

THE SO-CALLED CURSE OF HAM

Text: Genesis 9:20-27

INTRO: Most Bible scholars agree that most or all of Africa & much of Asia were settled by the descendants of Ham. The table of nations in Gen. 10 would seem to confirm this.

"The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put & Canaan" (Gen. 10:6). The descendants of Cush settled Ethiopia (& perhaps India). The descendants of Mizraim settled Egypt & most of northern Africa. The descendants of Put settled Libya & other areas. The descendants of Canaan settled the area of Palestine, initially known as the land of Canaan.

NOTE: Some individuals who are racially prejudiced use Gen. 9:2 in an attempt to justify mistreatment of people who possess a darker skin than themselves.

One fact ignored by many casual Bible students is that the so-called curse of Ham was not a curse on Ham at all--but a curse on Canaan, one of Ham's 4 sons. The curse never applied to Ham's other 3 sons or their descendants.

READ GENESIS 10:15-19.

Another helpful hint. Moses wrote the book of Genesis 1,000 years after this curse was pronounced. He wrote it primarily for the Hebrew nation. We need to ask, **WHAT WAS THEIR INTEREST IN CANAAN?** And to answer, we look thru Moses' writings for clues to the importance of this subject to the early Hebrew people.

I. GOD PROMISED TO ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS THE LAND OF CANAAN, Gen. 12:5-7; 15:13-16, 18, ff.

A. That promise was later spoken to Abraham's grandson, Jacob. Gen. 28:13.

B. When it came time for the Hebrew people to leave Egypt, God renewed the promise to Moses.

READ EXODUS 3:7-8, 17; 33:1-2

C. As Moses' life drew to a close, the Hebrews were on the verge of receiving that promised land.

READ DEUT. 31:7; 32:48-52; 34:1-6

II. NOW, LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CURSE.

A. Canaan would be a servant to his brothers, Cush, Mizraim and Put.

NOTE: The expression "servant of servants" is the Hebrew way of expressing the superlative degree of servitude. Eg., Nebuchadnezzar was a king of kings (Dan 2:37) , Song of Solomon, a song of songs (1:1).

B. Canaan's servitude to his brothers was fulfilled in 4 world empires.

1. Babel (Cush), Gen. 11:1-6; 10:10
2. Egypt (Mizraim)
3. Assyria. NOTE: Assyria was named after Ashur, a descendant of Shem -- but Nineveh, its capital city was founded by Nimrod & colonized by other Cushites, so the Assyrians were probably a mixture of the blood lines of Shem & Cush.
4. Babylon (Cush). Gen. 10:10.

C. Canaan would be Shem's servant, Gen. 9:26.

1. This was fulfilled by the conquering of the land of Canaan by the Hebrews under Joshua.

And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day & have become forced laborers. (Josh. 16:10).

And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out. (Josh. 17:13).

2. This relationship in which Canaan served the descendants of Shem continued thru the time of Solomon & beyond, 1 Kings 9:20-21.

C. Japeth would dwell in Shem's tents & be served by Canaan, Gen. 9:27. Fulfilled in 3 world empires.

Medo-Persia, Greece & Rome, all in succession conquered the land of Canaan & dwelled in the tents of Shem. To all of them to one extent or another, the descendants of Canaan were brought into bondage.

Wycliffe Bible Encl.: "With the defeat of Tyre by Nebucahdnezzar in 572 B.C., the Canaanites/Phoenicians ceased to be of importance in Biblical history." (pg. 297).

CONCLUSION: The curse upon Canaan (not Ham) was fulfilled during O.T. times & has no bearing on us or anyone else in the world today. The basic purpose for which this prophecy was recorded was to inform & assure the ancient Hebrews that God was going to bless them & give them the land that at that time was being occupied by the Canaanites. The prophecy has absolutely nothing to do with race relations or other such matters today. Through Christ, God wants to bless all races & nations & families & individuals today. Acts 10:34-35. READ GAL 3:26-29.

La Porte, TX, November 4, 1979

Exton, PA, April 16, 1989

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, February 28, 1993

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, January 24, 1999

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, January 1, 2006