

## Sermon Discussion

### 13 February 2022

Read Genesis 9:18-29

#### Dig Deeper

This section presents the characteristics of the **three branches** of the human family that grew out of Noah. Moses stressed the themes of blessing and cursing. God cursed Canaan with slavery because Ham showed disrespect toward Noah whereas He blessed Shem and Japheth for their regard for their father's vulnerable condition.

Though **wine** is said to cheer the heart (*Judges 9:13; Psalm 104:15*) and alleviate the pain of the curse (*Proverbs 31:6-7*), it is also clear that it has disturbing effects. In this case, Noah lay drunk and naked in his tent. Intoxication and sexual looseness are hallmarks of pagans, and both are traced back to this event in Noah's life. Interestingly after the Flood, man had not changed at all; with the opportunity to start a "new creation," Noah acted like a pagan.

The basic question concerns what Ham did (v. 22, 24) and why Noah cursed Ham's "son" Canaan (v. 25-27). Many ideas have been proposed. **The rabbis** said Ham castrated Noah, thus explaining why Noah had no other sons. Others claim that Ham slept with his mother, thus uncovering his father's nakedness, and that Canaan was the offspring of that union. Others have said that Ham was involved in a homosexual attack on his father.

But the **Hebrew expression** here means what it says: Ham ... saw his father's nakedness (v. 22). He was not involved with Noah sexually, for in that case the Hebrew would be translated "*he uncovered his father's nakedness.*" Instead, Noah had already uncovered himself, and Ham saw him that way.

To the ancients, however, even seeing one's father naked was a breach of family ethic. The sanctity of the family was destroyed and the strength of the father was made a mockery. Ham apparently stumbled on this accidentally, but went out and told his two brothers, as if he had triumphed over his father.

The **first time** Moses recorded a human uttering a curse (v. 25) is a prophecy announcing divine judgment on Canaan's descendants for their sin that had its seed in Ham's act. Noah, as a prophet, announced the future of this grandson's descendants. **There is no basis** for the notion that this oracle doomed the Hamites, who were mainly Africans, to a position of inferiority or slavery among the other peoples of the world. Canaan and his branch of the family are the subject of this prophecy, not Ham and all his descendants.

1. In this section of the Bible, what failures do you see in the first people to repopulate the earth? What were the results? What does this tell you about sin?

2. Do we build up an immunity against sin the more we grow in Christ? Why or why not?
3. How would you answer the charge that God was not fair in cursing Canaan? Did God cause children to suffer for their parents' sins?
4. Is it possible for all Christians obey God? What would you say to someone who said, "*I'm too weak to obey*"?
5. How do you generally respond when you learn of another Christian's sin (v. 22)? Are you more like Ham or more like Shem and Japheth (v. 23)?

### **Application & Prayer**

- Looking back on Noah's entire story, how can you see the gospel of Christ pictured?
- Noah's sin led his son into sin, which affected an entire race of people. What principle does that illustrate about sin? Is there any sin you need to confess before God right now?
- Reflect on the implications of Genesis 9:18-29 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in His gracious promises.