

The Jaredites Were Black by *David Grant Stewart* Published by the National Translator Certification Service. Copyright 1978, 1982, 1984 NTCS.

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Cover illustration: Olmec sculpture in the National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico.

The Jaredites Were Black.

A discussion between three friends, namely:

Tom, an old scholar. Dick, an old friend. Harry, an old skeptic.

Dick and Harry are at Tom's house sitting before the fireplace after dinner.

Dick: Before coming over I took the liberty of mentioning to Harry your conclusion that the Jaredites were black and did not hold the priesthood.

Harry: Everyone knows that the Jaredites were some sort of pre-Israelite Israelite people and favored of the Lord. I'm interested in hearing why you are so determined they were black people.

Dick: Seems to me there was a time when "everyone knew" the world was flat, that the earth was the center of space...

Harry: The brother of Jared had the Urim and Thummim. He saw the Savior. The Jaredites had prophets. They were even "taught from on high". The book of Ether says never could there be a people more blessed and prospered as the Jaredites were. How could they not have held the priesthood? How could they have been black? How can you prove your idea?

Tom: All that you say is true, that the Jaredites were an exalted people, but they did not hold the priesthood, and they were black. It may not be possible to prove anything to you if you don't want to accept it, but if you like, I'll present the evidence which convinces me that they were unquestionably black and did not hold the priesthood, yet were an exalted people.

I first became mildly convinced of this notion over a dozen years ago, after I had been working as a professional translator for a couple of years. The idea was so strange to me at first, but over the years the evidence I have accumulated has become great enough that I have become less diffident about presenting it for the consideration of others.

Dick: This is what he wants to hear.

Harry: Yes.

Tom: First, let's examine the evidence to the contrary. Does it say in the book of Ether that the Jaredites held the priesthood?

Harry: No.

Tom: Or anywhere in the Scriptures?

Dick: Nowhere.

Tom: Is their lineage traced from any non-black people?

Harry: Their lineage isn't given at all after they leave the tower, that is, their lineage before they left, of their ancestors.

Tom: We'll get back to that. Has any president of the church ever said they were not black? Or were Semitic? Or held the priesthood?

Harry: Well, I don't think so.

Tom: If any president of the church ever does say at any time in the future that the Jaredites were Semitic, or from Japheth, or held the priesthood, or were white, then I will admit to being wrong.

Harry: Does this conclude your "non-negative" evidence?

Tom: Actually, there's another point you could have raised, but I will make this objection for you. In some places, the Jaredites are called "fair" [1] and in the old languages "fair" can mean either "pretty" or "white". For example, compare the use of the word when Akish made "fair promises" to his friends. [2] But enough of this. Will you admit that there is no evidence that they were white?

Harry: Well, so far you make it look that way.

Tom: And if we ever find any proof they held the priesthood, then we'll accept that as proof they were white too, right?

Harry: Of course. At least, if they had the priesthood they could not have been negroid black. But they had the Urim and Thummim.

Dick: Joseph Smith had the Urim and Thummim before he ever had any priesthood, or even was baptized.

Harry: I guess Dick's right.

Tom: Do you need the priesthood to be a prophet?

Harry: Of course.

Dick: But what about Anna, the prophetess in the New Testament?

Harry: But that's a prophetess!

Dick: So how is that different except in gender, from a prophet?

Harry: All right. Next thing, you're going to prove to me that women don't hold the priesthood.

Tom: But that shouldn't be necessary, should it?

Harry: Not hardly.

Tom: Good. And it is possible that we really have no evidence whatsoever that the Jaredites were white or that they held the priesthood?

Harry: I guess not.

Tom: There is mention of a priest in the book of Ether, but only a corrupt one who murders his king. [3].

Dick: Sounds more like priestcraft than priesthood.

Tom: Let's get on with the positive evidence. Could it be that it's possible to find out something about a person from his name?

Carey: No. A person can be named anything, and he doesn't even get to choose his name; his parents do it for him.

Tom: Let me tell you about an Irish Jesuit priest by the name of Mordechai Shapiro. Does that strike you as funny?

Harry: No.

Tom: Nobody but a Jew would name his kid Mordechai, and Shapiro is also a Jewish family name. How about a name like Osama Arikawa?

Did: Sounds Japanese.

Tom: Of course. Can you imagine a Dutchman who is pure Dutch named Osamu Arikawa?

Harry: It does sound a little misplaced.

Tom: How about a name like Lloyd Williams?

Harry: Sounds English.

Tom: Welsh, actually.

Dick: What about a name Jim Davis? I know a fellow named Jim Davis, and he's black.

Tom: These are transplants. After the Civil War, all of the Negroes had to take surnames. In most cases, these were the names of the plantation owners, which of course had nothing to do with their African heritage. Most Negroes in the United States have names which are borrowed from England, Scotland, and Wales. Negroes who came later from Africa by choice generally retain their African names. You'll never find a pure African named Osamu Arikawa unless he was legally adopted by a recently arrived Japanese family as an infant himself.

Harry: So you are going to tell me that the Jaredites are black, because they have Negro names. But they were transplants too. I'm not convinced.

Tom: Suppose you had a phone book from a deserted island. It contains names like Manoel da Silva, João Gomes Oliveira, Enrique Guimarães, and the like. What does this tell you?

Harry: That they had telephones?

Dick: Be serious, Harry: That they were Spanish.

Tom: The names are Portuguese. It would suggest that in the absence of conflicting evidence, we would be justified in assuming that their ancestors originally came from Portugal.

Harry: What about a name like Dave Olstowski? I have an acquaintance by that name, and he is three fourths French.

Tom: The first name gives it away. Polish parents, more commonly use name like Tadeusz, Kasimiersz, Andrzej and the like. But we are spending too long on this. The point is, if we ripped a page out of a Lisbon phone book and a similar page out of a Moscow phone book, do you think a Brazilian or Portuguese person to tell which one came from Lisbon?

Harry: Of course.

Tom: And could you tell the difference between a page from Stuttgart and a page from Jakarta?

Harry: Probably, but I probably wouldn't know where the Jakarta page came from.

Tom: Would a translator, who knew both languages?

Harry: I would think so.

Tom: Then, could it be possible to tell something about a person from his name?

Harry: In some cases, perhaps.

Tom: And if you had many names, would it be more conclusive if they all were of the same type and of the same ethnic background?

Harry: Well, of course.

Tom: And would this be more obvious to a translator who knew the language of the ethnic group?

Harry: Of course.

Tom: Let's look at the Jaredite names. At least two Jaredites are named Heth [4]. Heth is the name of the ancestor of the Hittites [5].

Harry: How do we know this?

Tom: Where do we get the name "Hittite"?

Dick: From the Bible.

Tom: And from what language do we get the Old Testament?

Harry: Hebrew, of course.

Tom: Mainly. The Hebrew word Hittite means "children of Heth". The Hebrew language makes a man's name plural to signify his people. The Welsh do the same thing in later times. William, Stephen, Robert, David, Evan and so on are the ancestors of Welsh families named Williams, Stevens, Roberts, Davis, and Evans.

Dick: Just like the Israelites.

Harry: What are some other Jaredite names like this?

Tom: The Jaredite Ahah is the same name that the Egyptian historian, Manetho has on his Egyptian king list.

Harry: But what about the obviously Hebrew names Aaron, Levi, Jared and Seth?

Tom: The "obviously Hebrew" names Aaron and Levi were among the many items the Israelites borrowed from Egypt when they left, like the name Moses, which is also Egyptian and not at all Hebrew. Jared is a name that existed before there were any Israelites, as is Seth. Seth is in fact, the name of an Egyptian god.

Dick: What about the name Ether? What does it mean and where does it come from?

Tom: Ether is a very old Egyptian place name and when applied to a person, it means "prisoner" [6]. Remember that Ether was born in prison, his father Coriantor having spent his entire life in prison.

Harry: This is fascinating. What do the other Jaredite names mean?

Tom: It isn't my purpose to translate the book of Ether, but merely to show that the Jaredites were black. Can you see that the names in the book of Ether come from Ham? That they were Egyptian and Hittite?

Harry: Yes, but does that suggest they were black? The Egyptians weren't black.

Dick: Of course, they were. Everyone knows that.

Tom: What "everybody knows" proves nothing. It is not my objective to prove the Egyptians were black; I'll be satisfied to prove to you that the Jaredites were descended from Ham and let the rest take care of itself. But I can hardly bear to see such frightful ignorance in a seemingly intelligent fellow like Harry, so I shall indulge you.

In what language is Ham's name? The word Ham, what language is it?

Harry: Hebrew.

Dick: Egyptian.

Tom: If I translate his name, will you accept it as a possible description of the bearer?

Dick: You once said that all the names of the early patriarchs were given by prophecy and were descriptive of the bearers.

Harry: All right. But is Ham Egyptian or Hebrew?

Tom: What language did Ham's father speak?

Dick: Noah? It must've been Adamic.

Tom: That's right, and the answer is both. It is a convergence of Egyptian and Hebrew in their earliest forms. In both Egyptian hieroglyphic and ancient Hebrew, the name Ham means black. In hieroglyphic it also means servant or slave. It has been a mystery to Egyptologists why the hieroglyphic for slave was a part of the king's title. The answer is that it is part of an elliptical phrase meaning "servant of Horus".

Harry: How do you know this?

Tom: On the earliest monuments, the "slave" hieroglyph, used as the king's title, was followed by the Horus symbol. So that the king's title was "servant of Horus". In later hieroglyphics this Horus symbol was omitted as understood. Even the great Sir Alan Gardiner was stumped by having the king called a servant and he suggested using the word majesty.

Dick: But it really means a servant of Horus, which is in no way demeaning to a king.

Harry: Like we call our prophets servants of the Lord.

Tom: Exactly. It's also a pun on the name Ham and can also be translated as descendant of Ham.

Harry: But how could Ham be black? Was Noah also black?

Tom: Of course not. But Ham's mother was.

Harry: But then Shem and Japheth would have to be black, which is not so.

Tom: Of course not. But Ham's mother was.

Harry: But then Shem and Japheth would have to be black, which is not so.

Tom: Of course not. The Scripture makes a special point of making it clear that Shem and Japheth had the same mother [8]. Why do you suppose it would make an issue of two brothers having the same mother?

Harry: Because Ham had a different mother?

Tom: Yes, and if Ham was black, what about his children?

Dick: They would have to all be black too, or else Gregor Mendel is in trouble!

Harry: What about the Scripture that says the Canaanites were black. Canaan was Ham's son. Why would it say Canaan was black if his brothers were too?

Tom: This is a point that is universally misunderstood. Who is the ancestor of all the Egyptians?

Dick: I believe you said once that Mizraim is a word that means Egyptians or the land of Egypt, and that Mizraim the son of Ham is the father of all the Egyptians.

Harry: I heard that too.

Tom: That is correct. But what of the Scripture that says that all of the Egyptians were Canaanites [9]?

Harry: That seems to be a contradiction. Canaan was a brother of Mizraim.

Tom: No contradiction at all. The Canaan mentioned in Abraham here is not the son of Ham, but his ancestor.

Harry: How do you know that?

Tom: Enoch prophesied that a people would wipe out the Shumites. Who were these people?

Dick: The people of Canaan [10].

Harry: But this was a prophecy of the future. It could have applied to Canaan the son of Ham.

Tom: Not so. The prophecy was fulfilled in Enoch's own lifetime [11]. Enoch was contemporary with the people of Canaan.

Dick: I guess it's hard for a man to have a people named after him before he's born.

Harry: So Canaan was cursed, but how do we know the curse was a black skin?

Dick: Come on, Harry, it's right in the Scripture: "and there was a blackness come upon all the children of Canaan" [8].

Harry: Hmm. So Ham and all his posterity were black. This is what it means then when it says "From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of Canaan [Ham's mother's ancestor] was preserved in the land."

Dick: This also explains the Hebrews' using the term Canaan to mean any black person.

Tom: That's right. The Syro-Phoenician woman who came to the Savior for help was a black woman, and in another place a she is called a Canaanite.

Harry: It's like we would call a Negro an African regardless of the country in Africa he may have come from.

Tom: It shouldn't have been necessary to go into all this just to show that Ham was black.

Harry: I feel a bit silly.

Tom: No, no. You have highly credentialed company. But let's go on to more important matters.

Harry: Yes, I would like more evidence that the Jaredites were black.

Tom: Have you ever consider the correlation between national origin and occupation?

Harry: You mean, like Japanese gardeners, Belgian textile workers, Chinese laundry men, Swiss watchmakers, and that sort of thing? Hey, if we have to import all our barbers, we're in trouble!

Tom: Ah, but then your name Harry could take on new significance!

Dick: Is there a correlation between the professions and national origin?

Tom: Not if we're talking about small-town occupations. But there is a very distinct ethnic uh, color, that specialized fields take on when we're talking about state of the art. For example, to what do the Russians owe their missile technology?

Dick: Why, their occupation of East Germany, of course.

Harry: You mean all of the V-2 bases were in the eastern part of Nazi Germany?

Tom: That's where their rocket technology was based.

Harry: But what about our own space program?

Tom: Who headed up the US space program after the war and made it what is today?

Harry: Wernher von Braun?

Tom: And where did we get Herr von Braun?

Harry: From Germany.

Tom: And who are the Giants in missile technology today?

Harry: The Americans and the Russians.

Tom: And where did we and the Russians get our rocket technology from?  
Tom: And who are the world leaders in precision machinery?  
Dick: The Swiss.  
Tom: Economists?  
Harry: The Scots, for sure!  
Tom: And acupuncture?  
Harry: The Chinese.  
Dick: I don't believe in acupuncture.  
Tom: I don't either, but you do begin to see a correlation between some fields and a different nations don't you?  
Harry: So what does this have to do with the Jaredites?  
Tom: Who were the shipbuilders of the ancient world?  
Dick: The Egyptians and the Phoenicians.  
Tom: Who were the glassmakers?  
Harry: The Phoenicians.  
Tom: And who were the iron workers?  
Dick: I think the Hittites.  
Tom: And who were the beekeepers?  
Dick: Anybody who wants honey!  
Tom: Yes, that was a sneaky question. But the bee was especially significant to the Egyptians and to the Ethiopians, in their national value system. A beekeeper to the Ethiopians was something like an opera singer to the Italians.  
Harry: A big deal, huh?  
Tom: When the Ethiopians were vassals to the Egyptians, they would even pay their tribute with honey.  
Dick: Why not -- rhymes with money.  
Tom: But what do all these professions have in common?  
Harry: That they were all practiced by the Jaredites?  
Dick: That they were all practiced by the black nations?  
Tom: Exactly.  
Harry: Umm ...  
Dick: Sidon.  
Tom: It shouldn't be necessary to show that cities were traditionally named after their founder, who later became the god of the city, and that the people were called after the name of the founder. Who was Sidon's father?  
Dick: In Genesis 10, he was Canaan's oldest son.  
Harry: The the Sidonians, or Phoenicians, were black.  
Tom: And so were the Philistines, and so was Goliath.  
Dick: Sodom and Gomorrah are listed as black cities too.  
Harry: So the Jaredites got their ironworking technology from the Hitites?  
Tom: Actually, it goes back farther than that. "And Zillah, she also bare Tubal Cain, an instructor of every artificer in glass and iron." [12] It was his niece, by the way, that Noah took as a second wife to preserve Cain's posterity and had Ham. This year's ancient Hebrew tradition, and not scripture. I mention that by way of interest. But you get the idea, anyway, that the technology was kept in the family.  
But let's consider another aspect: physical stature. Is there any correlation between physical stature and race?  
Harry: Of course. Even I will admit that.  
Tom: And when we want tall people, basketball players, what race comes to mind?  
Dick: The Negroes, of course.  
Harry: The Harlem Globetrotters.  
Tom: What is the tallest race in the world today?  
Harry: The Watusis, I would say.  
Tom: Who is the tallest man in recorded history?  
Dick: Genesis says they were giants in those days, but it doesn't give us any shoe sizes.  
Harry: Without stepping on any toes, I think we could say Goliath. He was six cubits and a span, which you say is nine feet six inches.  
Dick: And you already said Goliath was a black man.  
Tom: What we know about the stature of Jaredites?

Dick: That they were large and mighty men.

Tom: And what do we know about the Urim and Thummim that Joseph Smith had?

Dick: You said some time ago that it was so large that a modern person could not look through both lenses at once [13].

Tom: That implies a distance of about 4 inches between lenses. And was this Urim and Thummim a native American Jaredite model or a Hebrew import?

Harry: It was Jaredite.

Dick: Import jobs are always smaller.

Harry: I am convinced that you are convinced that the Jaredites were big black men who did not hold the priesthood. But how could they have been favored of the Lord, as the expression goes, if they were black?

Tom: What is the Lord's criterion for exalting a nation?

Dick: Righteousness exalteth a nation [14].

Harry: Do we have any evidence of the Negroes been blessed by the Lord in Scripture?

Dick: I can answer that one. Abraham 1:26: "Pharaoh, being a righteous man..."

Tom: And was Pharaoh a black man?

Harry: Yes, it's pretty obvious.

Dick: "... being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the priesthood."

Harry: I think you must be the only person on the face of the earth who believes this, but you do make a convincing case of it. Joseph Smith must have known this. Why didn't he say so? I mean that the Jaredites were black and did not hold the priesthood.

Tom: When the church was organized, what were the requirements for membership?

Harry: Basically, that you keep the 10 Commandments and that you can accept the idea of modern revelation.

Tom: You mean there was no Word of Wisdom?

Harry: No, not yet. Not in 1830.

Tom: And no tithing?

Harry: No.

Tom: Why do you suppose the church was initially so easy in its requirements?

Dick: You said before that the Lord has always been willing to subordinate a lesser point in order to gain a greater point, and that the church would never have gotten off the ground if perfection had been demanded from the beginning.

Tom: And why was there polygamy for a season?

Harry: There wasn't any perfection, and the Lord had to grow his own.

Tom: Which, it should be obvious, is no longer necessary.

Harry: There are a few stragglers who don't see it that way, but they don't even have a case.

Tom: What would have happened if all these principles -- that is, the Word of Wisdom, Tithing, etc., had been sprung at once?

Harry: You've answered my question.

Tom: Then I don't need to say anything about what might have happened to the tiny little church coming out with a history of exalted Negroes, even prophets?

Dick: It was hard enough just trying to set them free. I'm afraid the Civil War would have been moved up 30 years, but the outcome would have been different. Nobody would want to defend the church.

Tom: But we have made progress. Now let me ask another question. Why is the federal government pumping millions of dollars into Black Studies programs at universities?

Dick: Trying to establish a black heritage.

Tom: Why was Roots so popular?

Harry: It was a beginning at establishing a black heritage.

Tom: What does the Mormon Church have to offer?

Harry: If you are right about the Jaredites, a black heritage that is second to none. Except for the priesthood, those people had it all!

Dick: And now, even that.

Harry: We're keeping you too long. If you could find another piece of independent evidence about this, I could just about be convinced the Jaredites were black.

Dick: Tell him about the Aztec records!

Tom: I'm afraid I can't say too much about any Aztec records. They were burned by the Spanish invaders. But some years after I had reached this conclusion about the Jaredites, it was naturally interesting to me to come across these pieces of independent information:

"Hernandez [Vicente Hernandez, Spanish missionary, 1480-1543] and Acosta [Jose de Acosta, Spanish missionary and author, 1539?-1600] shared the opinion of their time that the great fossil bones found in Mexico were remains of giants and it was argued that, as before the deluge there were giants on the years, therefore Mexico was peopled from the Old World in antediluvian times." [15]

Dick: Only their timing was off.

Harry: Wow. Jaredite bones.

Tom: But Carlos de Siguenza y Gongorra [1645-1700] must have had access to the Aztec records or traditions, because he "arrived at the curiously definite result that the [original settlers of Mexico] were descended from Naphtuhim, son of Mizraim and grandson of Noah, who left Egypt for Mexico shortly after the confusion of tongues." [16]

Harry: So the Jaredites were from Naphtuhim and therefore black!

Tom: Siguenza would not have known anything about the Jaredites except for what he learned from the Aztecs. This same source admits that the records from which he derived this information were destroyed [17].

Harry: Which would explain why his conclusion has fallen out of favor.

Tom: Josephus admits the Naphtuhim people disappeared [18]. By the way, he provides more evidence on what I said about the black races and their identification with modern nations.

Dick: Tell them what Naphtuhim means.

Tom: Naphtuhim is the plural form of "nephet" which means honey comb. It means the honeycomb people, or in other words, the beekeepers.

Harry: Or in other words, the people of Deseret!

Dick: Tell Harry what you found out about Jaredite technology.

Tom: The Jaredites plot their last civil war with swords. But at one point in their civilization, they were highly advanced. I shall present my evidence next time you come.

Harry: In terms of archaeology, who were the Jaredites?

Tom: The Olmecs. But what really excites me is their technology before 1000 B.C.

Harry: What are you going to do with this information? When will we get to hear more?

Tom: In answer to your first question, nothing publicly. Not till I hear the verdict of the jury on this more trivial point.

Dick: You mean the public's response to your conclusion that the Jaredites were black.

Harry: I wonder how the public will react.

Dick: Or if.

Tom: Who knows? Good night, fellows.

Footnotes

1. Ether 7:4; 8:10; 13:7.
2. Ether 8:17.
3. Ether 14:9.
4. Ether 1:16, 25-26.
5. Genesis 10:15.
6. Burchardt, M. Die Altkanaanäischen Fremdworte und Eigennamen in Aegyptischen. Leipzig, 1909-10. Ether's name is written like this: [hieroglyphs I cannot reproduce here.]
7. Ether 11:19, 23.
8. Moses 8:12.
9. Abraham 1:21-22.
10. Moses 7:7.
11. Moses 7:8, 12.
12. Genesis 4:22.
13. Comprehensive History of the Church 1:105.
14. Proverbs 14:34.
15. Encyclopedia Britannica, ninth edition, 1891, XVI: 206.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Flavius Josephus. Antiquities of the Jews, VI: 2

Item number 6 means: *The old Canaanite loanwords and proper names in Egyptian* (hieroglyphic).