

## The Curse of Canaan

Genesis 9.25–27

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • April 9, In the year of our Lord, 2014

### **Prelude:**

#### **I. We want to discover why Noah said the following,**

25 Then he said:

“Cursed be Canaan;  
A servant of servants  
He shall be to his brethren.”

26 And he said:

“Blessed be the Lord,  
The God of Shem,  
And may Canaan be his servant.

27 May God enlarge Japheth,  
And may he dwell in the tents of Shem;  
And may Canaan be his servant.”  
(Gen 9.25–27)

#### **II. Did Noah put a curse on Canaan?**

A. Why is Canaan mentioned rather than Ham?

B. If Noah did not put a curse on Canaan, why did Noah mean?

### **Persuasion:**

#### **I. The Context**

A. After the Lord promised not to destroy the world with a flood again,

1. Moses wrote of a certain incident in the life of Noah and his sons, and
2. Moses then said the sons of Noah populated the Earth,

18 Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated (Gen 9.18–19).

- a) Why did Moses mention that Ham as the father of Canaan?
- b) When did Moses write the Book of Genesis?
  - (1) He wrote it during the wilderness wanderings.
  - (2) He brought Israel out of Egypt, and to where were they going?
    - (a) They were headed to the Land of Canaan.
    - (b) Therefore, the land that would be their new home,
      - i) was populated by one of the descendants of Ham.
      - ii) Why had the Canaanites been so corrupt?
        - (1) Moses sets out to show the beginning
        - (2) of the corruption of the canaanites.

B. After the Flood, Noah became a farmer,

20 And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard (Gen 9.20).

C. He made wine and got drunk,

21 Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent (Gen 9.21).

D. See the contrasting ways his sons reacted to his nakedness,

22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. 24 So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him (Gen 9.22–24).

- 1. Note that Moses pointed out that Ham was the father of Canaan.
- 2. When Moses wrote of Shem and Japheth in verse 23,
  - a) he did not mention the descendants of those two sons.
  - b) Why did Moses happen to reveal that Ham was the father of Canaan?

- (1) How does that fit into the narrative?
- (2) Remember what we saw from verse 18.
  - (a) The focus of this part of the story is the Land of Canaan, and
  - (b) the people who lived there as Israel got ready to take the land.
    - i) Someone else lived in the land, but
    - ii) God wanted them removed.
      - (1) Here the Bible begins to explain
      - (2) why they needed removal from the land.

E. Verse 24 says that Noah knew what Ham had done to him.

1. Noah was either aware of it during his drunkenness, or
2. his other sons told him about it.

F. What exactly did Ham do to his father?

1. First, where was Noah when drunk and naked?
  - a) He was in his tent.
  - b) He had not been exposing himself to everyone.
2. Second, what did Ham see?
  - a) He saw his father naked in his tent.
  - b) Does this mean that Ham was where he should not have been, or
    - (1) does it just mean that he saw his father naked in the tent?
    - (2) In other words, obviously there will be various reasons for
      - (a) Ham going into his father's tent,
      - (b) even as we go into our parents's homes, and
        - i) by accident or chance,
        - ii) we see something that we normally would not see.
  3. Third, what did Ham do about it?
    - a) He told his brothers outside.

- b) It must be that he was making fun of his father, and
  - (1) wanted his brothers to see the spectacle
  - (2) of their father naked and drunk.

## II. The Curse of Canaan

A. Why did Noah utter this curse? Or was he uttering a curse?

- 1. Was Canaan involved in some way?
- 2. The fact that Moses noted Ham as the father of Canaan, and
  - a) that Noah spoke of Canaan's cursedness,
  - b) seems to indicate Canaan's involvement.

B. If it does not mean that Canaan was involved,

- 1. then the moral character of Ham
- 2. was picked up by Canaan and his descendants.
  - a) Thus they lived a cursed life, because
  - b) they followed the example of Ham.

C. Noah then spoke in prophecy,

- 1. revealing the general nature of the descendants of his sons,
- 2. focusing primarily upon Canaan, because
  - a) he was the son of Ham,
  - b) who had committed the offense in this incident, and
    - (1) Canaan would follow that example,
    - (2) along with his descendants,
      - (a) only going far beyond what Ham did,
      - (b) becoming grievous sinners in the matter of sexual sins.
        - i) Gen 15.13–16
        - ii) Gen 19.5
        - iii) Lev 18

- c) Also, consider how the tribes of Levi and Simeon were spread throughout Israel because of their father's sin.
  - d) Consider how David's sin against Uriah and with Bathsheba, manifested itself in the lives of his children.
  - e) The descendants lived out what their father's did.
3. Leupold says,

"We render 'Cursed is Canaan' not 'be' (A. V.); and 'servant of servants shall he be,' not in an optative sense *may he be*. The evil trait, displayed by Ham in this story, had, no doubt, been discerned by Noah as marking Canaan, the son, more distinctly. Canaan's whole race will display it more than any of the races of the earth. To foretell that involves no injustice. The son is not punished for the iniquity of the father. His own unfortunate moral depravity, which he himself develops and retains, is foretold" (p. 350).

#### D. What was the curse?

- 1. He would be a servant of servants.
- 2. He would be a servant to his brothers.
- 3. He would be a servant to Shem.
- 4. He would be a servant to Japheth.
  - a) The surviving Canaanites did serve the Israelites, descendants of Shem.
    - (1) Jos 9.23
    - (2) Jos 17.12–13
    - (3) Jdg 1.28
    - (4) 1Ki 9.20–21
  - b) Also, the Carthaginians and the Egyptians who were of Canaan,
    - (1) became servants to others,
    - (2) such as the Romans.

### **Exhortation:**

#### **I. What shall we conclude?**

- A. There is no doubt that Ham had been a righteous man,
- B. otherwise, he would not have survived the Flood.
  - 1. Yet, we wonder whether some of the old world, the pre-flood world
  - 2. had entered the thinking of Ham and influenced him.

**II. At this point in time,**

- A. how many people lived in the world?
- B. It would have been Noah and his wife,
  - 1. their sons and their wives, and then
  - 2. the children that they started to have.
    - a) I asked this because it shows that all of the things that we blame
    - b) for worldliness and sin,
      - (1) no longer existed.
      - (2) Yet, Ham, and later Canaan, still committed sin.

**III. Just like Cain who really had no other influence,**

- A. we can isolate ourselves from everything and everything, but
- B. we will still find a way to sin.