

CURSE OF HAM  
GENESIS 9:25

PREFACE

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## PREFACE

The Purpose of this paper is to determine the correct interpretation of Gen. 9:25. This particular verse was chosen because of the present day controversy concerning this perplexing problem. It was felt that through the writing of this paper the writer might, in some degree at least, solve this problem. It was through the study of this verse, together with relating verses, that the writer realized the importance of the Old Testament teaching concerning the curse of Noah. The writer also has been made to realize the tremendous implications of how God used Noah to foretell the future course of the world's races.

The writer wishes to express his appreciation and thanks to Prof. John C. Whitcomb, faculty advisor, for the efficient help he has given in the preparation of this paper. Appreciation is expressed also to the faculty of Grace Theological Seminary for the instruction received from the various classes.



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## INTRODUCTION

The choice of this text for critical investigation was stimulated by the apparent lack of study by scholars on this subject as well as the various interpretations rendered by the scholars who had investigated this field. Because of my interest in this problem, and because of the segregation issue which is prevalent at this time, I have accepted this verse. The writer believes he has arrived at a solution which is both historically and prophetically tenable. It has been a personal blessing to study this subject which embraces the entire ethnical relationships of the different races and how God beforehand made it known.

Since there are many problems which arise when the vast subject of ethnical relationships is considered, the discussion will be limited to a study of the fulfillment of Noah's curse on Canaan with the exclusion of Noah's blessing on Shem and Japheth except where it is necessary to substantiate the writer's views on the curse of Canaan.

All Scripture quotations found in the text of this paper are from the American Standard Version, 1901.



According to Biblia Hebraica, third edition,  
edited by Rudolf Kittel

וַיֵּאָכֵל  
אֶרְוֹר כְּנָעַן  
יְהִי לְאִתָּן

Variant reading: Arabic version - Ham for Canaan

A reading which seems, in the opinion of some commentators, to be required by the rhythm, no less than the tenor of the context; but which is not supported by sufficient MS authority.

SEPTUAGINT TEXT

According to Septuaginta, edited by Alfred Rahlfs

Καὶ εἶπεν

Ἐπικατάρατος Χαναὰν

Παῖς οἴκετης ἔσται τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ.



## ENGLISH VERSIONS

### King James Version, 1611

And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

### Moffatt's Bible 1913

"A curse on Canaan! May he be a slave and thrall to his brothers!"

### The American Bible, 1931

he said, "Cursed be Canaan! The meanest of slaves shall he be to his brothers."

### Revised Standard Version, 1952

he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers."

## ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

"Cursed be Canaan;

A servant of servants shall he be unto his  
brethren."

These words, as uttered by Noah concerning this curse, have had far-reaching effect upon the entire ethnic relationships in the world. Because of these effects, it is necessary to know the background which was the setting and cause for this curse on Noah.

The Scriptures tell us that Noah was selected of God and used of God to preserve a remnant of people through the great deluge of God's judgment upon the earth. Until the time of the flood, there is not much that we know concerning the family of Noah; in fact, until the time of Noah's curse, we know virtually nothing concerning the character of the sons of Noah. After the flood waters had subsided, Noah built an altar and offered a sacrifice of every clean bird and beast to God for their deliverance. God's reply was not to Noah alone but also to his sons (Gen. 9:25 "and God blessed Noah and his sons") in the sense that His covenant would be to all the families of the earth which in itself does not signify any differences in the person-



alities or characters of the sons in order to be a recipient of the blessing. Indeed, the character of the sons was not revealed until Gen. 9:22ff.

Two events in Noah's life of world-wide importance are recorded as having occurred after the flood: his sacrifice with the divine promise which followed it (Gen. 8:20 and 9:17) and the prophetic curse and blessing pronounced upon his sons (Gen. 9:18-29).<sup>1</sup>

Next we are told, "And Noah began to be a husbandman, and planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken: and he was uncovered within his tent." (Gen. 9:20, 21).

There have been various interpretations concerning this text, but we will mention only the one which we believe to be the true one. Since this critical monograph does not deal with this particular verse, the discussion will, therefore, be limited.

We believe that Keil and Delitzsch are correct when they say:

As **נִחַם וְשָׂדֵה** cannot be the predicate of the sentence, on account of the article but must be in apposition to Noah, **וַיִּנְחֵם** and **וַיִּשְׂדֶּה** must be combined in the sense of "began to plant". The writer does not mean to affirm that Noah resumed his agriculture operations after the flood, but that as husbandman he began

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<sup>1</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Vol. I of The Pentateuch, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. James Martin, B. A., (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885) p. 150

to cultivate the vine; because it was this which also furnished the occasion for the manifestation of that diversity in the character of his sons, that this which was so eventful in the consequences in relation to the future history of their descendants. In ignorance of the firey nature of wine, Noah drank and was drunken and uncovered himself in his tent. (v 21)<sup>2</sup>

To argue whether Noah was guilty of sin in being drunken is not to be considered in any detail in this critical monograph apart from mentioning the fact that "a defense of Noah on account of his drunkenness is entirely cut off." Against such a defence Luther expressed himself in very strong terms:

"They," says he, "who would defend the Patriarch in this, wantonly reject the consolation which the Holy Ghost considered to be necessary to the Church - the consolation, namely, that even the greatest saints may, at times, stumble and fall."<sup>3</sup>

Hengstenberg in a footnote quotes Calvin as follows:

The object of this event, as pointed out by Calvin, viz, that God intended to give to all coming ages, in the person of Noah, a warning and an exhortation to temperance, would likewise be frustrated by this unwarrantable apology.<sup>4</sup>

Even as David was reprov'd in 2 Sam. 12:14 for giving an opportunity to the enemies of God to blaspheme,

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>E. W. Hengstenberg, Christology of the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids: Krebel Publications, reprinted 1956), I, 30.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



we find Noah setting an earlier example and so could also have been reprov'd. However, we must remember that this is supposition. God does use Noah to set forth, in the form of a curse, a great prophecy.

The purpose of this paper is to explain the curse as well as to whom the curse is applied.

#### STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

The major problem.--What is meant by, "A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren"?

The minor problem.--Why was Canaan cursed instead of Ham?



## VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

Major Problem: What is Meant by "servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren"?

### The Limited Servitude View

By the term "Limited Servitude" we mean limited as to the extent of the service which was imposed as compared to a servant and a slave. Lange states the view well as follows:

A servant of servants; that is, the lowest of servants. If the language had had in view already the later extermination of the Canaanites, it must have had a different style. The form of the expression, therefore, testifies to the age of the prophecy. We must also bear in mind, that the relation of servant in this case denotes no absolute relation in the curse, or any developed slave relation, any more than the relation of service which was imposed upon Esau in respect to Jacob. There even lies in it a hidden blessing. The common natures must, of themselves, take a position of inferiority; through subordination to the nobler character are they saved, in the discipline and cultivation of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Peter Lange, Genesis, trans. Tayler Lewis and A. Gosman; A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, trans. Philip Schaff (6th ed. rev.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), I O. T., 337

## The Unlimited Servitude View

This view which is held by many interprets the curse of Noah to be complete slavery which was imposed on the seed of Canaan. This view is ably put forth by Keil and Delitzsch as follows:

The Canaanites were partly exterminated and partly subjected to the lowest form of slavery by the Israelites who belonged to the family of Shem; and those who still remained were reduced by Solomon to the same condition. (I Kings 9:20, 21)<sup>2</sup>

This view of Unlimited Servitude is also held by Murphy who incorporates in this view the ones to whom the servants will be in servitude as well as also making the race of Ham the recipient of the curse.

It is a historical fact that the degradation of slavery has fallen especially upon the race of Ham. A portion of the Kanaanites became bondsmen among the Israelites, who were of the race of Shem. The early Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, and Egyptians who all belonged to the race of Ham, were subjugated by the Assyrians, who were Shemites, the Persians, the Macedonians, and the Romans, who were all Japhethites. And in modern times it is well known that most of the nations of Europe traded in African slaves.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 158

<sup>3</sup>Murphy, as cited by T. H. Leale, Homiletical Commentary on the Book of Genesis, (New York, Funk & Wagnalls Co. 1892) p. 186



This view is also held by Clarke,<sup>4</sup> Oehler,<sup>5</sup> Pink,<sup>6</sup> Newell,<sup>7</sup> Jenks & Warne.<sup>8</sup>

The curse is continuous in generations until the coming of Christ. The holders of this view are of different opinions concerning the extent of the curse. Some hold the Limited Servitude view and the Unlimited Servitude view. In any case, by necessity, they hold one or the other.

One of the chief exponents of this view is Skinner.

The dominant feature is the curse on Canaan, which not only stands first, but is repeated in the blessings on the two brothers. The descendants of Canaan are doomed to perpetual enslavement to the other two branches of the human family.<sup>9</sup>

The ethnic relationship of those cursed in the generations is set forth by Thomas Scott:

The whole continent of Africa was peopled principally by the descendants of Ham: 'and for many ages have the better parts' of that country lain under the dominion of the 'Romans, then of the Saracens, and now of 'the Turks! That wickedness, ignorance, barbarity, slavery, misery, live next of the innocent! See the poor negroes, how many 'hundreds every year are sold and bought, like 'beasts at the market, and conveyed from one 'quarter

<sup>4</sup>Adam Clarke, The Holy Bible (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, n.d.) I, 83

<sup>5</sup>Gustave Friedrich Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament trans. George E. Day (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, n.d.) p. 162

<sup>6</sup>Arthur W. Pink, Gleanings in Genesis (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.) I, p. 125

<sup>7</sup>William R. Newell, Old Testament Studies (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.) I, 32

<sup>8</sup>William Jenks and Joseph A. Warne (eds.), The Comprehensive Commentary on the Holy Bible (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1849), I, 62

## Perpetual View

This view holds that the curse is continuous in all Generations until the coming of Christ. The holders of this view are of different opinions concerning the Limited Servitude view and the Unlimited Servitude view but of necessity, they hold one or the other.

One of the chief exponents of this view is Skinner.

The dominant feature is the curse on Canaan, which not only stands first, but is repeated in the blessings on the two brothers. The descendants of Canaan are doomed to perpetual enslavement to the other two branches of the human family.<sup>9</sup>

The ethnic relationship of those cursed in the past generations is set forth by Thomas Scott:

The whole continent of Africa was peopled principally by the descendants of Ham: 'and for how many ages have the better parts' of that country lain under the dominion of the 'Romans, and then of the Saracen, and now of 'the Turks! In that wickedness, ignorance, 'barbarity, slavery, misery, live most of the inhabitants! and of the poor negroes, how many 'hundreds every year are sold and bought, like 'beasts in the market; and conveyed from one 'quarter of the world to do the work of beasts 'in another!'<sup>10</sup>

Thomas expands this view still more: "In a still wider sense the descendants of Ham in Africa have for

<sup>9</sup>John Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis The International Critical Commentary, eds. Samuel Rolles Driver, Alfred Plummer and Charles Augustus Briggs (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917) p. 184

<sup>10</sup>Newton as cited by Thomas Scott, The Holy Bible (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong and Crocker & Brewster, 1830), I, 60



centuries been slaves of the Japhetic races."<sup>11</sup>

Others who hold this view are: Sauer,<sup>12</sup> Robinson,<sup>13</sup> Gray,<sup>14</sup> Gray and Adams.<sup>15</sup>

As in the case of the Perpetual View, the holders of this view are of different opinions concerning the Limited Servitude View and the Unlimited Servitude View, of necessity, they hold one or the other.

E. Volck, who holds this view, says as follows:

History fulfilled the words of the patriarch: Canaan was reaped out by Israel; the Persians, Macedonians, and Romans of Japheth's race oppressed the Phoenicians of Canaan's progeny.<sup>16</sup>

Other holders of this view are as follows:

Wardsworth,<sup>17</sup> and Murphy.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup>W. H. Griffith Thomas, Genesis I.-XXV.10, A Devotional Commentary (London: The Religious Tract Society, n.d.), p. 120.

<sup>12</sup>Erich Sauer, The Dawn of World Redemption, trans. G. H. Lang, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 1952), p. 75.

<sup>13</sup>Theodore H. Robinson, "Genesis," The Abingdon Bible Commentary, eds. Frederick Carl Eiselen, Edwin Lewis and David G. Downey (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1929), p. 227.

<sup>14</sup>James Comper Gray, The Biblical Encyclopedia and Museum on the Holy Scriptures, (Hartford, Conn.: The S. S. Scranton Co., 1900) I, 37.

<sup>15</sup>James Comper Gray and George M. Adams, Gray and Adams Bible Commentary, (Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House - quotes Alfred, p. 37

### The Fulfillment View

The Fulfillment View holds that the curse of Noah has already been completed or fulfilled in past history. As in the case of the Perpetual View, the holders of this view are of different opinions concerning the Limited Servitude View and the Unlimited Servitude View but, of necessity, they hold one or the other.

W. Volck, who holds this view, says as follows:

History fulfilled the words of the patriarch: Canaan was rooted out by Israel; the Persians, Macedonians, and Romans of Japheth's race conquered the Phoenicians of Canaan's progeny.<sup>16</sup>

Other holders of this view are as follows:

Browne,<sup>17</sup> Wordsworth,<sup>18</sup> and Murphy<sup>19</sup>.

The Magnified Sin View.--That by cursing Canaan

witness of Man's sin was revealed. This view is held

via who says: "Certainly to my mind, there is no

that the punishment was carried forward even to his

ity, in order that the severity of it be the more

age,"<sup>22</sup>

The Sinful Walk View.--That Canaan was already

<sup>16</sup>W. Volck, "Noah" The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson, 8, 185.

<sup>17</sup>E. Harold Browne, "Genesis," The Holy Bible, ed. F. C. Cook (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d.), I, 81.

<sup>18</sup>Chr. Wordsworth, The Holy Bible, (London: Rivingtons, 1873), I, 53

<sup>19</sup>Leale, op. cit., p. 186



Minor Problem: Why was Canaan  
Cursed Instead of Ham?

The Youngest Son View.--One reason that is given is that he was Ham's youngest son as Ham was Noah's youngest son. This view is held by Hoffman.

But the reason why Canaan was the only son named, is not to be found in the fact that Canaan was the youngest son of Ham, and Ham the youngest son of Noah, as Hoffman supposes.<sup>20</sup>

The Guilt of Canaan View.--That he was the real perpetrator of the crime. This view is held by Pool who says:

It seems, therefore, very probable from these words, and the Hebrew doctors and others affirm it, that Canaan did partake with his father in the sin, yea, that he was the first discoverer of his father's shame.<sup>21</sup>

The Magnified Sin View.--That by cursing Canaan the greatness of Ham's sin was revealed. This view is held by Calvin who says: "Certainly to my mind, there is no doubt that the punishment was carried forward even to his posterity, in order that the severity of it be the more apparent."<sup>22</sup>

The Sinful Walk View.--That Canaan was already walking in the steps of his father's impiety. This view

<sup>20</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 157

<sup>21</sup>Matthew Pool, Annotations upon the Holy Bible, (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1853) I, 285

<sup>22</sup>John Calvin, Commentaries on the Book of Genesis, trans. Henry Beveridge, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. reprinted 1949), p. 305

is held by Keil who aptly puts it as follows:

The real reason must either lie in the fact that Canaan was already walking in the steps of his father's impiety and sin, or else be sought in the name Canaan, in which Noah discerned, through a gift of prophecy, a significant omen:<sup>23</sup>

The Prophetic Spirit View.--That Noah foresaw that the Canaanites would abundantly deserve the visitation of the curse. This view is held by Lange who states:

If now, notwithstanding this, Noah cursed his grandchild, Canaan, it can only be explained on the ground that in the prophetic spirit he saw into the future, and that the vision had for its point of departure the then present natural state of Canaan.<sup>24</sup>

#### THE WRITER'S INTERPRETATION

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<sup>23</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 157

<sup>24</sup>Lange, op. cit., p. 337



Minor Problem: Why was Canaan  
Cursed Instead of Ham?

This writer rejects "The Youngest Son View" as held by Hoffman for the following reasons: (1) Insufficient internal proof to show that he was the youngest son; (2) from the scant external evidence; (3) that Canaan had the misfortune of being the youngest son can not be a justifiable reason for cursing him; (4) it cannot be shown, from the grammatical standpoint, that he was the youngest son.

It would indeed sadly affect the biblical doctrine of recompense, if cursing and blessing were dependent upon such external reasons as, in the case before us, upon the circumstance that Canaan was so unfortunate as to be the youngest son.<sup>1</sup>

The Guilt of Canaan View, while held by more scholars, is also rejected by this writer. The reasoning that Canaan did partake of the sin with his father Ham is at best conjecture and without any justifiable proof.

The Magnified Sin View, which is held by Calvin, is accepted by this writer as a partial answer to our question. This writer, however, believes that it does

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<sup>1</sup>Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 34

not entirely answer the question. The writer of this paper believes that the cursing of Canaan holds far greater meaning than the mere revelation of Ham's sin.

The Sinful Walk View is also held by this writer, and while this view might seem to lack sufficient evidence, this writer will endeavor to show his reason for his conclusions.

The Prophetic Spirit View which is also held by this writer, is also held by Lange<sup>2</sup> and others. Spiritual discernment was certainly given to Noah by God which enabled him to so graphically see into the future.

The question often arises as to the justice of God in allowing an innocent person to be punished for something that he did not do, or for the sins of his father. Since the object of this paper is not to defend a just God Who can do no wrong, the writer will say as Calvin

that God, although he pursues his course of judgments upon the sons and grandsons of the ungodly, yet, in being angry with them, is not angry with the innocent, because even they themselves are found at fault. Wherefore there is no absurdity in the act of avenging the sins of the fathers upon their reprobate children; since of necessity, all those whom God has deprived of his Spirit are subject to wrath.<sup>3</sup>

The question which follows this, of course, is, "Why was not Ham the son of Noah who committed the sin, punished?" Why was Ham passed by in silence and his son

<sup>2</sup>Lange, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Calvin, op. cit., p. 305



Canaan made the victim? There are several ways to ask this question, but the basic question is the same.

Pool states the case well when he says

When Canaan is mentioned, Ham is not exempted from the curse, but rather more deeply plunged into it, while he is pronounced accursed, not only in his person (which is manifestly supposed by his commission of that sin for which the curse was inflicted) but also in his posterity, which doubtless was a great aggravation of his grief.<sup>4</sup>

The Jews imagine that Canaan was cursed instead of Ham because of some special favor of God bestowed on Ham, "namely that of having preserved him in the Ark."<sup>5</sup> but this is false reasoning because God is a just God and will not overlook sin of any kind. God does not show favoritism where sin is involved.

There is also a Hebrew tradition that points to Canaan as the first who saw Noah and told his father. This view, however, is rejected as theoretical.

Without any doubt, Ham, in some way, was involved in the punishment. It should be noted that Ham did not receive a blessing as Japheth and Shem. This seems to imply that he was in some way involved in the curse, even though the curse was not placed on him. "Ham himself is far from being exempt, that God, by involving

<sup>4</sup>Pool, op. cit., p. 37

<sup>5</sup>Calvin, op. cit., p. 306

his son with him aggravates his own condemnation."<sup>6</sup>

Another question often asked is why Noah selected the line of Canaan in preference to the lines of Mizraim, Cush and Phut.

It should be mentioned that the fall of Noah did not have anything to do with this curse and the blessings pronounced on his sons. Noah's fall, besides showing the weakness of God's saints, merely reveals the true nature of his sons. The fact is that Ham was at enmity with his father which is revealed by his behaviour in the presence of his father's fall. Thus, his family background also reveals something of Canaan's character.

Gray and Adams say: "The curse was directed against Canaan probably because he, of all Ham's sons, was following in his father's sinful ways."<sup>7</sup>

That Canaan was selected instead of his brothers can be explained in the light of Noah's having special spiritual powers from God which enabled him to see the end result. Thus the selection was God's ... not Noah's. An example of this was in the lives of Esau and Jacob.

This question is well answered by Calvin who says

Let us remember that the judgments of God are, not in vain, called "a great deep" and that it would be a degrading thing for God, before whose tribunal we all must one day stand, to be subjected to our judgments, or

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 305

<sup>7</sup>Gray and Adams, op. cit., p. 37



rather to our foolish temerity. He chooses whom he sees good, that he may show forth in them an example of his grace and kindness; others he appoints to a different end, that they may be proofs of his anger and severity. Here, although the minds of men are blinded, let every one of us ascribe praise to God's justice, then plunge, with insane audacity into the profound abyss. While God held the whole seed of Ham as obnoxious to the curse, he mentions the Canaanites by name, as those whom he would curse above all others. And hence we infer that this judgment proceeded from God, because it was proved by the event itself. What would certainly be the condition of the Canaanites, Noah could not know by human means. Wherefore in things obscure and hidden, the Spirit directed his tongue.<sup>8</sup>

Hengstenberg further elaborates as to the characteristic sin of the seed of Canaan when he says:

To this view we are further led by what is reported in Genesis concerning the moral depravity of Sodom and Gomorrah, which, in the development of the sinful germ inherent in the race, had outrun all others, and were, therefore, before all others, overtaken by punishment. To this view we are led, further, by Lev. xviii. and the parallel passages, where the Canaanites appear as a nation of abominations which the land spues out; and, finally, by what ancient heathen writers report regarding the deep corruption of the Phoenicians and Carthaginians.<sup>9</sup>

It should also be noted that the meaning of Canaan's name is "The submissive one" taken from  $\text{קָנָה}$  which means to stoop or submit. When in the Hiphil it means to bend or subjugate. Thus from the name Canaan, which was given to him by Ham, the implication is that

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<sup>8</sup>Calvin, op. cit., p. 306

<sup>9</sup>Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 35



Ham expected obedience from him something that he himself did not give to Noah. Thus we get another glimpse into Ham's true character which reflected on his seed. However, God again had a far more reaching reason for this name Canaan which has since been fulfilled. Thus this writer takes the position that Noah was made to see into the future and that the Spirit of God spoke through Noah. The fact that Noah must have realized the future is seen in his spontaneous burst of praise to God when he blessed Shem, (verse 26). To realize the blessing could only reveal his knowledge of the curse. Henry says that Canaan was cursed "because the posterity of this son was afterward to be rooted out of their land to make room for Israel."<sup>10</sup>

Also, by cursing Canaan, the greatness of Ham's sin was revealed for all posterity. Not only in Noah's day was this sin revealed but later in its fulfillment and at present, for the edification of the saints. The fact that Ham had no blessing from Noah, either for himself or his sons, is proof that his sin was great; but to have one of his sons singled out for a curse is a far greater testimony to the greatness of the sin. A blessing from the father was of great importance and to be desired in the Old Testament (see Esau and Jacob). Consequently, to be overlooked points to a great misdemeanor on Ham's part.

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<sup>10</sup>Matthew Henry, A Commentary on the Holy Bible, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, n.d.) Vol #, 43.



Major Problem: What is Meant  
by "a servant of servants"?

The Limited Servitude View -- The writer rejects the interpretation as held by some that Noah's curse was only for menial servitude for the following reasons:

The grammar will not substantiate this view. עֶבֶד עֶבֶד

i.e. the lowest of slaves as quoted by Keil & Delitzsch.<sup>1</sup>

Gesenius renders the root meaning of the word עֶבֶד

to mean a servant, who, amongst the Hebrews, was commonly

a slave. Parallel usages in the Bible are Gen. 12:16,

17:23, 39:17; Ex. 12:30, 44. The name "servant" is also

applied in the following ways: (1) to a whole people

when subject and tributary to another, Gen. 9:26, 27;

27:37; (2) to the servants of a King, that is his minis-

ters and courtiers; for example עֶבְדֵי מֶלֶךְ Gen. 40:20,

41:10, 37, 38; 50:7; Ex. 5:21, 7:10, 10:7; שָׂרְפָה

עֶבְדָּהּ I Sam. 16:17, 18:22, 28:7.

Samuel Bagster also gives as a primary use of עֶבֶד

to work, labor, variously. A secondary use is to serve,

work for another, and the third usage with the ל to

impose servitude upon, make to serve.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit. p. 158

<sup>2</sup>Davidson, B., The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, (London: S. Bagster & Sons, Ltd.), p. 583.

As Terry so well says, "The most abject slave is a servant of servants (Gen. 9:25); the holiest place is the holy of holies; the most excellent song is שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים the song of songs.<sup>3</sup>

For Lange to say 'that the relation of the servant in this case denotes no absolute relation to the curse, or any developed slave relation, any more than relation service which was imposed upon Esau in respect to Jacob'<sup>4</sup> is to ignore the facts.

In answer to this objection, we must hasten to say that when David and his men conquered the Edomites, killing thousands of them he compelled the remaining Edomites to become tributaries and even put garrisons among them to secure their obedience. This is certainly not the picture of a servant but a slave. This condition endured for one hundred and fifty years during which time they were governed by deputies, and viceroys appointed by the kings of Judah. We must, therefore, reject this reasoning which is held by Lange and remain true to the root of the word שִׁבְדָּה which is שָׁבַד .

Thus we conclude from the etymology of the word "servant" that the Limited Servitude view is not tenable.

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<sup>3</sup>Milton S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Pub. House). p. 89

<sup>4</sup>Lange, op. cit., p. 337



Unlimited Servitude View  
So the Fulfillment View  
of this condition is that

pages 55ff of this work.



## The Perpetual View as opposed to the Fulfillment View

Because of the overlapping ideas held by the exponents of these two views, the writer thought it would not only result in a more scholarly work but would also result in a more easily understood work to compare the two views as opposed to each other in one section of this paper.

The writer rejects the Perpetual View as untenable, whether held with the Limited Servitude or with the Unlimited Servitude view. The writer does, however, accept the Fulfillment View with the Unlimited Servitude View.

In rejecting the Perpetual View, the writer states his objections as follows:

Actual realization of the fulfillment of Noah's curse.--It is necessary as a basis, to explain the fulfillment of Noah's curse, to first investigate and explain the distribution of the nations as well as the ethnic relationships. The writer will do this by explaining Genesis 10, which is commonly called "The Table of Nations", so that it will be possible to get a view of the distributions of the nations.

Ryle says:

The ethnology of prehistoric times must not be confounded with modern scientific conceptions of ethnology. It preserves the primitive traditions -- traditions of immense value and interest to the historian -- respecting the



origin of races and nations. In a great measure, however, these traditions accurately represent prevalent opinions as the geographical distribution of the races than actual facts as to their origin and descent.<sup>5</sup>

This statement is viewed by this writer to lack background of world history as well as belief in the verbal inspiration of God's Word. This opinion is ably answered by Keil and Delitzsch who say

The genealogy of the tribes is not an ethnographical myth, nor the attempt of an ancient Hebrew to trace the connection of his own people with the other nations of the earth by means of undertain traditions and subjective combinations, but a historical record of Genesis of the nations, founded upon a tradition handed down from the fathers, which to judge from its contents, belongs to the time of Abraham.<sup>6</sup>

Adam Clarke continues in the same vein of thought as Keil and Delitzsch when he says

It is extremely difficult to say that particular nations and people sprang from the three grand divisions of the family of Noah, because the names of many of those ancient people have become changed in the vast lapse of time from the deluge to the Christian era; yet some are so very distinctly marked that they can be easily ascertained, while a few still retain their original names.<sup>7</sup>

Oehler says "It often happens, even in the later genealogies, that races and people are personified and represented as individuals."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Herbert Edward Ryle, The Early Narratives of Genesis (London, Macmillan & Co., 1912), p. 125

<sup>6</sup>Keil & Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 161

<sup>7</sup>Adam Clarke, op. cit., p. 84

<sup>8</sup>Oehler, op. cit., p. 57

Therefore, when Ryle says "no candid exegesis of the oracle of Noah would now permit us to harmonize his words with modern scientific conceptions as to the distribution of races"<sup>9</sup>, we believe that either the evidence was not available to him or he deliberately chose to overlook certain known facts which would point to the contrary. Ryle's reason for his position is that "it fails in nearly every respect to satisfy the complex problems presented by the history of language and the descent of nations."<sup>10</sup>

The answer to this problem of ethnic relationship between the nations seems to hinge on the authenticity of the "Table of Nations" as set forth by Moses in Chapter Ten of Genesis. Scholars of various branches have long been interested by this so-called "Table of Nations". Not only Ryle, but others as well have tried to show that the nations were related by an eponymous ancestor.

Because they take the position that the names mentioned are not considered real individuals, the "Table of Nations" is interpreted as having a primitive ethnological arrangement and neither a scientific classification of the races of mankind nor an historically true account of their origins, which it places about

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<sup>9</sup>Ryle, op. cit., p. 125

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.



2500 B. C.<sup>11</sup> The ones who hold this view are forced to draw attention to the seemingly apparent omissions in the list. We should remember, however, that Moses was in the habit of condensing large periods of history by using the practice of historic lists. More conclusive proof, however, is found in I Chr. 1:4-23 where we have a duplicate list with but a few variations. Moses did not write I Chronicles but, as the Talmud says "Baba Bathra i. 14-15"<sup>12</sup> Other Jews claim that Ezra compiled the majority of it, but the thought which this writer wishes to bring out is that a different person wrote this list.

Needless to say, the author of this paper takes the position of verbal inspiration and so believes as the Bible says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16)<sup>13</sup> and also, "For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."<sup>14</sup>

The arrangement of the listing of the "Table of

<sup>11</sup>D. J. Wiseman, "Genesis 10: Some Archaeological Considerations", Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute.

<sup>12</sup>William Smith, A Dictionary of the Bible, ed. F. N. and M. A. Peloubet, (Philadelphia, John C. Winston and Sons) p. 116.

<sup>13</sup>The Holy Bible, American Standard Version. (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1901).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.



Nation" in Genesis is divided according to the sons of Noah as follows: Shem, Ham, and Japheth, as has already been set forth in Gen. 5:32, but it is interesting to note that in verse 2 of Chapter 10 the list is changed in order to read, "Japheth, Ham, and Shem." The reason for this change is given by Keil and Delitzsch:

The materials are arranged and distributed according to the law of divine selection; the families which branched off from the main line are noticed first of all; and when they have been removed from the general scope of the history, the course of the main line is more elaborately described, and the history itself is carried forward. According to this plan, which is strictly adhered to, the history of Cain and his family precedes that of Seth and his posterity; the genealogy of Japheth and Ham stands before that of Shem; the history of Ishmael and Esau, before that of Isaac and Jacob; and the death of Terah, before the call and migration of Abraham to Canaan. In this regularity of composition, according to a settled plan, the book of Genesis may clearly be seen to be the careful production of one single author, who looked at the historical development of the human race in the light of divine revelation, and thus exhibited it as a complete and well arranged introduction to the history of the Old Testament kingdom of God.<sup>15</sup>

The main divisions of this table are clear, which are as follows: (1) the descendants of Japheth (verses 2-5); (2) the descendants of Ham (verses 6-20); and (3) the descendants of Shem (verses 21-31). It should be noted that each of these divisions ends with a very descriptive catch-phrase (verses 5, 20 and 31) which is a type of the colophon (an inscription or device

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<sup>15</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 37



commonly used in former times to terminate a manuscript or book, and often giving the subject, the scribes or printer's name, the date and place of production, and so forth.)<sup>16</sup> In this case, it is used to summarize the preceding narrative and form a link with other texts which bear on the same narrative and which were before recorded on separate documents. This form of colophon was often used in Babylonian and Assyrian and Hebrew literature which point back to the source or origin of the writing. Wiseman explains by saying:

It is sufficient to notice that the common catch-phrase begins after the purpose and content of each list with the words "in/with their land" and "with/in their nations" (each is governed by the preposition beth); and "with reference to their language (tongue)" and "with reference to their family relationship" (each expression being governed by the preposition Lamedh). In each colophon, the order of these terms may be significant in showing the emphasis placed on each in the list. Each has in common the feature that they end with the term "in their nations"; that is, the lists include within each branch units which have national affiliations.<sup>17</sup>

Thus we can see from the above explanation that the thought of geographical division, linguistics and physical affinities are prevalent, which is essential to appreciate the subject of ethnology in the eyes of the near Eastern people. The writer again, therefore, points

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<sup>16</sup>H. G. Emery and K. G. Brewster, The New Century Dictionary of the English Language, (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., n.d.), I, 285

<sup>17</sup>Wiseman, op. cit., pp. 15, 16



out that Bishop Ryle is in error to say that:

No candid exegesis of the oracle of Noah would now permit us to harmonize his words with modern scientific conceptions as to the distribution of races. It has now for a long time been well known and generally recognized, that the old and simple plan of assigning the population of Asia to the descendants of Shem, that of Africa to the descendants of Ham, and that of Europe to the descendants of Japheth, is utterly unscientific; it fails in nearly every respect to satisfy the complex problems presented by the history of language and the descent of nations.<sup>18</sup>

The writer agrees with Ryle to a degree that to list the families of Noah according to geographical division alone would be in error, in the same degree as to try to list the families according to either linguistic or physical affinities alone, but when all three are prevalent, there is a sufficient basis from which to draw a conclusion. It should also be noted that in the Far East many nations or cities have derived their names from some personal name, god or mortal. Thus it can be seen that there can be no objection to the usage of the names in Chapter Ten to denote land areas in some cases.

As Wiseman so ably states:

I personally believe that the tradition of these relationships, where they are listed in the genealogical manner ("begat"), goes back to an initial physical relationship, e.g. that the founder of the tribe of Seba was a person of that name, son of Cush, and that his name was retained to describe the line of his descendants, each of whom had his individual name.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ryle, loc. cit.

<sup>19</sup>Wiseman, loc. cit.



Thus it is seen that contrary to the view of Bishop Ryle as to the impossibility of harmonizing the Genesis 10 account of the Table of the Nations to geographic locations, we find that it is not only possible but feasible to do so.

Table of Nations.--After having come to the conclusion that the Table of Nations is the accepted method to show the distribution of the nations, the writer will now explain these divisions.

It might be well, first of all, to point out that this writer does not believe, as do many, that man came, due to the process of evolution, from the Neanderthal Man, or any other fanciful ideas that might be held which are contrary to the origin of man as stated in Genesis, Chapter One. In the beginning, God created man in His own image. It is entirely unscriptural to say that man ascended from a lower form of life. The theory of evolution would cast a dark shadow on the contents of the entire Word of God.

In Gen. 10:1 to 5 the sons of Japheth are enumerated. Lange gives a detailed list of these names with their geographic location.<sup>18</sup>

It will be noticed that the names of seven sons are given, and these names later occur as those of tribes which, in all probability, point back to the tribe-fathers. It cannot be an infallible rule, as in

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<sup>18</sup>Lange, op. cit., p. 344



the case of later times, for a nation to derive its name from the country, or land, which it happens to conquer; but of necessity the natural method for a nation to acquire its name is from its ancestors, or earliest inhabitants.

(גֹמֶר) Gomer (G M R). These radical letters are found extensively combined in the history and geography of Europe:<sup>19</sup>

(גֹמֶר) Gomer, pr. n. - (1) of a northern people sprung from Japheth (Gen. 10:2), from whom Togarmah (or the Armenians) is said to be descended (Gen. 10:3), and who in the army of Magog are mentioned with Togarmah (Eze. 38:6). This is probably to be understood of the Cimerii (ΚΙΜΗΡΙΟΙ) inhabiting the Tauric Chersonese and the region near the Don and Danube;<sup>20</sup>

Thus, in conjunction with Lange and Gesenius, it can be stated positively that the sons of Gomer perpetuated in the Crimea, branched westward to later become the enemies of Rome and later spread to England and Ireland. Ashkenas, Riphath, and Togarmah, families of Gomer, settled around the Black Sea.

"(מֶשֶׁךְ) Meshek, Meh-shek; a son of Japheth, and the people descending from him: - Mesech, Meshech."<sup>21</sup>

The names of Tubal and Meshech are usually found together in the Bible and from their associations their

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>William Gesenius, Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures, trans. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., reprinted 1949, p. 175

<sup>21</sup>James Strong, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (New York, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press), p. 74



homes are generally believed to have been located near the Caspian and Black Seas.

(תִּירָס) m. Gen. 10:2 Tiras, pr. n. of a northern nation sprung from Japheth, according to Jonath, and Targum of Jerusalem, Thracia.<sup>22</sup>

Another reference to Tiras is found in I Chr. 1:5. Tiras was believed by the Jews to refer to the Thracians and were said to live southwest of the Black Sea.

When speaking of the Isles of the Gentiles, verse 5 it is generally believed and accepted that Europe is the general location. Some scholars suppose that this term can also be applied to any country in which it is necessary to travel by sea to reach.

In concluding the Japhetic Line, we can summarize their locations to include Crimea, British Isles, Cymry that is Welsh, Ireland, French, Germany, Armenia.

The line of Ham:--And the sons of Ham: Cush (Ethiopians), and Mizraim (Egyptians), and Phut (Lybians), and Canaan (Canaanites, Lowlanders.)<sup>23</sup>

For added information concerning the dispersion of the four main families of Ham, the reader should consult Lange. In this way, further proof as to the location and spread of the Hamite race will be revealed.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 863.

<sup>23</sup>Lange, op. cit., p. 344.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.



(שִׁיט) pr. n. - (1) (Cush) Ethiopia (f. Ps. 68:32), and Ethiopians (LXX Αἰθιοπία, Αἰθιοπες) comp. Jos. Archaeol. i.6 and 2, and Pesh. Act. 8:27); a people descended from Ham, Gen. 10:7,8; whose country was surrounded by the river Gihon (Gen. 2:13; comp. Isa. 18:1; Zeph. 3:10);<sup>25</sup>

(שִׁיט) (terror; coll. with the Arab.) pr. name - 1. of a son of Ham, Gen. 10:6, and a country, Ethiopia, so called after him, and applied also to its inhabitants, Ethiopians.<sup>26</sup>

It is to be noticed that in the Bible the name Cush is always translated Ethiopia. As stated by Gesenius and Bagster, this region is to an area south of Egypt. It has been stated by Hurlbut that "in Gen. 2:13, and Isa. 11:11, and Ezek. 38:5, the reference must be to an Asiatic Cush in Mesopotamia".<sup>27</sup> Hurlbut does not give his reasons for differentiation: therefore, for lack of evidence, this writer will apply the geographic land area of Cush to be south of Egypt.

(מִצְרַיִם) pr. n. dual, Egypt, Gen. 46:34, 50:11 often more fully, מִצְרַיִם וְעֵצֶן the land of Egypt, fem., Gen. 45:20; 47:6,13; also the Egyptians; commonly in prose writers with a pl. (Gen. 45:2; 47. 15,20; 50:3; Exod. 1:14), rarely with a sing masc., 14:25,31; poet, with sing. masc., Isa. 19:16, 25; Jer. 46:8; and f., Hos. 9:6. Singular מִצְרַיִם (which see), lower Egypt; both this side and upper, (called by its particular name מִצְרַיִם seems to have been denoted by zeugma, by the dual מִצְרַיִם; like the two Sicilies used for Sicily and Naples; although

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<sup>25</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 389.

<sup>26</sup>Davidson, op. cit., p. 374.

<sup>27</sup>Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, A Bible Atlas (New York, Rand McNally & Co., 1910), p. 9.



this origin being afterwards neglected, the dual  $\text{מִצְרַיִם}$  is also found when it does not include Pathros (Isa. 11:11; Jer. 44:15). Others refer the dual form to the land being divided in two by the Nile. (But this country had its name from Mizraim a son of Ham.<sup>28</sup>

Even as the word Cush is translated to always mean Ethiopian, so the word Mizraim is always used to denote the land of Egypt in the Hebrew. Even also as Gesenius mentioned, the word has a dual meaning representing two divisions of the country which, in turn, correspond to the two crowns on the royal effigies.

( $\text{מִצְרַיִם}$ ) pr. n. of an African nation, according to Josephus (Antt. i, 6, 2) of Mauritania, in which the river Phut is mentioned by Pliny (H.N. v.i). LXX and Vulg. commonly rendered it Libya, Gen. 10:6; Jer. 46:9; Ezek. 27:10; 38:5; Nah. 3:9.<sup>29</sup>

From the association of the word Phut, which is several times translated Libya, with other tribes, we can give the geographical location in north Africa. It is also possible to identify Phut with Punt which was a kingdom along the coast of the Red Sea southeast of Egypt.

( $\text{כְּנָעַן}$ ) Pr. name - (1) Canaan, a son of Ham, ancestor of the nation of the Canaanites, Gen. 9:18, seq; 10:6. (2) the land of the Canaanites (Ex. 15:15, fully  $\text{אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן}$  with masc. Hos. 12:8); pr. the depressed, low, region (from the root  $\text{כָּנַע}$  with the addition of  $\text{אֶרֶץ}$  as in  $\text{אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן}$ ), opp. to the loftier country  $\text{אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם}$  see  $\text{אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם}$  No. 1). (But this name was taken from Canaan, the son of Ham, the ancestor of the

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<sup>28</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 502

<sup>29</sup>Ibid, p. 668

Canaanites.) It specially denotes - (a) the land on this side Jordan, as opposed to the land of Gilead, Nu. 33:51; Josh. 22:9. - (b) Phoenicia, Isa. 23:11, i. e. the northern part of Canaan, situated at the base of Lebanon; the inhabitants of which call themselves כנעני upon their coins (see my Comment on Isa. loc. cit.; Gesch. der Heb. Sprache, p. 16, 227); by the Greeks they are called Φοίνικες. The Poeni, also a colony of the Phoenicians, retained this ancient name, as we learn from Augustin (Expos. Ep. ad Romanos) in these words, "Interrogati rustici nostri," i. e. Hipponenses, "quid sint? punice respondentes Chanani, corrupta scilicet, ut in talibus solet, una littera, quid alius respondent, au, Chananaei?" - (c) Philistia, Zeph. 2:5, חִתִּי אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן - כְּנָעַן הָעִיר the language of Canaan, i. e. Hebrew, which the Canaanites and Hebrews used, Isa. 19:18. (3) for כְּנָעַן אִישׁ a Canaanite, Hos. 12:8; hence any merchant. Isa. 23:8 כְּנָעֲנֵה "her merchants." Comp. Zeph. 1:11; Ezr. 17:4.<sup>30</sup>

To summarize the geographical location of Canaan, we can say that the land area was Palestine, lower Syria, from Gaza to Hamath. Special attention should be paid to the geographic location of the sons of Ham. This writer uses not only Biblical passages to show the fulfillment of Noah's curse on the seed of Canaan, but the geographic location of the other sons of Ham to give added evidence for their exclusion from the curse.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, p. 405



In Gen. 10:21 we read as follows "unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber".

It should be noticed that the statement "the father of all the children of Eber" has a special meaning. This statement, or declaration, calls special attention beforehand that the sons of Eber the Shemite's line of the descendants of Abraham separates again in Pegleg, from Joktan or his Arabian descendants.

(עֵלַם) Elymais, (Elan), pr. n. of a providence of Persia, in which stood the capital city, Susa (Ezr. 4:9; Dan. 8:2): perhaps in ancient writers it included the whole of Persia, which is called by later writers **אֶלָם** Gen. 10:22 (where the origin of the Elamites is traced from Shem), Gen. 14:1; Isa. 11:11; 21:2; 22:6; Jer. 25:25; 49:34, seqq.; Eze. 32:24. When used of the country, it is constr. with a fem., Isa. 21:2; when used for the inhabitants with a masc., Isa. 22:6.<sup>31</sup>

Elam is always recognized as the name of the providence of Persia. It was called by the Greeks, Elymais, and in recent history the name includes the entire territory of Persia.

(אֶשּׁוּר) - (1) i.q. **אֶשּׁוּר** a step; const. with a fem., Job 31:7. (2) rarely **אֶשּׁוּר** (I Ch. 5:6), with Local (Gen. 25:18), pr. n. Assyria (Asshur), Hos. 9:3; 10:6; Zec. 10:10); more fully **אֶשּׁוּר אֶרֶץ** Isa. 7:18, and the Assyrians, (const. with a masc. Isa. 19:23; 23:13; 30:31; 31:8; Ps. 83:9; Hos. 14:4). ("In the arrow-headed inscriptions it is written Asura: see Lassen, *Über d. Persepol. Keilschriften*, p. 71-79.") The name of Assyria is used in various senses by the Hebrews, e.g.- (a) Assyria ancient and proper (Gen. 10:10-12:22), and it

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<sup>31</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 622



appears to have comprehended just the same countries as are ascribed to Assyria proper to Ptolemy (vi. 1), i.e. those which lie to the east of the Tigris, between Armenia, Susiana, and Media, namely Adiabene. It is mostly - (b) used of the Assyrian empire, which also included Babylonia and Mesopotamia (Isa. 10:9, 10, and see my remarks on Isa. 39:1), extending as far as the Euphrates (Isa. 7:20), which, on this account, furnishes an image of the Assyrian empire (Isa. 8:7). So the name of Assyria comprehends Babylonia in Herod. (i.102,106), Once even in the Old Test., the provinces situated beyond the Tigris appeared to be disregarded, and the Tigris is said to flow to the east of Assyria **יִשְׂרָאֵל** Gen. 2:14. - (c) After the Assyrian empire was overthrown, **יִשְׂרָאֵל** was sometimes used of the countries in which that empire had formerly flourished, and to the new empires which had arisen in its place; videl. of Babylonia, 2 Ki. 23:29; Jer. 2:18 (comp. Isa. 8:8); Lam. 5:6; where Darius is called **יִשְׂרָאֵל** **הַמֶּלֶךְ** ("Hitzig attempts to show that **יִשְׂרָאֵל** is put also for Syria, Isa. 19:23 (Begr. d. Kritik, p. 98; or Isa. p. 235). But his arguments are not convincing." Ges. add.<sup>32</sup>

As seen, Assur is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, and it was located on the Tigris, and Nineveh was its capitol. Also at one time they ruled westward all the territory to the Mediterranean Sea.

(**טַרְחָדָשׁ**) Gen. 10:22, 24; 11:10-13 (Arphaxad), pr. n. of the third son of Shem, designating at the same time a people or region; nor is the conjecture of Bochart improbable (Phaleg. ii.4) that this is **Ἀρραπαχίτις**, *Arrapachitis* a region of Assyria, near to Armenia (Ptolem, vi.1) the native land of the Chaldeans (see my remarks on Isa. 23:13). This is the favored by the etymology (from **טַרְחָ** boundary and **טַשׁ** or **טַשׁ** i.q. **טַשׁ** (see note), and by Josephus. (Antiq. 1, 6, & 4); **Ἀρφαξαδὸς δὲ τοὺς νῦν Χαλδαίους καλομένους Ἀρφαξαδαῖους ὠνόμασεν.**

Arpachshad, or Arphaxad has been designated as

<sup>32</sup>Ibid, pp. 84, 85



the ancestor of the Chaldeans and their territory was at the head of the Persian Gulf.

(לִדִּים) (Ludim, Lydians), pr. n. of two nations - (1) of one sprung from Shem, Genesis 10:22; according to Josephus, (Ant. i. 6 & 4) the Lydians in Asia Minor, an opinion not improbable. - (2) of an African people (perhaps belonging to Aethiopia), of Egyptian origin, accustomed to fight with bows and arrows. Eze. 27:10; 30:5; Isa. 66:19; and לִדִּים Gen. 10:13; Jer. 46:9<sup>33</sup>

Lud, or the Lydians as they are sometimes called, were located not only in Asia Minor but more directly in the southwestern border of Asia Minor.

(סַרְגַּי) const. state סַרְגַּי (Aram. Mesopotamia, Syria), pr. n. ("height, high region") (1) Aramaea, Aramaens, or Syria, Syrians, construed with a verb m. sing.; 2 Sam. 10:14, 15, 18; I Ki. 20:26; pl. 2 Sam. 10:17, 19; I Ki. 20:20; more rarely with sing. f. Isa. 7:2. This ancient and domestic name of Syria, was not altogether unknown to the Greeks, see Hom. II ii, 783, Hesiod, Theog. 304; Strabo xiii. 4 & 6; xvi. 4, & 27. The name of Aramaea however extends more widely than that of Syria, and also includes Mesopotamia, although Pliny (v. 15, & 12), and Mela (i.11) give the same more extended limit to Syria. When it simply stands סַרְגַּי we should generally understand western Syria, or that properly so called; Jud. 3:10; i Ki. 10:29; 11:25; 15:18; especially Syria of Damascus; Isa. 7:1, 8; Am. 1:5; more accurately called סַרְגַּי דַּמַּשְׁקִי 2 Sam. 8:5. Where Mesopotamia is intended, it is called סַרְגַּי נַחְרִי (Mesopotamia, Aramnaharaim) "Syria", of the two rivers, "Gen. 24:10; Deut. 23:5; Jud. 3:8 or סַרְגַּי פָּנִי (Pasan-aram) "the plain of Syria", Gen. 25:20; 28:2; 5, 6, 7; and ellipt. פָּנִי 48:7; rarely simply סַרְגַּי. Numbers 23:7, when a more exact description has preceded (comp. סַרְגַּי). In western Syria (not in Mesopotamia, as is commonly thought,) there were besides in the time of David, certain other kingdoms, סַרְגַּי זֹבָחִי (Aram-zobah). (see

<sup>33</sup>Ibid, p. 432.



אַרַם בֶּת רוֹחוֹב, (Aram-beth-rohob) (see  
 אַרַם מַעַכָּה, (Arammaachah) (see  
 etc., which were however afterwards sub-  
 ject to the king of Damascus (i Ki, 20:1).<sup>34</sup>

It has been seen by the explanation of Gesenius that the word Aram is consistently rendered Syria in the Bible. The Syrians occupied the area between Canaan and Phoenicia on the east, the great desert on the west and south and on the north, the Euphrates. There were four branches of this family: Uz, of ancient Job, was located in northern Arabia. Hul and Gether are said to have occupied the area around Lake Merom. Meshech, or Mash, is believed to have merged with the Japhetic line in the family of Meshech.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid, p. 80.



## The Fulfillment of Noah's Curse

Historically.-- the reasons for Canaan's being

Cursed be Canaan:  
A servant of servants shall  
he be unto his brethren.

It is not a matter of chance that this prophecy was given immediately after the deluge, which stands out as so great an event in the history of the fallen human race, the first event, indeed, subsequent to the fall, with which the Protevangelium was connected.<sup>35</sup>

This curse should be viewed partly as retributive judgment pronounced on Ham in which Ham's punishment was to be through his son Canaan. It can also be realized in the light of Ham's visualizing the result of his sin being fulfilled in the future upon his son Canaan and Canaan's seed. There also seems to be a wider implication attached to the fulfillment of this curse on Canaan by the realization that God is now revealing his choice of Shem in which the seed of promise was to be given.

It should be noted that of the four sons of Ham only one was directly cursed, and that was Canaan. While it is true that none of the other sons received a blessing from Noah, it should not be said or implied that because of the lack of a blessing they were included in the curse placed upon Canaan. Neither can it be said that Canaan was cursed because it was his misfortune to

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<sup>35</sup>Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 45.



be the youngest of the brothers. The writer accepts the possibility that one of the reasons for Canaan's being cursed in preference to his brothers could have been because he had been following in the footsteps of his father, Ham, which was discernable to Noah.

The writer agrees in essence with the view of Leupold, who says: "The rest of the Hamitic stock apparently, does not come under consideration because it is neither blessed nor cursed."<sup>36</sup>

This view, however, does not answer the problem concerning the other brothers. This writer believes that Lange correctly states the problem in a very discerning manner by saying:

Before all things we must hold fast to this, that the language of Noah is an actual prophecy; and not merely an expression of personal feeling. That the question has nothing to do with personal feeling is evident from the fact, that Ham was not personally cursed. According to the natural relations, the youngest grandchildren would be, in a special manner, favorites with the grandfather. If now, notwithstanding this, Noah cursed his grandchild, Canaan, it can only be explained on the ground that in the prophetic spirit he saw into the future, and that the vision had for its point of departure the then present natural state of Canaan. We may also say, that Ham's future was contained in the future of Canaan; the future of the remaining Hamites he left undecided, without curse and without blessing, although the want of a blessing was a significant omen. Had, however, Noah laid the curse on Ham, all the sons of Ham would have been denoted in like manner with himself; even as now it is commonly

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<sup>36</sup>H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis (Columbus, O.: The Wartburg Press, 1942), p. 349.



assumed that they were, though without sufficient ground (see Delitzsch, p. 281)<sup>37</sup>

The writer also, for lack of evidence to the contrary, excludes the brothers from the physical judgment which later destroyed Canaan. Argument from silence is not considered sufficient ground to include them. Canaan, however, is specifically made the recipient of the curse, and, for absolute proof, history reveals that Canaan was destroyed, as will be shown. Prophetically, this writer agrees with Hengstenberg who says:

The remainder of Ham's posterity are passed over in silence; it is only in the sequel that we expect information regarding them. But the foreboding arises, that their deliverance will be more difficult of accomplishment than that of Japheth, although the circumstances that Canaan is singled out from among them affords us decided hope for the rest.<sup>38</sup>

As pointed out before, the Hebrew word **עַבְד** means "a servant of servants" or a degrading servitude, or a servitude of bondage. In this case, the writer has proven that this is not only a degrading servitude but, to a larger extent, a servitude of bondage.<sup>39</sup>

It should be noted that Noah's curse, which is in poetic form, is a prophetic song, and the term "servant" is repeated three times. In the first usage of the word "servant", we find the curse set forth, and in

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<sup>37</sup>Lange, op. cit., p. 337

<sup>38</sup>Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 35

<sup>39</sup>p. 32 of this paper.



the second and third usages, the reemphasizing of the original curse in different forms as to the method and place of his servitude. (Rom. 11:27)

One should keep in mind when thinking of the dispersion of the sons of Noah the general geographic locations of each. Think of a round ball which is divided into three sections - two sections in the top of the ball and one section in the bottom of the ball. The section in the bottom would be Ham, and the section on the right side of the circle would be Shem, and the section on the left side would be Japheth. By keeping this in mind, as we continue this discussion, the fulfillment of this prophecy will become more discernible. However, it must be remembered that the curse was on Canaan, and not on his brothers.

At first glance into history following Noah's predictive statement, it would seem that things are working contrary to what Noah had foretold.

For an example, Abraham, who was given the promise (Genesis 12) was in the line of Shem, yet when the chosen people were ready to go into the promised land, who was there to stop them but Canaan. (Book of Joshua) We see another case in Japheth when God promised to enlarge him and that he should dwell in the tents of Shem, which means in essence "to have a common lot with the people whose God is the Lord." (see, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. House, 1954, p. 91.)



The fulfillment of this takes place in the calling of the Gentiles and the preparation of the preaching of the worldwide gospel. (Rom. 11:17)

Rome was then in power over the then known earth, and communication and travel were, as a whole, peaceful and good with but one exception - Canaan stood in the way of the spreading of the gospel. The two descendants of Canaan here took the form of the Colony of Tyre which was of Carthage. This nation was from the son of Sidon - one of the sons of Canaan.

Sidon, the oldest Phoenician city, hence called Canaan's "firstborn" was located on the Mediterranean seacoast, twenty-two miles north of Tyre. It represents the Phoenicians, who were called Sidonians from the eleventh to eighth century B.C. Its early importance is attested by Homer, who often mentions Sidon, but never Tyre, and who employs the names as synonymous with Phoenicia and Phoenicians. Later, however, it was eclipsed by Tyre, but the Phoenicians generally continued to be called Sidonians (I Kings 5:6; 16:31) as if in recollection of Sidon's ancient pre-eminence.<sup>40</sup>

In the light of these facts, it would seem that Noah's curse was acting as a boomerang and instead of a curse being fulfilled a blessing was his, but subsequent history does, as a fact, find the curse of Noah to have been fulfilled as will be shown.

One reason for this delay could be as Hengstenberg points out by interpreting Gen. 15:1y "And in the

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<sup>40</sup>Merrill F. Unger, Archaeology and the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1954), p. 91.



fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full." as follows:

According to this passage, the curse on Canaan can be realized upon him, only when his own iniquity has been fully matured. Thus his iniquity is presupposed by his curse. If he were to be punished on account of the fault of the father,--a guilt in which he had no share--then indeed no delay would have been necessary. To this view we are farther led by what is reported in Genesis concerning the moral depravity of Sodom and Gomorrah, which, in the development of the sinful germ inherent in the race, had outrun all others, and were, therefore, before all others, overtaken by punishment. To this view we are led, further, by Lev. xviii. and the parallel passages, where the Canaanites appear as a nation of abominations which the land spues out; and, finally by what ancient heathen writers report regarding the deep corruption of the Phoenicians and Carthaginians.<sup>41</sup>

Calvin expands this view by stating

Since the Scripture teaches that God averages the sins of men on the third and fourth generation, it seems to assign this limit to the wrath of God; but the vengeance of which mention is now made extends itself to the tenth generation. I answer, that these words of scripture are not intended to prescribe a law to God which he may not so far set aside, as to be at liberty to punish saints beyond the fourth generation.<sup>42</sup>

One of the first cases toward the actual fulfillment of Noah's utterance can be seen in the person of Nimrod, which resulted in the dispersion of the nations. We are told in Gen. 10:9 that he was a mighty hunter. Nimrod was the son of Cush. Nimrod was also a builder of

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<sup>41</sup>Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>42</sup>Calvin, op. cit., p. 306



mighty cities, which in itself was a direct rebuttal of God's command given to Noah after the flood, "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." Nimrod's sin was twofold: (1) in building the cities without spreading across the earth, and while Nimrod was not under the curse of Canaan, it appeared for a time that he was not being punished for his disobedience to God, we find that today there are but very few traces of his cities remaining; and (2) Nimrod began the building of the tower of Babel, which was not only a rebellious act against God but also an act of apostasy from the worship of God. The tower of Babel has often been connected with some form of religious worship. God in this case caused a confusion of tongues and a dispersion of the people over all the face of the earth. The people of Babel, therefore, were now complying unwillingly to God's command to replenish the earth.

When thinking of the confusion of tongues, we must remember that God is a God of order. From this confusion of tongues can be traced three original languages. It is thought by some scholars that this was the original meaning of the confusion of tongues.<sup>43</sup>

The three languages compare as mentioned previously by Lange in the Table of Nations to be linguistic (Gen. 10:32). The division of languages thus was made subservient to an orderly distribution of Noah's sons.

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<sup>43</sup>Wiseman, op. cit., pp. 15, 16.

With this in mind, think back upon the chart previously mentioned and place the actual spreading of the nations after their dispersion from the tower of Babel.

Another son of Ham - Canaan - is found occupying what is now called Palestine. God again, after the wilderness wanderings, drives the Canaanites out of the promised land through the use of the Semitic Jews, especially under the leadership of Joshua defeating them. Thus we can see that the Canaanites were partly subjected to the lowest form of slavery by the Israelites which, in turn, was partial fulfillment of the curse of Noah. Then, under King Solomon, the Canaanites were finally defeated. (Jos. 9:21-27; Jud. 1:28, 30, 33, 35; I Ki. 9:20, 21).

Until quite recently, it was thought by liberal Bible scholars that the Hittite civilization was a myth. Due to archeological finds, however, we now know of not only one Hittite civilization but of two dominant periods of Hittite power. The first period was about 1900 B. C., and the second was about 1400-1200 B. C. and they were located in Asia Minor and Syria. The Hittites were from the line of Heth, son of Canaan, but even these great powers were brought to dust by God until they were even a forgotten people. Surely God's ways are wonderful, and when He speaks, heaven and earth will not pass away



until His word is fulfilled.

As for the Jebusites, we find in Josh. 20:23-26 that their king was killed; in Josh. 15:8 and Judges 1:8 the city was taken, the remaining Jebusites were subjected to slavery or bond service. I Ki. 9:20.

The Amorites were destroyed for their wickedness, and in I Ki. 9:20, 21, the remnant became bond servants.

We can see that God's prophetic judgment fell on these great nations of Canaan, and they shall never rise again. As with all conquered countries, the result for the remnant was servitude of the lowest form. It has been suggested by some commentators that the slavery of the African is also a result of this curse.<sup>44</sup> Sauer states the proposition as follows:

But the other Hamites, who were not indeed cursed, but were assigned to a lack of blessedness -- after a prosperous development in the beginning (especially under Nimrod, later by the Phoenicians and Egyptians)--have again and again had to groan under the yoke of oppression, especially the negro, the last particularly in America after the introduction of slavery. Not till after the North American civil war of 1861-1865 was slavery abolished in the United States. Even now it still prevails in the great portions of central Africa, especially in the Mohammedan States.<sup>45</sup>

Sauer should note, however, that the Phoenicians and Egyptians were not of the line of Canaan but were his brothers, and hence, as pointed out previously, did

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<sup>44</sup>Murphy, op. cit. p. 186

<sup>45</sup>Sauer, op. cit., p. 75



not come under the curse of Noah. This error of including all the sons of Ham in Noah's curse has repeatedly been made by expositors when speaking of the curse, which results in confusion and misinterpretation of the prophetic value of this portion of Scripture.

Murphy says:

It is a historical fact that the degradation of slavery has fallen especially upon the race of Ham. A portion of the Kenaanites became bondsmen among the Israelites, who were of the race of Shem. The early Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, and Egyptians, who all belonged to the race of Ham, were subjugated by the Assyrians, who were Shemites, the Persians, the Macedonians, and the Romans, who were all Japhethites. And in modern times it is well known that most of the nations of Europe traded in African slaves.<sup>46</sup>

This, and this only is the one way slavery, in the sense of the African slave, can be introduced, and since the original premise is wrong, the result is also in error. In conclusion, it would be well to state Lange:

It has been, rather, the desire to give a worldly, political importance to the Scriptural predictions, especially the early ones, thus magnifying the Scriptures, as they suppose, and furnishing remarkable evidences of the truth of revelation. Very modern changes in the relative position of continents are seized upon for this purpose, to the ignoring or obscuring the true dignity of the Divine Word. It is safest to regard prophecy as ever being in the direct line of the church, and to judge of the relative importance of world-historical changes solely by this standard. Except as standing in visible relation to the chosen people, the chosen church, or to that extraordinary divine doing in the

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<sup>46</sup>Murphy, op. cit., p. 186



world which is styled revelation, the greatest earthly revolutions have no more super-earthly value than have to us the dissensions of African chiefs, or the wars of the Heptarchy. To the divine eye, or to the mind that guided the Biblical inspiration, human politics, whether of monarchies or republics, and all human political changes, in themselves considered, or out of this visible relation, must be very insignificant things.<sup>47</sup>

Genesis as a book of beginnings not only recounts the origin of the physical cosmos, including all plant, animal and human life, as well as the commencement of human sin and redemption, but it also describes the rise of all human institutions and social relationships. Chronically, in an amazing fashion, it catalogues the beginning of the nations (Gen. 9:18 - 10:32).

In studying the Biblical account of the origin of the nations, however, it is of utmost importance to bear in mind that the Bible, in presenting this subject, as well as other subjects in general, does not outline the necessary facts in the form of mere history - the systematic record of past events. Rather it presents these facts in the framework of a highly specialized history of human redemption. And what is even more important to remember, it interprets them in the mold of a philosophy of history, which is more precisely "the philosophy of Israel's history."<sup>48</sup>

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem: Noah, con-

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<sup>47</sup>Lange, op. cit., p. 340

## The Fulfillment of Noah's Curse

Prophetically.--While the subject of the blessings of Noah's prophecy does not come under the writer's critical subject, the writer feels that since the curse and the blessings of Noah are so closely associated, that to do justice to this critical and the readers of this critical, a brief explanation of the blessings are in order.

Genesis as a book of beginnings not only recounts the origin of the physical cosmos, including all plant, animal and human life, as well as the commencement of human sin and redemption, but it also describes the rise of all human institutions and social relationships. Ethnically, in an amazing fashion, it catalogues the beginning of the nations (Gen. 9:18 - 10:32).

In studying the Biblical account of the origin of the nations, however, it is of utmost importance to bear in mind that the Bible, in presenting this subject, as well as other subjects in general, does not outline the necessary facts in the form of mere history - the systematic record of past events. Rather it presents these facts in the framework of a highly specialized history of human redemption. And what is even more important to remember, it interprets them in the mold of a philosophy of history, which is more precisely "the philosophy of Israel's history."<sup>48</sup>

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem: Noah, contrary to what some critics might say as to his knowledge of his prophetic curse and blessing, burst into praise to God at what he saw in the future for Shem and his seed.

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<sup>48</sup>Unger, op. cit., p. 73.



Israel was in God's mind the medium of redemptive blessing to the world, and it was necessary for the nation to understand the source from which the various nations that surrounded her sprang, in order that she might have an insight toward them.<sup>49</sup>

It should be noticed that the name applied to God is here  $\text{אלהים}$ , *ELOHIM* which only expresses the general outlines of God's nature. In this case, however, the name used is Jehovah  $\text{יהוה}$  which has reference to his personality, revelations, and salvation. Also, we have the first usage of the name God applied to some one. This seems to imply that God is going to be manifested in some peculiar way to the seed of Shem. This has not only proven to be the case, but also, as seen through history, the line used for the chosen seed, Christ. (Gen. 12:1 to 3)

Varying ideas of the Promised Seed appear in the prophecy of Noah (Gen. ix, 26, 27), and the repeated promises to Abraham (Gen. xii, 3; xvii, 2-8; xviii, 18). These Messianic predictions became more definite as they were repeatedly confirmed to Isaac, to Jacob, to Judah, and to the house of David. They constitute the noblest psalms and the grandest portions of the Greater and the Lesser Prophets. Taken separately, these different predictions are of a fragmentary character; each prophet knew or caught glimpses of the Messianic future only in part, and he prophesied in part (I Cor. xiii, 9); but when the Christ himself appeared, and fulfilled the prophecies, then all these fragmentary parts were seen to form a glorious harmony.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid, p. 74.

<sup>50</sup>Terry, op. cit., p. 89.



Thus we see salvation coming through the line of Shem - not only for the seed of Shem but also for all the families of the earth. (John 4:22, Rom. 11:11 ff.)  
This, as Keil and Delitzsch say,

Instead of wishing good to Shem, Noah praises the God of Shem, just as Moses in Deut. xxxiii. 20, instead of blessing Gad, blesses Him "that enlargeth Gad," and points out the nature of the good which he is to receive, by using the name Jehovah.<sup>51</sup>

May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem." This blessing, while on Japheth, also at the same time infers of further blessing on Shem. These blessings on Japheth depend on his dwelling in the tents of Shem, and refer not only to spiritual blessing but also material blessing as the word "dwell" implies. This view is held by Lange<sup>52</sup> and Peters.<sup>53</sup>

Peters says:

Thus e.g. take Noah's prophecy (Gen. 9:25-27), and while it had a striking fulfillment in the past (comp. Bh. Newton's Diss. on Proph., Diss. 1), yet it will continue to be still more strikingly fulfilled in the future Kingdom.<sup>54</sup>

Thus we conclude this paper by saying that a student who studies God's Word in conjunction with the world history cannot help but marvel at the wondrous

<sup>51</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>52</sup>Lange, op. cit.,

<sup>53</sup>George N. H. Peters, The Theocratic Kingdom, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, reprinted, 1952), III,

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.



fulfillment of God's divine will as pronounced by Noah upon his sons, not only in the material but also in the spiritual sense, and we should praise and thank the Lord that salvation is for all because while the curse on Canaan brought about her ruin, God in His marvelous way opens a way to bring the other sons of Ham back into the arms of God when the larger blessing and hope was announced through Christ. "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." (Ps. 83:31) and as Delitzsch says, "We are all Japhetites dwelling in the tents of Shem."<sup>55</sup>

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!"<sup>56</sup>

#### ENGLISH PARAPHRASE

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<sup>55</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit. p. 160.

<sup>56</sup>The Holy Bible. American Standard Version. (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1901)

## ENGLISH PARAPHRASE

And he, Noah, said to Canaan, you and your seed after you are cursed, and the lowest kind of slave you and your seed will be to your brothers and their seed, which will result in your final destruction.

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