

DID GOD CURSE BLACK PEOPLE?

For hundreds of years people of different ethnicities, primarily in "religious" circles, have used Genesis 9:24-27 to justify their hatred and enslavement of "blacks" in America. Many have claimed that because of this incident "black" people are under a curse. But what does your Bible really have to say on this subject. Let's look to the Word of God for enlightenment as we study this controversial, and often explosive, subject.

I will not spend time on the various speculations as to what may have occurred, or which of the two, Ham or Canaan, was the actual perpetrator. However, there are a number of commentaries that theorize everything from Noah, or Noah's wife, discovered naked to presumptions that this was the first recorded account of a homosexual act.

1) First let's see what Genesis 9:18-27 has to say.

a) According to Genesis 9:24, how many were cursed and which one(s)?

Genesis 9:18-27

¹⁸ 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 earth.

²⁰ Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. ²¹ When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. ²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. ²³ But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's nakedness.

²⁴ 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."

²⁶ He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem.

²⁷ May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave."

²⁸ After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹ Altogether, Noah lived 950 years, and then he died.

2) Read Genesis 10:6-20 below and answer the following:

a) How many sons did Ham beget?

b) Starting in Genesis 10:15 below, what are the names of Canaan's offspring?

Genesis 10:6-20

⁶ The sons of Ham:

Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan.

⁷ The sons of Cush:

Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteca.

The sons of Raamah:

Sheba and Dedan.

⁸ Cush was the father of Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. ⁹ He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD." ¹⁰ The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, in Shinar. ¹¹ From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah ¹² and Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

¹³ Mizraim was the father of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴ Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites.

¹⁵ Canaan was the father of Sidon his firstborn, and of the Hittites, ¹⁶ Jebusites, Amorites, Gergashites, ¹⁷ Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸ Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.

Later the Canaanite clans scattered ¹⁹ and the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

²⁰ These are the sons of Ham by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.

NOTE – According to Unger’s Bible Dictionary Ham’s sons, “Cush, Mizraim, and Phut (or Put) were the progenitors of the tribes that peopled Africa, and Canaan became the father of those that principally occupied Phoenicia and Palestine.

3) The following verses will reveal what kind of people the Canaanites were and why the LORD didn’t want Israel to intermingle, intermix, or intermarry with them. As you’ll see, it had absolutely nothing to do with skin color.

Exodus 23:23-24

²³ For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. ²⁴ You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars.

Deuteronomy 12:29-31

²⁹ The LORD your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, ³⁰ and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, "How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same." ³¹ You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.

Deuteronomy 18:9-14

⁹ When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. ¹⁰ Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, ¹¹ or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

¹² Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. ¹³ You must be blameless before the LORD your God.

¹⁴ The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so.

Deuteronomy 7:1-6

¹ When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you- ² and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally.

[a] Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. ³ Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. ⁵ This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars,

smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. ⁶ For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

Psalms 106:34-41

³⁴ 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 demons. 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. ³⁹ They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves. ⁴⁰ Therefore the LORD was angry with his people and abhorred his inheritance. ⁴¹ He handed them over to the nations, and their foes ruled over them.

Jeremiah 32:26-35

²⁶ Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁷ "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me? ²⁸ Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the Babylonians and to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will capture it. ²⁹ The Babylonians who are attacking this city will come in and set it on fire; they will burn it down, along with the houses where the people provoked me to anger by burning incense on the roofs to Baal and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods.

³⁰ "The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth; indeed, the people of Israel have done nothing but provoke me with what their hands have made, declares the LORD. ³¹ From the day it was built until now, this city has so aroused my anger and wrath that I must remove it from my sight. ³² The people of Israel and Judah have provoked me by all the evil they have done—they, their kings and officials, their priests and prophets, the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem. ³³ They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline. ³⁴ They set up their abominable idols in the house that bears my Name and defiled it. ³⁵ They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molech, though I never commanded, nor did it enter my mind, that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin.

NOTE - The true meaning of "repent" is to turn from sin and back to God.

1 Kings 11:1-13

¹ King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. ² They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. ⁴ As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. ⁵ He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁶ So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

⁷ On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁸ He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

⁹ The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰ Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. ¹¹ So the LORD said to

Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. ¹² Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³ Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

4) In view of the fact that Genesis 9:25-27 states specifically that Canaan would be a servant to his brothers, the first and most obvious place to look for any possible fulfillment of these verses would be in your Bible. The following is not an exhaustive list.

Joshua 16:8-10

⁸ From Tappuah the border went west to the Kanah Ravine and ended at the sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the Ephraimites, clan by clan. ⁹ It also included all the towns and their villages that were set aside for the Ephraimites within the inheritance of the Manassites. ¹⁰ They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labor.

Joshua 17:13

¹³ However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labor but did not drive them out completely.

Judges 1:28

²⁸ When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor but never drove them out completely.

5) From the scriptures provided above, you see that man's justification for enslaving "black" people in America had absolutely nothing to do with Noah's curse on Canaan. For many years countless numbers of African Americans, and blacks on other continents, have been made to feel less than. So many souls left with debilitating feelings of rejection because of a lie. But what does our Lord have to say on the subject of flesh? What importance does God put on it?

John 6:63

⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

6) Read the following verses for a look into the heart of our LORD and His desire for every person, regardless of skin color or ethnicity.

1 Samuel 16:7

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Matthew 15:21-28

²¹ Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." ²³ But He answered her not a word.

And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

²⁴ But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

²⁵ Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" ²⁶ But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." ²⁷ And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Acts 8:26-38

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. ²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." ³⁰ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

" He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.

³³ In His humiliation His justice was taken away,
And who will declare His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth."

³⁴ So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. ³⁶ Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"

³⁷ Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

2 Peter 3:9

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Acts 10:34-35

³⁴ Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

³⁵ But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

Isaiah 19:24-25

²⁴ In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, ²⁵ whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."

7) Finally I ask that you meditate on the following.

Genesis 9:18-19

¹⁸ Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. ¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.