

Genesis 9:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.... This passage belongs to the primeval history section (Genesis 1-11) which establishes universal truths about God, humanity, sin, and divine purposes before focusing on Abraham and Israel. These chapters answer fundamental questions about human origins, the spread of wickedness, God's judgment, and the preservation of a righteous remnant.

Recurring patterns emerge: human sin escalating from individual disobedience to societal corruption, divine patience followed by judgment, gracious preservation of a remnant, and covenant promises ensuring redemptive purposes continue. The genealogies connect historical persons, demonstrate the fulfillment of divine promises (blessing and multiplication), and trace the line leading to Abraham and ultimately Christ.

Key theological themes in this section include:

1. sin's destructive progression affecting all humanity
2. God's righteous judgment while preserving mercy
3. human pride and autonomy opposing divine sovereignty
4. cultural development as both blessing and potential idolatry
5. God's sovereign plan advancing despite human rebellion.

These narratives provide the necessary context for understanding God's calling of Abraham and the covenant promises through which all nations will be blessed.

Historical Context

The primeval history (Genesis 1-11) parallels ancient Near Eastern traditions including Sumerian King Lists (pre-flood longevity), Akkadian flood traditions (Atrahasis, Gilgamesh), and Mesopotamian city foundation myths. However, Genesis demythologizes these traditions, presenting monotheistic history rather than polytheistic mythology. The genealogies connecting Adam to Noah to Abraham provide historical framework absent in pagan myths.

Archaeological evidence confirms ancient urbanization (chapter 4's cities), agricultural development, metallurgy, and musical instruments emerging in Mesopotamia's early history. The Babel account reflects Mesopotamian ziggurat construction (stepped pyramid temples), particularly in Babylon. Linguistic diversity requiring explanation was obvious to ancient peoples, making the Babel narrative culturally relevant.

For Israel in covenant with Yahweh, these chapters explained their relationship to surrounding nations. All peoples descended from Noah, but Israel descended from Shem through Abraham—chosen for blessing all nations. The flood demonstrated God's justice and mercy: judging wickedness while preserving the righteous. This pattern would recur throughout Israel's history, assuring them that God's covenant faithfulness endures despite judgment on the wicked.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. How should this truth about Ham's Sin shape our daily decisions and priorities?

3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | |
|-------------|---------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|
| וַיֹּאמֶר | אָר וּר | כָּנָעִי | עֶבֶד יְיָ | עֶבֶד יְיָ | יְהוָה ה |
| And he said | Cursed | be Canaan | a servant | a servant | H1961 |
| H559 | H779 | H3667 | H5650 | H5650 | |

לְאָחֵיו:

shall he be unto his brethren

H251

Additional Cross-References

John 8:34 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

Deuteronomy 27:16 (Curse): Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Joshua 9:23 (Curse): Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

Joshua 9:27 (Parallel theme): And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

Matthew 25:41 (Curse): Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Deuteronomy 28:18 (Curse): Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.