

Genesis Lesson 7: Genesis 9:18 – 9:29

Lecture

- “The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹ These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the whole earth.” Genesis 9:18-19
 - These verses perform 3 functions in Genesis.
 - They show that the divine command to “be fruitful and multiply” has happened, because Ham has a son Canaan.
 - They lay the groundwork for the later curse on Canaan.
 - They prepare for the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, which explains all the people groups who emerged from Noah’s 3 sons after the Flood.
- Do you remember what Lamech said about his son Noah?
 - “He named him Noah and said, “He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed.” Genesis 5:29
 - Lamech hoped that Noah would bring an end to the painful toil of farming which was a result of the curse on the land and God’s pronouncement on the punishment for Adam’s sin from Genesis 3:17-19.
 - Noah did put an end to the painful toil of farming, but not exactly in the way Lamech imagined. Noah and the other 7 members of his family were the only people saved from the Flood, which fully put an end to farming for 370 days.
 - Now, we learn from Genesis 9:20 that Noah had planted a vineyard. Growing grapes represents a step up from just growing crops for food.
 - Wine might even be considered a luxury item.
 - Gordon Wenham points out in his commentary that grape-producing vines actually originated in Armenia, which is where the ark landed.

- The oldest archaeological evidence for winemaking has been found in the country of Georgia, which also borders where the ark landed.
- While wine might have been considered a luxury item, it certainly presented the opportunity for misuse, with Noah in that category.
 - The Bible does not condemn growing grapes, eating grapes, or drinking wine. Grapes and wine were important elements of the Middle Eastern diet and wine was often used in religious sacrifices.
 - Wine was considered a blessing from God. Reference Psalm 104:14-15:
 - He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: ¹⁵ wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts.
 - Notice that Genesis, unlike later Bible passages, says nothing about Noah's drunkenness and nakedness.
 - Nevertheless, it is a sharp contrast to the pious, blameless man of Genesis 6 whom Peter called a preacher of righteousness.
 - Charles Spurgeon said, "God never allows His children to sin successfully." Warren Wiersbe adds, "There's always a price to pay."
- What Genesis 9:22 focuses on are the actions, and specifically the *lack of action*, of Noah's son Ham.
 - Ham, instead of simply covering up his father and going his own way, leaves his father Noah naked and tattles to his 2 brothers. This is the offense which results in the charge against Ham's son Canaan.
 - Ham's inaction and then his action are an indication of his character. God has not yet given the 10 commandments, but Ham clearly did not honor his father (the command from Exodus 20:12).
 - Noah's other 2 sons, Shem and Japheth, go to great lengths to cover up their father. Imagine walking backward into a large tent and trying to cover someone up without looking at the person.

- Victor Hamilton quotes Habakkuk 1:13 when commenting about Shem and Japheth.
 - “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.”
- The following Proverb speaks volumes about Noah’s 3 sons:
 - Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. Proverbs 17:9
- Certainly, Ham has created some strife with his brothers by his lack of action.
- When Noah wakes up, certainly with a hangover, he lashes out at Ham by cursing his son Canaan.
 - Scripture is silent on how Noah discovered what Ham had failed to do.
 - It is interesting that Noah’s first words in Genesis are, “Cursed be Canaan” (Genesis 9:25). Victor Hamilton says this “most taciturn of men” has built a big ship, weathered a flood lasting over a year, built an altar, sacrificed to God, planted a vineyard, produced wine, and now he finally speaks in Scripture.
 - His words sound like a man angry with himself as much as his son.
 - We should also understand that Noah’s curses do not carry the same weight as God’s curses and are perhaps more in the realm of wishing that God would hear his words and place a curse on Canaan.
 - Does God hear Noah? Later orders to destroy the Canaanites after the Exodus would suggest that God did. As you learned from Psalm 106, the Canaanites were guilty of idol worship and child sacrifice.
 - Why is Canaan cursed and not Ham?
 - This has stumped commentators for years and there is no definitive answer.
 - One suggestion is that this is an example of *Talion*, an eye for an eye. The youngest son of Noah, Ham, is responsible for the curse that is placed on his youngest son, Canaan, so named in Genesis 10:6.

- Another suggestion by Warren Wiersbe is that Noah is describing the future of his 3 sons and his grandson, based on what he saw in their character. In effect, Noah is giving a prophecy.
 - In this regard, Canaan's descendants will be cursed for their own sins, not the sins of Ham. Further, the descendants of Canaan will serve the descendants of Shem, and of Japheth.
 - And Ham's other descendants receive no prophecy, praise, or blessing at all.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God Romans 3:23

1. Which people does God use to populate the earth after the flood?
The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹ These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the whole earth. Genesis 9:18-19
2. How does their effectiveness fulfill Genesis 9:7?
 - As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it. Genesis 9:7
 - The descendants of the 3 sons of Noah populated the earth after the Flood.
3. What was Noah's occupation after the flood?
Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. Genesis 9:20
4. What societal change did Noah's post-flood occupation mark? (Hint: contrast with Genesis 3:18.)
 - It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. Genesis 3:18
 - Wine marked a production of a fermented drink which was a contrast from just producing plants to eat. It was a step forward in agriculture.
5. What happened to Noah?
 - When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Genesis 9:21
6. How do Noah's actions post-flood compare to the description of Noah in Genesis 6:9?
 - Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. Genesis 6:9
 - Noah had succumbed to the temptation of too much wine.

7. How do Proverbs 23:20-21, Isaiah 28:7, and Habakkuk 2: 15-16 offer context?
 - Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, ²¹ **for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.** Proverbs 23:20-21
 - And these also stagger from wine and reel from beer: **Priests and prophets** stagger from beer and are befuddled with wine; they reel from beer, **they stagger when seeing visions, they stumble when rendering decisions.** Isaiah 28:7
 - **Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies! ¹⁶ You will be filled with shame instead of glory.** Now it is your turn! Drink and let your nakedness be exposed! The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory. Habakkuk 2:15-16
8. Who discovers Noah's situation?
Noah's son Ham, the father of Canaan
9. What does he do?
Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. Genesis 9:22
10. What would have been the proper course of action?
Ham, when seeing his father drunk and naked, should have immediately covered him.
11. Who next handles Noah's situation and in what manner?
But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked. Genesis 9:23
12. How does Noah react later?
When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." Genesis 9:24-25

13. Why do you think Canaan is cursed and not Ham? (Hint: see Genesis 9:1.)
- Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. Genesis 9:1
 - Ham is twice identified as the father of Canaan, in Genesis 9:18 and 9:22. Canaan represents the “fruit” of Ham’s fertility and the re-population of the earth via Noah’s sons. Noah may think that Ham’s actions have jeopardized the blessing placed on Noah’s sons by God. Therefore Noah, perhaps in a fit of anger, places a curse upon Ham’s son Canaan. In effect, there is a curse on the line of Canaan.
14. Genesis 9:25b reads “a servant of servants” or “a slave of slaves.” How do you interpret this phrase?
- The line of Canaan will be subordinate to the lines of Shem and Japheth. This line will be “the lowest of the low” in the tree of life after the Flood.
15. In verse 26, why is the Lord blessed and not Shem?
- He also said, “Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. Genesis 9:26
 - Praise should always be granted to God, not to an individual.
 - Noah is giving God the glory for what he will do for the line of Shem.
16. How might verse 26 foreshadow the importance of Shem’s descendants? (Hint: read ahead to Genesis 11:10-31. What important person do you note there?)
- The “God of Shem” portion of this verse suggests that Shem is going to be the favored genealogical line.
 - This is the account of Shem’s family line..... After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. Genesis 11:10,26
 - Abram, later called Abraham is in the line of Shem.
17. What does Noah say about Japheth?
- May God extend Japheth’s territory; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth. Genesis 9:27

18. If Shem's descendants will be important, what does verse 27 suggest about Japheth's descendants?

Verse 27 suggests an alliance between Japheth's and Shem's descendants, with the line of Shem being superior.

19. What is the overall inference about the descendants of Canaan?

- They are not the chosen line.
- They will be subservient to the lines of Shem and Japheth.

20. When the Bible speaks of Canaanites, what religious practices do you associate with them? (Hint: see Psalm 106:34-38.)

- They did not destroy the peoples as the LORD had commanded them, ³⁵ but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs. ³⁶ They worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them. ³⁷ They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to false gods. ³⁸ They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. Psalms 106:34-38
- They were idol worshippers who practiced child sacrifice.

21. How old was Noah when he died?

- After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹ **Noah lived a total of 950 years**, and then he died. Genesis 9:28-29



Genesis Lesson 7

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Leaving the Ark



The Ark Rests on Ararat; Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 1860; The Bible in Pictures; Copyright: ₂
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Genesis 9:18-19

- These Verses Perform 3 Functions in Genesis:
 - They Show the Divine Command to “Be Fruitful and Multiply” Has Happened; Ham Has a Son Canaan
 - They Lay the Groundwork for the Later Curse on Canaan
 - They Prepare for the Table of Nations in Genesis 10; All the People Groups Who Emerged from Noah’s 3 Sons After the Flood

Noah

- Genesis 5:29; What Lamech Said About His Son Noah
- Lamech Hoped Noah Would Bring an End to the Painful Toil of Farming Which Was the Curse on the Land and Adam's Punishment (Genesis 3:17-19)
- Noah Did Put an End to the Painful Toil of Farming, But Not Exactly in the Way Lamech Imagined
- Genesis 9:20; Noah Planted a Vineyard; A Step Up from Growing Food Crops
 - Wine Might Be Considered a Luxury Item
 - Gordon Wenham: Grape-Producing Vines Originated in Armenia, Where the Ark Landed
 - The Oldest Archaeological Evidence for Winemaking Has Been Found in the Country of Georgia, Which Also Borders Where the Ark Landed

Noah

- Wine, While Perhaps a Luxury Item, Certainly Presented the Opportunity for Misuse
- The Bible Does Not Condemn Growing Grapes, Eating Grapes, or Drinking Wine
- Grapes and Wine Were Important Elements of the Middle Eastern Diet and Wine Was Often Used in Religious Sacrifices
- Wine Was a Blessing from God; Psalm 104:14-15
- Genesis, Unlike Later Bible Passages, Says Nothing About Noah's Drunkenness and Nakedness
- It Is a Sharp Contrast to the Pious, Blameless Man of Genesis 6, Whom Peter Called a Preacher of Righteousness
- Charles Spurgeon; Warren Wiersbe

The Drunkenness of Noah



The Drunkenness of Noah; James Tissot; circa 1896-1902; The Jewish Museum, New York City, New York

Ham, Shem, and Japheth

- Genesis 9:22 Focuses on the Actions and the Lack of Action of Noah's Son Ham
- Ham, Instead of Covering up His Father, Leaves His Father Naked and Tattles to His 2 Brothers; This is the Offense Which Results in the Charge Against Canaan
- Ham's Inaction and Then His Action Are Indicative of His Character
- Ham Did Not Honor His Father (Exodus 20:12)
- Noah's Other 2 Sons Go to Great Lengths to Cover Up Their Father
- Victor Hamilton Quotes Habakkuk 1:13 When Commenting about Shem and Japheth
- Proverbs 17:9
- Ham Has Crated Some Strife with His Brothers

Noah Lashes Out

- When Noah Wakes Up, Certainly with a Hangover, He Lashes out at Ham by Cursing His Son Canaan
- Scripture Is Silent About How Noah Discovered What Ham Failed to Do
- Noah's First Words in Genesis are "Cursed Be Canaan" (Genesis 9:25)
- Victor Hamilton: "This Most Taciturn of Men" Has Built a Big Ship, Weathered a Flood Lasting Over a Year, Built an Altar, Sacrificed to God, Planted a Vineyard, Produced Wine, and Now Finally Speaks

Noah Lashes Out

- A Man Angry with Himself as Much as His Son
- Noah's Curses Do Not Carry the Same Weight as God's Curses; More in the Realm of Wishing that God Would Hear His Words and Place a Curse on Canaan
- Does God Hear Noah? Later Orders to Destroy the Canaanites After the Exodus Would Suggest That God Did
- Psalm 106 Tells Us the Canaanites Were Guilty of Idol Worship and Child Sacrifice

Noah Condemning Ham by Cursing Canaan



Noah Damning Ham; Ivan Stepanovitch Ksenofontov; 19th century; copyright: [wikimediacommons.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Noah_Damning_Ham.jpg)

Why Is Canaan Cursed and Not Ham?

- This Has Stumped Commentators for Years; No Definitive Answer
- One Suggestion: an Example of *Talion*, an Eye for an Eye
 - The Youngest Son of Noah Is Responsible for the Curse That Is Placed on His Youngest Son (see Genesis 10:6)
- Warren Wiersbe Suggests That Noah is Describing the Future of His Sons and Grandson, Based On What He Saw in their Character; In Effect, Noah Is Giving a Prophecy
 - Canaan's Descendants Will Be Cursed for Their Own Sins, Not the sins of Ham
 - The Descendants of Canaan Will Serve the Descendants of Shem and Japheth
 - Ham's Other Descendants Receive No Prophecy, Praise, or Blessing at All