

Racism In Theological Disguise
Genesis 9:20-27

There is no shortage of controversial issues raised in the opening chapters of Genesis. We have already discovered the God's Word has much to say about the subject of Creation, the family, the role of husband and wife, homosexuality, capital punishment, and role of government. Today, we come to a passage that has been wrongly used to support white racism. Our goal in today's study is to discover the truth concerning the curse on Canaan, and to examine our own hearts regarding race relations.

Sadly, Christians used the BIBLE in an attempt to justify their racist behavior. The SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE (1917) included this footnote in Genesis 9:21. *"A prophetic declaration is made that from Japheth will descend the "enlarged" races Genesis 9:27. Government, science, and art, speaking broadly, are and have been Japhetic, so that history is the indisputable record of the exact fulfilment of these declarations."*

From Genesis 10:6, we learn that the sons of Ham were Cush (Ethopia), Put (Lybia), Egypt, and Canaan. Scofield's interpretation is that the curse of Genesis 9:27 is a curse that condemned the entire continent of Africa.

While Scofield's note may initially sound innocent, notice the word "Japhetic." Japheth's sons moved into the land that is currently Turkey, Greece and the western Mediterranean, essentially the ancestors of white Europeans. "Japhetic" means the superiority of the white race. This was the attitude of many in Europe and America in the 1800's and 1900's. It is devastatingly sad that accomplished theologians such as Scofield could be so prideful, as well as so thoroughly blinded by their cultural understanding so as to misinterpret the Scriptures. Bear in mind that the same danger is possible for us today, perhaps in different areas of our thinking.

Before we go further into the subject of racial prejudice TODAY, let's examine the story more closely. There are key points for us to remember...

I. Noah's Sin. Gen 9:20-22

This occurred years after they left the ark. Only 8 were on the ark. Ham's son Canaan was not yet born. There was time to find grapes, plant a vineyard, ferment wine and drink from it's produce. This is the first mention of wine in the Bible, and it demonstrates to us the danger of alcoholic consumption. Noah did not set out to get drunk and embarrass himself, he succumbed to the power of alcohol, as many still do today. WINE TAKES OVER and causes even the STRONGEST BELIEVER to sin! Noah retires to his tent, overheated by the alcohol, he removes his clothes. Noah's behavior is a LACK of JUDGMENT and DISCERNMENT that led to the sin of

DRUNKENNESS. It put the man of God in a **compromising situation** that someone with evil motives was able to take advantage.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary notes the following: *“Intoxication and sexual looseness are hallmarks of pagans, and both are traced back to this event in Noah’s life.”*

BKC. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-), *in loc.*

II. Ham’s Sin. Gen 9:22

What happened next is of utmost importance to the story. “Ham saw his father’s nakedness. The word can be interpreted, “gazed with satisfaction” (Morris). There is often an **emotional component** to this word (“My bones gloat over me” (Ps 22:18). “Enjoy looking at” (Song 6:11). “Look at with sorrow” (Gen 21:16).

Ham was **satisfied to see** his father’s embarrassing condition. Here, Dr. Morris gives us profound insight. *“A much more probable interpretation of Ham’s actions here is that they expressed a **long-hidden resentment** of his father’s authority and moral rectitude.Now, however, beholding the evidence of his father’s human weakness before his very eyes, he rejoiced, no doubt feeling a sense of release from all the inhibitions which had until now suppressed his own desires and ambitions. Thinking his brothers would share his satisfaction, he hastened to find them and tell them the savory news. Literally, the text means “he told with delight.”*

*Ham’s sin was not so much one of immoral lust. It was one of rebellion against his **father’s authority**, plus resentment against the entire **moral standard** that had been taught and enforced by Noah in his family for well over a hundred years. Fundamentally, his act revealed an attitude of resentment against God Himself, a character trait which was bound to crop out explosively some day, if not in Ham, then in his children. **Henry M. Morris**, The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1976), 235.*

Ham went and told his brothers (with delight). He violated God’s command regarding the family.

1. **Fifth Command. Exodus 20:12** “honor your father and mother”
2. **Proverbs 23:22** *“Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.”*
3. **Proverbs 23:25** *“May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!”*
4. **Proverbs 30:11** *““There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers;”*

Ham shows disrespect and lack of concern for his father’s embarrassing situation.

III. Shem and Japeth’s respect. Gen 9:23

They showed respect for their father. They covered Noah's disgrace. They understood the frailty of man, and the danger of sin. They were determined that the sin would spread no further than Noah's tent. They protected Noah's testimony and showed respect for their otherwise godly father.

IV. Noah's Curse. Gen 9:24-27

Because Ham disgraced his father, Ham would be disgraced by his son! Canaan's decedents would be servants. This is extremely important. Ham is not cursed (as Scofield and others wantonly argued. Canaan is cursed, and only Canaan. So we ask the question, who were Canaan's descendents? They were the people of the plain, including Sodom and Gomorah. They were the eventual people of the Canaanites. (See **Genesis 10:15-16**).

What happened to the Canaanites?

As early as **Genesis 14**, the decedents of Canaan were defeated and enslaved. God would later command Israel that He would "destroy the Canaanites" (Exodus 23:23-33). And this is exactly what happened (Numbers 21:1-3 ; Judges 1:17).

V. What does the **BIBLE** teach about race?

There is only ONE RACE... the HUMAN RACE

FOUR passages make this abundantly clear.

1. **Genesis 1:27. "God's image**
2. **Acts 17:26** *"From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live."*
3. **Revelation 5:9** *"And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every **tribe and language and people and nation.**"* This passage is striking because it demonstrates four categories of people that God will ensure to inhabit heaven. Notice that division of race (skin color) is not among the categories.
 - a. Tribe = φηλος φυλής.
 - (1) "A subgroup of a nation which is regarded as being more closely related biologically than the whole nation" (Louw and Nida).
 - (2) Examples: **tribe of Benjamin, tribe of Judah...**
 - b. Gloss γλώσσης = language
 - c. Laow λαος = people
 - d. Ethnos ἔθνους = nation
 - e. Nothing is said of a "race"

4. **Galatians 3:28** *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* (**1 Corinthians 12:13** *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."* **Colossians 3:11** *"Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."*)

VI. What does **BIOLOGY** teach us about race? Here, De. Ken Ham offers excellent insight.

According to the Bible's history, all humans are descendants of Adam and Eve—thus only one biological race exists. ... When the Human Genome Project published a draft of their findings in 2000, the New York Times reported that "the researchers had unanimously declared there is only one race—the human race."

Assume dominant genes result in lots of melanin and recessive genes result in little melanin. Adam and Eve were most likely a middle brown color with both dominant and recessive genes for the pigment melanin in the skin. Children who received all the dominant genes would end up with a lot of the color and be very dark. Children who received all the recessive genes would end up with only a little color and be very light. Children with a mixture of the genes (both dominant and recessive) would be middle brown (Ken Ham, "It's Not Just Black and White," (Answers in Genesis, Feb 13, 2008), www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v3)

VII. What is the Source of Racism

- A. It is NOT
1. America's past history of slavery
 2. Poverty
 3. Social classes
- B. The source of RACISM is SIN!
1. PRIDE (we're better than others)
 2. SHAME (we're inferior to others)
 3. OPPRESSION (manipulation of a group of people)
- C. Racism has been **ADVANCED** through the teaching of evolution.
1. Margaret Sanger, 1920's. Eugenics. Evolutionary. White superiority.
 2. "In the 1800s, before Darwinian evolution was popularized, most people used the word "races" to refer to such groups as the "English race," "Irish race," and so on. However, this all changed in 1859 when Charles Darwin published his book *On the Origin of Species*. Most people don't know that the subtitle of that book is *The Preservation of Favored Races and the Struggle for Life*.
 3. In 1871, Darwin wrote *The Descent of Man* in 1871, in which he

applied evolutionary philosophy to mankind. (Because of his bitterness toward God and renouncing his earlier faith, it's likely that this is what he wanted to do all along anyway.) In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin popularized the idea of different races of people—lower races, higher races, primitive races, advanced races, and so on. What did that do? As the late Steven J. Gould from Harvard University said, “Biological arguments for racism may have been common before 1850 but they increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of evolutionary theory.” **(Ken Ham, “It’s Not Just Black and White,”** (Answers in Genesis, Feb 13, 2008), www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v3/n2/twins-black-and-white

D. Racism is a powerful tool used to divide, control and manipulate people

VIII. Sinful tendencies from which we must recognize and repent

- A. Racially charged words
- B. Humor at the expense of others
- C. Stereotypes
- D. Seeing things through a “racial lens”
- E. Saying, “It’s white people who are racist”
- F. Saying, “It’s black people who are racist”
- G. Thinking that they way to overcome racism is through reverse racism (affirmative action)
- H. Voting for or against a political candidate because of their skin color
- I. “Preserve our race” (objections to interracial marriage)

IX. America’s sad history

- A. Slavery
- B. Evolutionary teaching
- C. Segregation
- D. Racial discrimination

X. Call to Action

- A. The SIN is
 - 1. Judgement
 - 2. Pride
 - 3. Anger
 - 4. Bitterness
- B. The CURE
 - 1. Repentance
 - 2. Forgiveness

3. Grace
4. Forbearance

C. The GOAL - one people of God!