

## Why Was Canaan Cursed?

Opening Text: **Genesis 9:18-27**

### I. Introduction

A. Today's sermons is prompted by a question after last weeks sermon.

1. I taught on Exodus 17:8-16 last week, and in the midst of that teaching dealt with who the Amalekites were, briefly.

2. Lets review that a little bit by going to **Exodus 17:8-9, 14-16**. In this text we see that Yahweh certainly did not deal with the Amalekites in the same way that He dealt with the Israelites. One group (Israel) was His chosen people, and the other group (Amalek) was not His chosen people. Couple this with **Deuteronomy 25:17-19**.

B. Who were the Amalekites?

1. We begin by going to **Genesis 10:6, 15-18**. Heth is where the Hittites sprang, literally Hethites. We see in the text of Genesis 10 that Hittites were Canaanites, meaning descendants of Ham's son Canaan.

2. Next we go to **Genesis 24:1-4** and then **Genesis 26:34-35**. So here in Genesis 26 we see that the first two wives of Esau were Hittite/Canaanite women.

3. We then go to **Genesis 36:12** and learn that Amalek was Esau's grandson born to his son Eliphaz and his concubine Timnah. Eliphaz was Esau's son through a Hittite/Canaanite wife (**Genesis 36:1-2, 4a**).

C. So the Amalekites were descendants of Ham's son Canaan.

1. I had mentioned in last weeks message that Canaan was cursed back in Genesis 9, and I did not have time to go into why in that sermon.

2. I have explained to some people here in the congregation in private Bible study why I believe Canaan was cursed, but I'd like to explain it in more detail and put it into a sermon today seeing that I had some questions raised from my mentioning it last week.

### II. Genesis 9:18-27

#### A. Verses 18-19

1. Here we learn that Noah had three sons with him on the ark. **Genesis 7:13** as well as 1 Peter 3:20 teaches us that of the family of Noah (or descendants of Adam) there were a total of 8 souls or Adamite souls upon the ark.
2. Notice in **Genesis 9:18** at the end the text is specific to note that "Ham is the father of Canaan." I have to ask here have you ever thought "Why?" Why is Ham singled out to be the father of Canaan in this verse? I mean, when we continue to read in Genesis we learn that Shem and Yapheth fathered sons as well. We even see that Ham had other sons too in **Genesis 10:6**, yet he is singled out to be the father of Canaan in Genesis 9:18.
3. Before moving on, Genesis 9:19 teaches us that the whole earth was overspread (in the context of descendants of Adam) by these three sons of Noah. This does not mean (and I guess this is for another lesson) that no other people group existed upon the earth, nor does it mean that Noah's sons were the only people to overspread the earth. All we learn from this text is that from the descendants of Noah (or more precisely from Adam) the earth was overspread by these three sons: Shem, Ham, and Yepheth.

#### B. Verses 20-21

1. "Husbandman" in verse 20 is literally "iysh adamah."
  - a. YLT translates this "man of the ground" which is quite literal.
  - b. Wycliffe's old English translation states "earth tiller."
  - c. The World English Bible translates it "farmer."
  - d. The point is that after Noah exited the ark he began to work the ground, and one of the first things he accomplished was the planting of the vineyard.
  - e. Recognize that although we read the verses here quickly, this process didn't happen overnight. Noah would have had to plant the vineyard and the coming of the grapes would have had to happen after the vineyard was established. So we literally have YEARS taking place within verses 20-21.
2. We see in verse 21 that Noah then drank of the wine of his vineyard and became drunk with the wine.
  - a. We see here obviously that wine in OT times was intoxicating. Often times when you mention to people today that righteous people in ancient Biblical times drank wine they reply, "Well, the

wine back then wasn't like the wine today." Well... Noah was able to become drunk off the wine he made.

b. The word drunken here is the Hebrew word *shakar* which is defined by Hebrew lexicons as "To become tipsy, to satiate with a stimulating drink." It is often used in contexts of drunkenness.

c. Now, this is not to say that Noah should have become drunken. I point this out to show that the wine as far back as Genesis 9 was intoxicating. This doesn't mean that Noah should have went overboard with his wine. Wine is permissible biblically, but it is to be done in moderation and decency. It should not be overdone to the point of drunkenness. Noah had too much *yayin* in this instance.

3. Finally, verse 21 tells us that he was uncovered inside his tent.

a. This sentence has led many to believe that what happened next was the mere visualization of Noah's personal nakedness.

b. I can see how people arrive at that conclusion from this sentence, but I believe a deeper study of the text is in order.

c. I do not believe when it says "he was uncovered within his tent" has to do with Noah's personal nakedness. I'll explain shortly.

### C. Verse 22-23

1. Notice again first off that Ham is mentioned as being the father of Canaan. This is second time the immediate context has mentioned this (cf. Gen. 9:18) in spite of the fact that Ham is said to have fathered Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan.

2. Next it says that he "saw the nakedness of his father" and then told his two brothers.

3. When then read that Shem and Yepheth took a garment and walked into where Ham had been and "covered the nakedness of their father. The text ends by saying that they did not see their father's nakedness.

4. I believe what is taking place here is the Hebrew idiomatic way of saying that Ham actually laid with his mother or father's wife. At first this might seem strange, but we need to understand that all languages contain idiom's and they always seem strange to people that speak a different language or live in a different culture. ("in a pickle," "mad about my flat," "I have the cockroach," etc.)

5. Look with me to **Leviticus 18:6-8**. Now look with me to **Leviticus 20:11**. Both texts speak of lying with your father's wife as "uncovering your father's nakedness." This was an idiomatic way of a man committing the grievous sin of laying intimately with his father's wife. (Also **Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20**.)

6. We might wonder in our minds that if this is what Ham did then why was he not put to death? Our answer may lie in realizing that the death penalty had yet to be as fully established as it would later become. Even Cain who killed Abel was not put to death.

7. Now, I believe this is the interpretation of "seeing the nakedness of his father" not only because of the texts in Leviticus but also what we read next in Genesis.

#### D. Verses 24-26

1. Noah woke up from being drunken and he knew what had happened.

2. What are the first words out of Noah's mouth? He says cursed be Canaan, and here we have Canaan mentioned again. Ham has already said to be the father of Canaan twice (vss. 18, 22) and now Noah is pronouncing a curse upon Canaan.

3. Just as I asked why is Ham called the father of Canaan in this text (as opposed to Cush, Mizraim, and Phut), I have to now ask why Noah pronounces a curse upon Canaan and not Cush, Mizraim, and Phut?

4. Contextually, I believe the reason Canaan was cursed is because Canaan was the offspring that came forth from the relationship that Ham had with the wife of Noah, his mother. Ham's "uncovering his father's nakedness" i.e. lying with his own mother was an incestuous relationship that resulted in offspring. Canaan was the offspring from that sexual immorality, and Noah prophetically pronounced a curse upon this child.

5. Notice in verse 6 that Noah says blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Shem, and then Noah mentions that Canaan will be a servant to Shem.

a. Take note also that of the three sons of Noah, only Shem is spoke of in this way.

b. Noah does that say that Yahweh is the Elohim of either Yepheth or Ham. In Genesis 11:10-32 we follow Shem's lineage and in the end we see that from Shem eventually came Abram who's name was later changed to Abraham.

### E. Verse 27

1. This verse tells us that Elohim will enlarge Yepheth.
  - a. It is interesting to note that the name Yepheth actually means "expansion."
  - b. The enlarging of Yepheth is in reference to his territory.
2. The "he" that shall dwell in the tents of Shem is debated. Some believe it is a reference to Yepheth while others believe it is a reference back to Elohim. When correctly identifying the Yephethites as well as the Shemites, I believe the "he" referenced in vs. 27 is Yahweh.
3. Notice at the end that Canaan is again said to be a servant. Probably a reiteration that Canaan will be a servant to Shem.

### III. Conclusion

- A. The Amalekites of Exodus 17:8-16 were the descendants of Esau through his relationship with a Hittite/Canaanite wife.
- B. The Canaanites were a cursed people. Not all of Ham's descendants were cursed. We even see two of the tribes of Israel being born from an Israelite father and Egyptian mother (**Genesis 41:45, 50-52**). The Egyptians are actually Mizraimites, descendants of Ham's son Mizraim. (Egypt is #4714 SEC Mizraim.) We get the word Egypt from the Greek and not from the Hebrew. The two words are likely unrelated.
- C. The Canaanites were cursed prophetically by Noah. I believe the context of Genesis 9 indicates that Ham committed sexual immorality with his mother and the offspring of that was Canaan. The Canaanites all through Scripture were a cursed people. Their name even means "humiliated." Thus the derogatory references to Amalek we read at the beginning of the sermon.