

Priesthood Ban on Blacks — Cheat-Sheet

CORE CRITIC CLAIM

The pre-1978 priesthood/temple restriction on Black members proves LDS prophets are racist, not inspired — and therefore false prophets.

KEY DEFENSIVE POINTS

- **Prophetic infallibility is not a biblical standard.** No biblical prophet was morally perfect. Peter was rebuked for racial prejudice (Galatians 2:11-14) and remained an apostle.
- **The Bible records God working within cultural limitations.** Old Testament regulated slavery rather than abolishing it. Jesus initially restricted ministry to Israel (Matthew 15:24). Gentile inclusion took a decade after the Great Commission.
- **Progressive revelation is the biblical pattern.** Acts 10 (Peter's vision) changed longstanding ethnic exclusion through revelation — the same pattern as Official Declaration 2.
- **The Church has officially disavowed racist theories.** The "Race and the Priesthood" essay (2013) explicitly condemns all past racial justifications and all racism, past and present.
- **Duration does not disprove prophetic legitimacy.** Gentile exclusion from Israel's covenant lasted ~2,000 years. Aaronic priesthood was restricted to one family for the entire Mosaic dispensation.
- **LDS scripture itself affirms universality.** 2 Nephi 26:33: "All are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile."

KEY SCRIPTURES

Scripture	Point
Galatians 2:11-14	Peter rebuked for racial/ethnic prejudice — apostles can err on race
Acts 10:9-35	Gentile inclusion came through revelation, correcting prior exclusion
Acts 15:1-29	Jerusalem Council changed restrictive practices through revelation
2 Nephi 26:33	"All are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile"
D&C 1:24-28	God works through servants "in their weakness"
Galatians 3:28	"Neither Jew nor Greek... all one in Christ Jesus"
Matthew 15:24	Jesus initially limited ministry to Israel
Isaiah 28:10	"Line upon line, precept upon precept"
D&C 3:6-7	Joseph Smith rebuked — prophetic fallibility is scriptural

ONE-LINE OBJECTION RESPONSES

Objection	Response
"A true prophet would never allow racism."	Peter held ethnic prejudice and was publicly rebuked (Galatians 2:11-14) — he remained an apostle.
"125 years is too long for a mistake."	Gentile exclusion lasted ~2,000 years; Levitical priesthood restriction lasted the entire Mosaic dispensation.
"1978 was just social pressure."	Peter's Gentile inclusion also coincided with practical needs — timing does not disprove revelation.
"Past leaders gave racist justifications."	The Church has officially disavowed those theories; prophets sometimes offer personal explanations that God later corrects.
"If prophets can be this wrong, why trust them?"	Trust is in God and continuing revelation, not prophetic infallibility — a standard LDS theology explicitly rejects.
"Other churches fixed racism sooner."	Many also split over slavery (Southern Baptists, 1845); no tradition has a clean record on race.
"This proves the whole church is false."	By that logic, Peter's prejudice proves Christianity is false — the argument proves too much.

QUICK HISTORICAL PARALLELS

- **Peter and the Gentiles:** Personally taught by Christ, still held ethnic prejudice for years, required a vision to change (Acts 10)
- **Paul and Slavery:** Returned Onesimus to Philemon; instructed slaves to obey (Ephesians 6:5)
- **Moses:** Tolerated slavery, practiced ethnic exclusion, yet was God's prophet
- **The early church:** Took ~10 years after the Great Commission to begin including Gentiles

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- [Race and the Priesthood — Gospel Topics Essay](#)
- [Official Declaration 2](#)
- [FairLatterdaySaints: Blacks and the Priesthood](#)