

Lesson 27

The Curse On Canaan

Genesis 9:18-29

I. INTRODUCTION

A. This section is a record of man's depravity. With a whole new world before Noah and his family, Noah falls into sin. This proves that men are sinners (even saved men) and they must walk close to God if there is to be progressive victory over sin.

B. This section is also a record of the various families of the earth. There is just one human race and various family groupings within that race.

II. THE THREE FAMILIES 9:18-19

A. **"And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan."** From Noah's three sons came the various family groupings of the human race. The descendants of Shem are essentially the Semitic people (Jews and the Arabs). The descendants of Ham are the southern nations (Middle East, Egypt, South Arabia, parts of Africa, etc.). The descendants of Japheth are the Indo-Europeans.

B. **"These are the three Sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread."** From these three families the whole earth was populated.

III. THE SIN OF NOAH 9:20-21

A. **"And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard."** We do not know when the incident took place after the flood but there had to be ample time for Noah to grow a vineyard that would produce grapes, which takes from 3 to 5 years.

B. **"And he drank of the wine and was drunken"** Noah produces wine and gets stone drunk. There are two schools of thought on Noah's drunkenness:

1. Some excuse his drunken state because of ignorance. These scholars suggest that before the Flood, due to the water canopy that surrounded the earth, there were different climatic conditions. Therefore there was no fermentation of any kind, for there was no exposing of any food to direct sunlight. When Noah made wine, he did not know it would make him intoxicated. He became drunk out of ignorance, and, furthermore, God never reprimands Noah for this act.

2. Most scholars agree that Noah was guilty of over-indulgence in wine and lost control of himself through drunkenness. NOTE. Drunkenness is always called sin in Scripture. Noah who had found grace in God's eyes (Gen. 6:8) and who had been found to be the only upright one in his age (Gen. 7:1), fell into sin. This shows us that even the best of God's saints are capable of sin if they are not walking close to the Lord.

C. **"And he was uncovered within his tent."** Noah's drunkenness led to lack of concern about modesty, for alcohol always lowers one's resistance to right and wrong. Noah probably felt warm because of the affect of the wine, took off his clothes and fell asleep in his tent; that is, he passed out.

IV. THE SIN OF HAM 9:22-23

A. **“And Ham, the Father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.”** Ham is guilty of some kind of sexual sin against his father, whether it be in act or thought is not recorded. In Leviticus 18, the words “to see the nakedness” is an expression for a sexual act. Some have suggested an act of homosexuality while others think that Ham was guilty only of bad sexual thoughts toward Noah and made fun of this to his brothers. NOTE. Notice the repetition of the words “The father of Canaan.” This indicates that the curse on Canaan was given to stress the source and character of this sin. The emphasis is upon Canaan.

B. **“And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both of their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father’s nakedness.”** The other two brothers had nothing to do with this sin and refused to look upon their father’s nakedness.

V. THE CURSE ON CANAAN 9:24-27

A. **“And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.”** There were either physical marks to show sexual perversion, or the other brothers of Ham related the message to their father.

B. **“And he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.’”** This curse was pronounced on Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, and his progeny, not on Ham himself (Gen. 10:15-19). Canaan would be placed under the greatest possible servitude and would be a slave to Shem and Japheth. This is a prophetic curse and has its fulfillment in history.

1. Did God Curse Canaan? It was Ham who sinned and not Canaan. Why then does God curse Canaan? There is no easy solution to this problem but there are several suggestions. First, perhaps Canaan was involved in this sexual perversion with Ham even though it is not recorded. Second, some have thought that God cursed the youngest son of Ham because Ham was the youngest son of Noah, but this makes God arbitrarily putting a curse on Canaan without Canaan being involved. Third, and perhaps the more satisfactory explanation is that the licentious ways of Ham were also obvious traits in his son Canaan, Noah knew that Ham’s tolerance of perversion, his delight in it, was also in seed form in Canaan. Thus, guided by divine wisdom he unerringly curses Canaan. NOTE: The saying, “Like father, like son,” becomes apparent in Ham and Canaan. Sexual perversion in this case was definitely related with parental influence and perhaps there is a genetic connection. POINT: Psychologists, who have made a study of homosexuality, say that most homosexuals come from homes where there is a distorted parental influence. Usually a dominant mother and a weak father produces a homosexual son, or the opposite produces a lesbian daughter.

2. How Was This Curse Fulfilled in History? According to Genesis 10:15-19, the Canaanites settled in the area which is now Palestine. These Canaanite tribes were all conquered when Israel entered the land, bringing fulfillment of the curse. In that sense, Canaan finally became the servant of Shem as predicted in 9:26. Furthermore, the Phoenicians, who were descendants of Canaan through Sidon, were ultimately overcome by the Japhetic Greeks and Romans. This curse was temporary and fulfilled thousands of years ago. NOTE. Archeological discoveries have definitely shown that the Canaanite religions were debauched and corrupt. Their idolatry was a worship of the gods El and Baal; they practiced human sacrifice and all their religion was centered around sexual perversion, which had its origin with Ham and Canaan.

3. Why Was the Case of Canaan’s Curse Recorded? At the time God gave this revelation to Moses, the children of Israel were wandering in the desert preparing someday to go into the Promised Land, which at that time was the land of the Canaanites. What an encouragement this must have been to the Israelites to know that Canaan’s descendants would be their slaves,

4. Is the Curse Related to the Negro Race? Absolutely not! This curse fell on Canaan, not Ham. Three of Ham's other sons were absolutely free of the curse and none of their offspring settled in Africa. The Canaanites settled in what is now the area of Palestine. Archeology has shown that 94% of the Hamites were white and 6% black. NOTE: People who think that the Hamites are to be slaves are filled with race hatred and are guilty of very poor exegesis of Scripture.

C. **“And he said, ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.’”** Noah pronounces special spiritual blessings for the Shemites and relates them to *Jehovah Eloheim*. The spiritual Shemites are the Jews, the instrument that God used for thousands of years to be His message to the world. Also the Jews were the ones through whom the Messiah came. NOTE. The Shemites, whether Jews or Arabs, are very religious people. It is interesting to note that the three great religions of the world are from the Semitic family: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. NOTE. This prophecy was literally fulfilled when Joshua and the Israelite armies conquered Canaan and its tribes, making that area the home of the Jews.

D. **“God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”** Japheth was promised enlargement. The Japhetic peoples are primarily those of the Indo-European family. The entire western world has been settled by Japhetic people, and, if one considers the Chinese as well as the Indians of Japhetic stock then most of the far east has been settled by these people. NOTE: Perhaps this prophecy is also spiritual in nature and refers to the great influx of Japhetic peoples who would follow the one true God and His Messiah, Jesus Christ. After all, up to this point in history, the Japhetic family has been the greatest recipient of the gospel of Christ. NOTE: This prophecy was literally fulfilled when the few remaining descendants of Canaan were conquered by the Greek and Roman armies, who were Japhetic in stock.

VI. THE DEATH OF NOAH (9:28-29). “And he died” tells us that even the great men of God have to die, but God will raise up others to follow. Yet, death for the saint means that he goes to be with his Lord.