

## THE CURSE OF CANAAN

The Postdiluvian civilization has its origin in Noah's three sons: "These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was populated." (Gen.9:19)

"These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies by their nations and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood." (Gen.10:32)

A special curse was given to one segment of the Postdiluvian population. A curse was willed by Noah upon Ham's youngest son, Canaan: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers." (Gen.9:25).

The national history of the Canaanite family is recorded in Gen.10:15-18 (11 families). Its national territory is described in Gen.10:19. They would be the nations that occupied the Promise Land (Ex.33:2; Joshua 3:10). "By the time of the Conquest the term Canaan signified the territory later called Palestine." (Unger, pg.171)

We will examine our lesson text by the following three homiletical points.

- Gen.9:18-19      Son of Ham                                      Canaan
- Gen.9:20-24      Sin of Ham    Carnality
- Gen.9:25-29      Servitude of youngest son of Ham                      Curse of Canaan

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**This lesson will study FIVE aspects of the Curse of Canaan and how it affected Postdiluvian history.**

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### **1. The sin of Ham, the youngest son of Noah (Gen.9:24) effected the future history of Ham's youngest son, Canaan and his descendants (Gen.10:6).**

Notice that the phrase, "Ham, the father of Canaan," is found twice in our lesson text (Gen.9:18, 22).

It was Noah who pronounced this curse upon Canaan not God (Gen.9:24). It was part of Noah's will to his three sons (Gen.9:24-27). It was a birthright curse upon his inheritance. This is the reason for the use of the phrase, "Ham, the father of Canaan," in our lesson text.

A similar father's curse was pronounced by Jacob upon Reuben for defiling his father's bed (Gen.35:22-23; 49:3-4) [lost of first-born rights]; (1 Chron.5:1) [historical impact].

The curse of servitude was NOT pronounced upon Ham or upon his other sons. It was ONLY pronounced upon Canaan.

### **2. Most biblical scholars believe that the sin of Ham was some incestuous offense against Noah (Gen.9:20-24).**

There are two key Hebrew words in our lesson text that led us to believe this conclusion:

- The first Hebrew word is galah (hithpael impf) [UNCOVERED] – "Became drunk and uncovered himself inside his tent."
- The second Hebrew word is (saw / raah / kal impf: erwah) [NAKEDNESS] – "and Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two older brothers outside." (Gen.9:22)

It says that Noah knew what his youngest son had done (asah / kal pf) (Gen.9:25) and not only **cut Ham out of his will** but pronounced a curse upon Ham's youngest son, Canaan. Therefore, it was something very serious.

Later uncover nakedness becomes a euphemism for incestuous acts in Lev.18:6-18 and Deut.27:20-23. “A summary of the laws against incest (Lev.18:7-18). Penalties for incestuous relations are given in Lev.20.” (NIV, Lev.18:6)

“This is compared to one who makes his neighbor drunk so he can take lewd pleasure from the man’s nakedness.” (NIV, Hab.2:15-16)

### 3. The history of the Canaanites is characterized by sexual perversion.

“Israel was thereby prepared for a life different from the Canaanites, whose life style was deplorably immoral.” (NIV, Lev.18-20).

The phallic cult and child sacrifice were the Canaanites appeals of their religion:

- “Neither shall you give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall your **profane** the name of your God; I am the Lord, you shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an **abomination**. Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a **perversion**.” (Lev.18:21-23; 20:1-5)

Israel was warned against entering into any covenant with the Canaanites especially marriage (Deut.7:1-11; Ex.34:10-17).

### 4. The curse of Canaan declared that Canaanites would be in servitude to all other nations except the Hamitic nations (Gen.10:6-20).

**This was not a curse upon the black race.**

In Hebrew, the name Canaan means submissive one and signifies his role in plan of God.

They were “servant of servants” to the nations of Shem and Japheth (Gen.10:2-5, 22-31).

Solomon will put all of occupants of the land under servitude or forced labor (1 Kings 9:20-22; 2 Chron.8:7-9) “Namely, from the descendents who were left after them in the land whom the sons of Israel had not destroyed, them Solomon raised as forced laborers to this day.” (2 Chron.8:8)

### 5. At the same time as the curse of Canaan, Noah pronounced blessings upon Shem and Japheth.

They received blessings for their reverent behavior in this incident (Gen.9:23). In these two blessings, Shem is given preeminence. “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem” and “Let Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem.”

Shem would carry the messianic genealogy (Gen.11:10-32; Luke 3:34-36; Gal.3:16). The Hebrew word Shem means **name** in English. Shem would bear the name of the messianic seed of the Abrahamic Covenant “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

The prophecy that Gentiles would be included in Christ is declared in “**Let him dwell in the tents of Shem.**” (9:27) “A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.” (Col.3:11)