

Mormonism from a Biblical Perspective

Examining LDS doctrine and beliefs by searching the Bible

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All verses quoted from the New King James Bible, unless otherwise noted. Where the full Bible text is not represented, omissions are represented by ellipses (...). Summaries of sections of scripture as well as author additions to the text will be enclosed in brackets [].

Genesis, Chapter 4

1-15 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain... And Abel... and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him... And the LORD said, 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.

In many religious denominations arising out of Judaism, including Mormonism, the mark of Cain has been thought to have been a curse of black skin. There are two very compelling reasons to reject this idea completely. The first is contained within this verse itself. While the Lord did pronounce a curse upon Cain as punishment for this act of murder, God is clearly concerned with protecting Cain from harm at the same time. First God proclaims that no one is to take vengeance on Cain or they will be punished far more severely than Cain was. This was indeed a blessing for Cain. It was a mercy given to Cain by a merciful God, as is the mark. The mark, far from being a part of the curse, was in fact part of Cain's merciful protection. We are given no insight on what this mark was, but to think it to be a cursing of black skin is preposterous. If the mark was indeed black skin, which we have no reason to think, then it was truly a blessing to Cain rather than a curse. It would have marked him as one who had been given God's mercy and was under His protection.

The second reason to reject this idea is related to Noah. You will find when we study that section of scripture that the family of Cain does not survive the flood. There is no descendant upon the earth after the time of the flood that came through the line of Cain. If the mark had been black skin, it would not have survived the flood. It is time for Mormons and misguided Christians alike to make amends for such irrational thinking.

16-18 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD... And knew his wife; and... [some geneology omitted here] begat Lamech.

19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

Here we see the first instance of polygamy. LDS church doctrine declares that God commanded certain Old Testament prophets to practice polygamy. It is true that the Bible never seems to clearly and specifically condemn polygamy, but it also does not ever give it the status of the commandment or will of God. The way God describes this first appearance of polygamy and the man who introduces it holds important information for us about how God views it, as we shall see.

20-23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah... I have slain a man to my wounding, and

a young man to my hurt.

We see here that Lamech is a murderer. He has slain a man that has hurt him in some way. It is possible from the wording of the passage that he has actually killed two men – a man and a young man - although it is probably just a poetic repetition of one murder.

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

Lamech was also an incredibly prideful and self-centered man. He is comparing himself here to Cain, but not as a fellow sinful murderer. He is claiming for himself the mercy that God showed to Cain to spare his life. In fact, he is claiming seventy seven times more protection and mercy! In Lamech we do not see God granting mercy to a righteous man who introduced an important doctrine of polygamy, but instead we see a pride-filled, self-centered murderer who wrongfully claims to have God's mercy and protection.

Although this passage does not condone or condemn polygamy, it does seem to be showing that it is not something introduced by a man that is anywhere near to living a life of obedience to God.

25-26 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare... Seth... And to Seth... Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

Time was marching on and the small group of people was beginning to fulfill God's command to fill the earth. Eventually, it became impossible for everyone to live close enough to the Garden of Eden to physically go there to commune with God between the cherubim at the gates. Men needed a new way to stay in touch with their Creator, so prayer was introduced and "then began men to call upon the name of the LORD."

Genesis, Chapter 5

1-23 [The geneology of Adam to Enoch has been omitted here]

Genealogy was obviously a very important part of the Old Testament. Great care is taken to trace lineages and ancestors, linking fathers to sons for many generations. This, of course, is very similar to what the LDS church is very involved in today. We see a change take place after the life of Jesus Christ, though. No longer are genealogies kept as they were and the Apostle Paul actually likens them to fables as he warns people not to be consumed by them in 1 Titus 1:4; *Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies...* Their purpose in the Old Testament and in the opening chapter of the Gospels in the New Testament were to show the lineage of Jesus Christ, who was prophesied to come through a very specific lineage. Once Jesus was born on the earth, these prophesies were fulfilled and the need to keep track of lineages and genealogies ceased.

24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

Christians often speak of their Christian "walk". To a Latter-day Saint, this term is usually speaking of their obedience to the commandments of God. It is thought that Enoch fulfilled the commandments so well that he was taken to Paradise – he had become good enough. To a Christian, however, "walking with God" speaks to the relationship that they have with Him. The Bible does not say why Enoch was taken, but it does say that he had a relationship and communion with God. In other words, he was a believer in God,

which certainly meant that he was doing his best to keep God's commandments, but that is not necessarily the reason God took him.

25-31 [The geneology from Methuselah to Noah omitted here]

32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[End]