

**PROFITABLY UNDERSTANDING TRAGICALLY MISINTERPRETED BIBLE PASSAGES**  
**Part II: Understanding The Curse On Ham's Son That Has Been Errantly Applied To African Peoples**  
**(Genesis 9:20-27)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. A tragic but too-common misconception that has existed among pro slavery advocates (cf. H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, vol. I, p. 349) is the view that Noah's curse that the son of Ham would be "a servant of servants" to his brethren implies God meant for African peoples to be subject to Caucasians!
- B. This dreadfully errant misconception arose from misunderstanding what the text itself teaches, let alone just **WHICH** party bore the curse of Ham (as follows):

**II. Understanding The Curse On Ham's Son That Has Been Errantly Applied To African Peoples.**

- A. Noah's curse in reference to the sin of his son, Ham for disrespectfully gazing on Noah's nakedness was applied to **Ham's son, Canaan**, and **not to Ham himself**, cf. Genesis 9:20-22, 24-26.
- B. In effect, for dishonoring his father, Noah, in disrespectfully gazing on Noah's nakedness, Ham was punished with his son, Canaan coming to dishonor him, Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to Gen . 9:25.
- C. Now, though this curse involved Canaan's becoming a "servant of servants" to his brethren, evidence abounds that Canaan was **not** the father of **African** people groups (as follows):
  - 1. The table of nations at Genesis 10:15-20 reveals the Canaanites comprised the ancient Phoenicians (Sidon), [at least some of the early] Hittites (Heth) who lived in Canaan and north up towards modern Turkey, and the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgasites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites who lived in the Land of Canaan between Phoenicia and Gaza, then east toward Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Lasha, Genesis. 10:15-20.
  - 2. In other words, these are the peoples who "settled in Lebanon, Hamath on the Orontes River, and all through the land" of **Canaan** that God later gave to Abraham and his seed, cf. Genesis 15:18-21. This was **NOT** the land of AFRICA of black-skinned peoples, but of those who lived in what later became the Holy Land and who were later defeated in battle by the sons of Israel! (Joshua 1:3-4)
  - 3. Now, it is a fact that some of the descendants of Canaan's **brothers** through his father, Ham were those who fathered various black-skinned African people groups:
    - a. Ham produced four sons who were named Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Canaan, cf. Genesis 10:6.
    - b. Mizraim is the ancient name for Egypt, and tribes of this man's line settled "from North Africa to Crete," cf. Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 43 (in citing Genesis 10:13-14).
    - c. The Cushites included black-skinned people from Upper (southern) Egypt (Z.P.E.B., Vol. One, p. 1047-1048), for Jeremiah 13:23 takes special note of the "Ethiopian" (literally, Cushite, cf. *kushi*, Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 730) who was no more able to change his skin than the leopard its spots.
  - 4. However, as the curse of Noah applied to Ham's **one** son, **Canaan, and not to the OTHER sons of Ham**, and as Canaan was to be a "servant of servants . . . unto his brethren" (Genesis 9:25), the seed of Canaan was to serve Ham's other descendants, including the black-skinned Cushites and perhaps some black-skinned offspring of Ham's son, Mizraim (if he indeed produced any black-skinned peoples)!
- D. Also, "The Canaanites long ago became extinct"; "The curse [of Noah applied to Ham upon his son, Canaan] cannot be applied to anyone today." (Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Genesis 9:25; brackets ours)

***Lesson:*** *It is dreadfully wrong to conclude the curse Noah placed on Ham's son, Canaan meant God planned for dark skinned African peoples to function as slaves to whites: (a) The curse of Noah upon Ham was applied only to Ham's son, Canaan, who fathered the peoples who dwelt in the Promised Land that God later had Joshua displace. (b) It is true that Ham's other descendants through his other sons, Cush and possibly some descendants of Mizraim fathered the black African people groups, but these were NOT under Noah's curse, but would have DOMINATED CANAAN'S cursed line! (c) The Canaanites have long ceased to be a people, so Noah's curse is not applicable to anyone today anyway!*

***Application:*** *(1) May we honor all men, regardless of race, ethnicity or gender, cf. 1 Peter 2:17. (2) May we love all men, regardless of race, ethnicity or gender, Romans 13:8. (3) May we disciple all nations, not neglecting African people groups as Acts 8:26-29 so eloquently examples for us!*