain...”

– From the Church’s Gospel Topics Essay

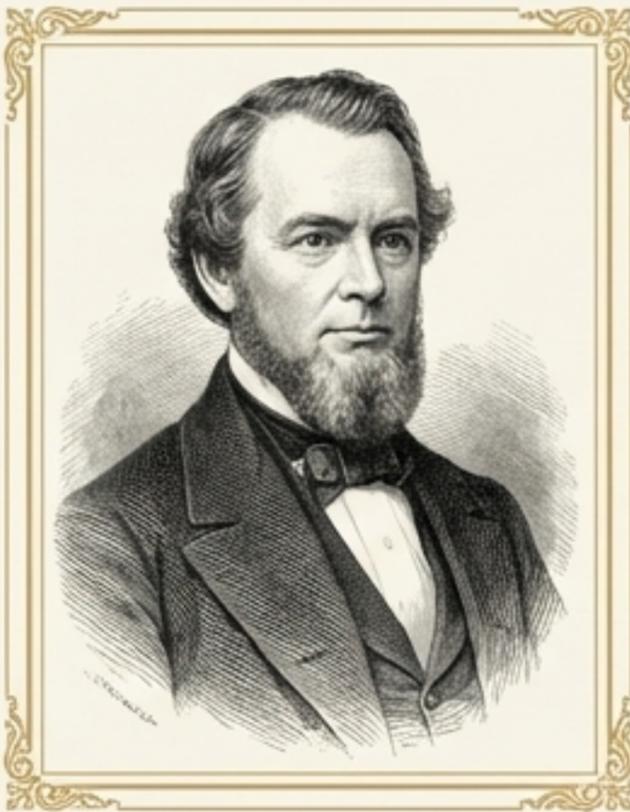
This frames the racism as a passive cultural inheritance, not a divine commandment or a deliberate choice.

# The Historical Reality: Prophets Chose to Be on the Wrong Side of History

## The Value Proposition of a Prophet

Mormonism's core claim is that prophets receive divine guidance to lead the world. If they are merely "products of their time," or even worse than their contemporaries, what is their purpose?

### Evidence of Internal Dissent



#### Apostle Orson Pratt

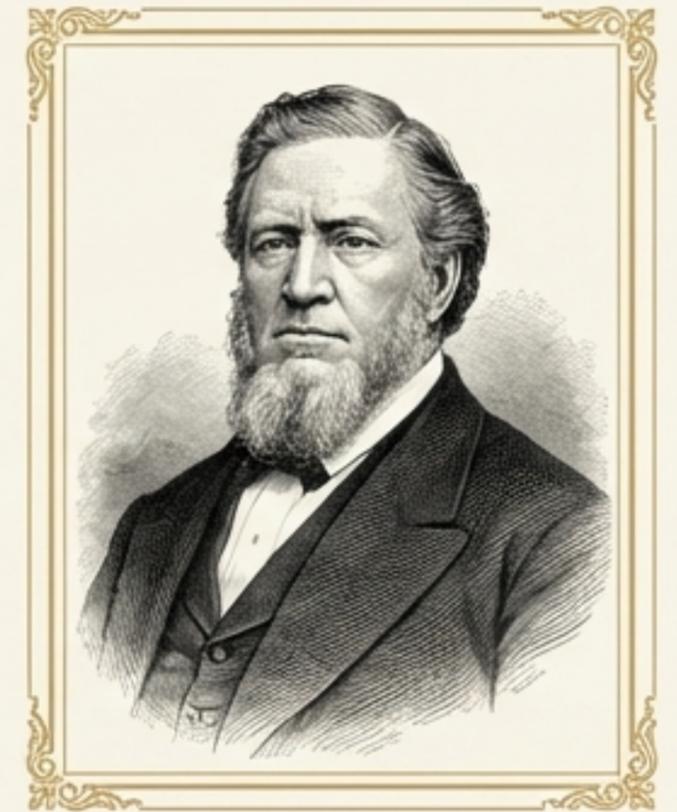
Utah Legislative Debate, 1852

Argued **against making Utah a slave state**, calling the act enough "to cause the angels in heaven to blush." He also **argued for Black males' voting rights.**

#### Prophet Brigham Young

Utah Legislative Debate, 1852

"My voice shall be **against it** all the day long... **We just as well make a bill here for mules to vote as Negroes.**"



### Conclusion

Brigham Young was not passively reflecting his time; he was **actively fighting against more enlightened views within his own leadership to establish racist policy.**

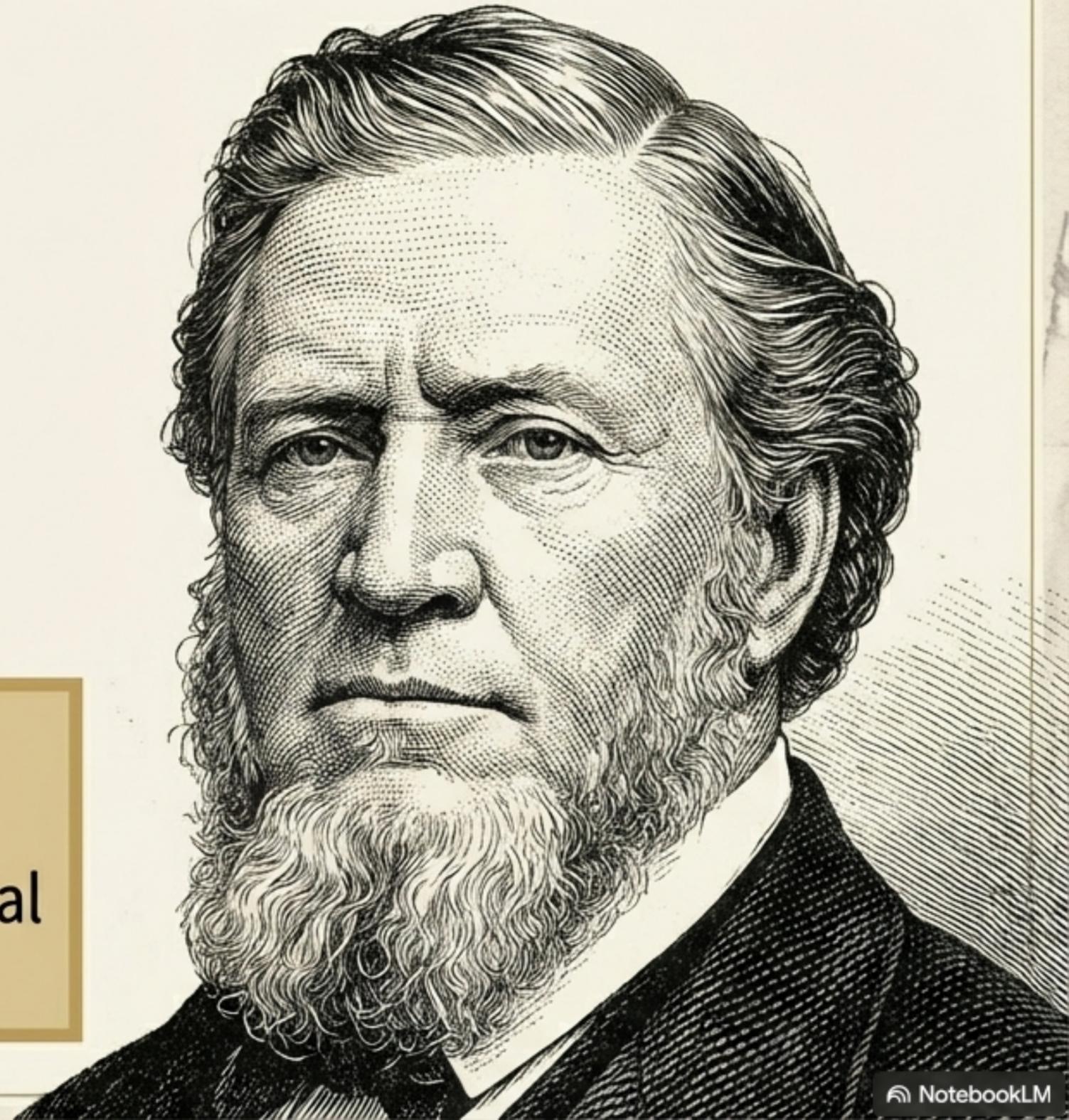
# Apologetic Claim #3: “The Priesthood Ban Started with Brigham Young.”

## The Common Narrative

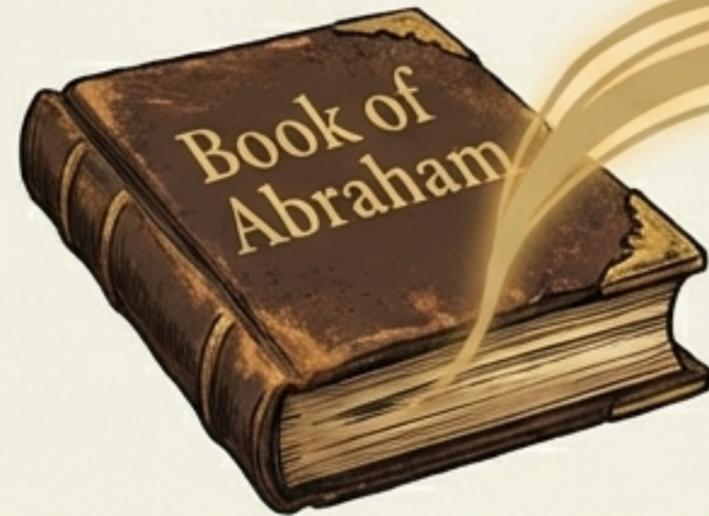
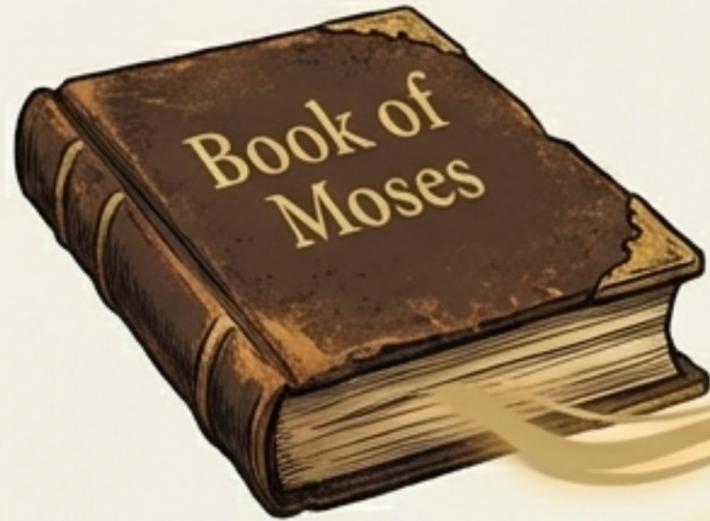
A frequent claim from members and apologists is that the priesthood and temple ban was a “policy” that originated with Brigham Young.

## The Goal

This narrative attempts to contain the theological damage, framing the ban as a flawed policy of one man, not a foundational doctrine from the church’s founder.



# The Foundational Evidence: The Doctrine Originates in Joseph Smith's Scripture



- **Book of Moses 7:22 (Created c. 1830):**  
Establishes a **curse of "blackness"** upon the descendants of Cain.
- **Book of Abraham 1:24, 27 (Published 1842):**  
Directly links this lineage to a **denial of the priesthood**. "...from Ham sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land... Now Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of priesthood..."

## Analysis

The priesthood ban is not a policy created out of thin air by Brigham Young. It is the **direct application** of doctrine found in scriptures authored by Joseph Smith. The idea that it starts with Brigham Young is **patently false**; the justification is in the canon today.

# A Case Study in Deception: “Follow the Footnotes”

## The Church’s Essay Quotes Brigham Young

...at the same time President Young said that at some future day, black church members would have “all the privilege and more” enjoyed by other members.”<sup>(1)</sup>

\*This quote is used to portray Young as forward-thinking and prophetic.\*

## The Full Context from Brigham Young’s 1852 Speech

...that time will come when they will have the privilege of all we have...and more... **until the last of the posterity of Abel had received the priesthood...until the residue of the posterity of Michael and his wife receive the blessings...**

### The Truth

Brigham Young was not prophesying a 1978-style revelation. He was teaching the ban would be lifted only after **every single white person on Earth** had received the priesthood—essentially, not in mortality. The Church’s essay omits this crucial context, fundamentally misrepresenting its own source.

# By Definition, This Was a Doctrine of White Supremacy

“The belief that white people are superior to those of all other races... and should therefore dominate society.” – Oxford Dictionary

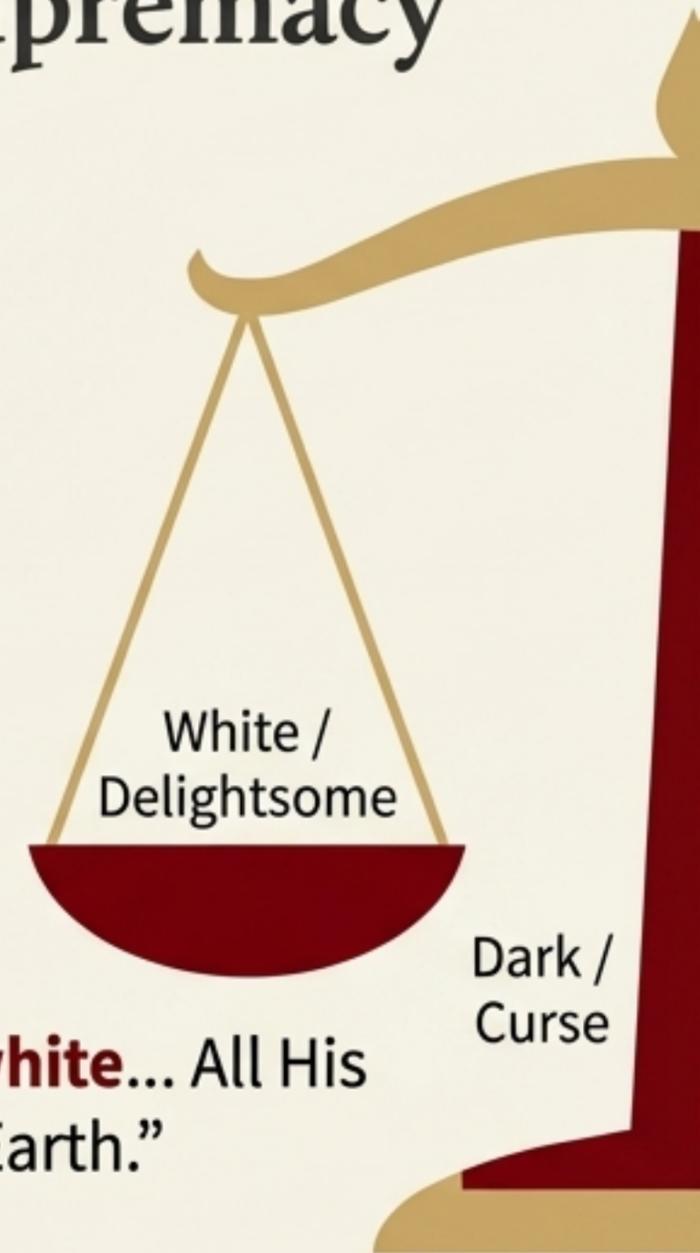
## Evidence from Church Doctrine and Publications

- **From Scripture**

- The Book of Mormon explicitly defines “white” as “**delightsome**” while dark skin is a “**curse**” and “**loathsome**.” It promises that righteous Lamanites will have their skin “**turn white again**.”

- **From an Apostle**

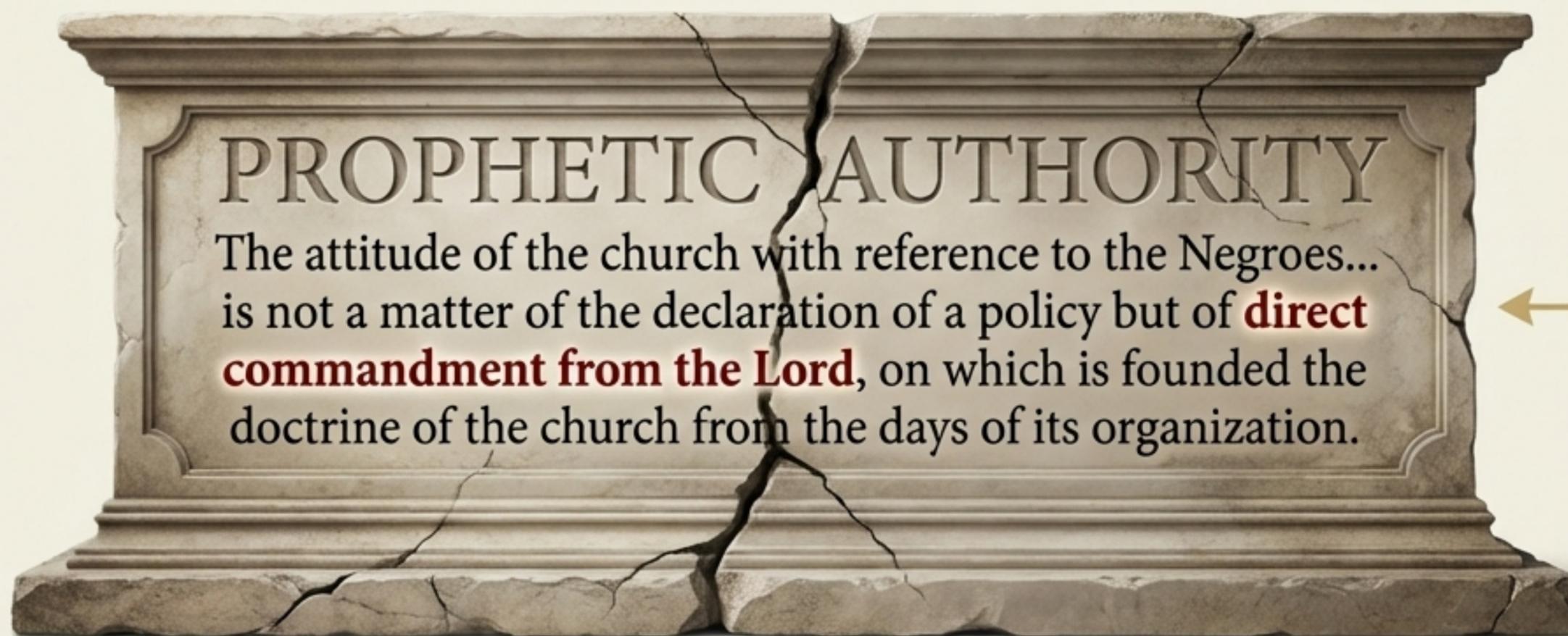
- “We understand that when God made man in his own image... he **made him white**... All His prophets and apostles belong to the **most handsome race** on the face of the Earth.”  
- *The Juvenile Instructor*, 1868, edited by Apostle George Q. Cannon.



**When scripture and apostolic teachings define white skin as divinely favored and dark skin as a curse, it meets the textbook definition of a **white supremacist doctrine**.**

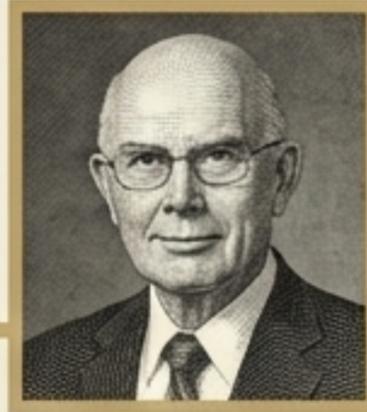
# The Inescapable Conclusion: **A Crisis of Prophetic Authority**

**The Core Problem:** For over a century, prophets, seers, and revelators taught racist ideas not as policy or opinion, but as eternal truth from God. The Church now admits these teachings were wrong.



If prophets cannot discern between their own cultural prejudice and the will of God on an issue as fundamental as **human dignity**, how can they be **trusted** on any other matter?

# The Modern Response: **Blame God, Demand Loyalty**



## **1. Blaming God:**

Oaks admits the justifications felt wrong, yet concludes God must have commanded it without reason. This makes God the author of the racist policy.

“I studied the reasons then being given [for the ban] and could not feel confirmation of the truth of any of them... I learned that in general the Lord rarely gives reasons for the commandments and directions He gives to His servants. I determined to be loyal to our prophetic leaders...”

Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency (2018)

## **2. Loyalty Over Conscience:**

He presents his decision to suppress his own moral compass and remain “loyal” as a virtue.

**The Implication:** The current leadership’s model is to obey authority even when it contradicts your conscience. This avoids confronting the reality of prophetic fallibility.

# The **Unresolved Contradiction** at the Heart of Modern Mormonism

## Side A: The Command to Repent



“Any of us who has prejudice towards another race needs to **repent**.”

– *Russell M. Nelson, 2020*

## Side B: The Refusal to Act



- The racist passages in the Book of Mormon, Book of Moses, and Book of Abraham **remain unchanged**.
- The Church has issued **no formal apology** for the doctrine, **only for “theories”**.
- The prophets who taught this doctrine are **still venerated** without qualification.

**The Central Question:** How can the Church **genuinely repent** while **still canonizing** the scriptures that contain and justify the racism? How can it disavow “theories” when they are **still taught as the word of God**?

# The Evidence Points to a Foundational Problem

The history of racial teachings in the LDS Church is not a footnote, a mistake of a single leader, or a mere “product of its time.” The evidence shows it is a doctrine originating in the Church’s foundational scriptures and consistently taught as God’s will by its prophets for over 120 years.

**The issue, therefore, is not simply about past racism. It is about the fundamental claim of the Church: that it is led by prophets who speak for an unchanging and just God. The evidence demands each individual to question whether that claim is credible.**