

**THE CURSE OF CANAAN IN GENESIS 9:18-27 AND ITS EFFECTS ON HAM'S
DESCENDANTS**

AMOS SUKUTHA

M21B09/025

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO BISHOP TUCKER SCHOOL OF DIVINITY AND
THEOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF BACHELOR
OF DIVINITY OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

September, 2024



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

DECLARATION


I, **Sukutha Amos**, declare that this Research Report is original and to the best of my knowledge, it has never been presented to any University or Institution for any award.

Signed.....
SUKUTHA AMOS
STUDENT

Date..10/9/2024..

APPROVAL

This research report has been carried out under my supervision and is submitted with my approval.

Signed:.....

REV. DR. MUKESHIMANA EMMANUEL
SUPERVISOR

Date:10/9/2024.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

I cannot imagine what the last three years would have been like without God's love Constantly enriching my existence, and his continual encouragement helping me and my family with work, as with so much else in life. This work would also have not been possible without the assistance of various people. It is, of course, virtually impossible to name all of the people who have helped me along the way. I am thankful to everyone who helped make this work a reality; in particular, I would like to thank the following; I am very grateful to my supervisor and mentor, Dr. Emmanuel Mukeshimana for his Help during my study and subsequently: he has been able to give me full of wise advices. I appreciate of the Dean of Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology Rev. Prof. Christopher Byaruhanga and Madam Jean the assistant Register. Thanks are also due to the School of BTSDT, especially Professor Elly Kansime and Dr. Emmanuel Mukeshimana and those who challenges and encouragement have motivated and taught me along the way. To be able to complete the present study is in itself a reflection of the sacrificial. Love of many individual Christians and Churches I received. Without the spiritual and financial support of the churches, the present work would not have been started and completed. In this, I would like to express my thanks to Rev. Canon to the Ordinary David Kaleebu the DS Central Buganda Diocese, my spiritual Father, I must also express my gratitude to my Beloved Wife Esther Masika Sukutha for the persistent prayer, love and support. Moreover, Special thanks go to the unfailing love and concern given Brother Sukutha Eria. In addition, a number of friends have also contributed to the cost of Maintenance for my family and my study over the past three years. Finally, words cannot express the debt which I owe to my family in Kasese for all the love and concern which they have so unselfishly shown to me and my family during the writing of this work. Without their love and encouragement, this work might never have seen the light of day. A final word of gratitude has to be reserved for my dear Children, Aquila, Ashbel and Ariel, who has persistently given their Love and companionship, especially over the Past three years.

To God, this work is dedicated with faith.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY.....	2
1.1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	4
1.1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
1.1.6 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY	4
1.1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.2 LITURITURE REVIEW	6
1.2.1 The historical and cultural context of the Curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27.....	7
1.2.2 Theological implications of the Curse of Canaan and its impact on descendants of Ham. ...	9
1.2.3 The impact of interpretations and teachings related to the curse of Canaan.	11
1.3 METHODOLOGY	13
1.3.0 INTRODUCTION.	13
1.3.1. Hermeneutical Interpretation.	13
1.3.2. Cultural Hermeneutics.	14
1.3.3. Confessional Hermeneutics	14
1.3.4. Research Design.....	15

1.3.5 Ethical Considerations:	15
1.3.6 Research Instruments	15
1.3.7 Textual Analysis:	16
1.3.8 Historical Research:	16
1.3.9 Validation of the Research Instrument.	16
1.3.10 Sources of Data Information.....	16
1.4 Summary	17
CHAPTER TWO	18
THE EXEGETICAL STUDY OF CURSE OF CANAAN IN GENESIS 9:18-27.	18
2.0 Introduction.....	18
2.1 THE EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 9:18-27	19
2.1.1 Ham`s sin 22-23	19
2.1.2 Canaan`s Curse 24-27	20
2.2. The relationship of Genesis 9:18-27 with other Old Testament Texts.	21
2.3. The relationship of Genesis 9:18-27 with other New Testament verses.	22
2.4 Theological Significance Genesis 9:18-27.	23
2.5 Conclusions	24
CHAPTER THREE	25
THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION OF THE CURSE OF CANAAN IN GENESIS 9:18-27.	25
3.0 Introduction.....	25
3.1 The Nature of the Curse.....	25
3.2 Divine justice and human responsibility.....	26
3.4 Covenant and Election	26
3.5 Interpretation in light of later scripture.....	27

3.6 Conclusion	29
CHAPTER FOUR.....	30
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	30
4.1 Conclusions:.....	30
4.2 Recommendations.....	32
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	33

ABSTRACT.

The study is about the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its effects on the descendants of Ham. The study is a Biblical and research based and it is guided by three objectives; to investigate the historical and cultural context of the narrative of the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27. To analyze the theological implications of the curse of Canaan and lastly to assess the impact of interpretation and teachings related to the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27.

The researcher used Hermeneutical Interpretation, Cultural Hermeneutical and Confessional Hermeneutical Methods to study and found out that the concept of curse of Canaan and the effects of curse on Ham`s descendants mentioned in the Bible especially in the book of Genesis has had a lasting impact on the interpretation and treatment of the descendants of Ham. The study also found out that this curse has been interpreted as a justification for the subjugation of people of African descent particularly during the era of slavery in the United States.

It is argued that interpreting this curse narrative as a divine mandate for the enslavement or mistreatment of any group of people is a gross misinterpretation.

The study recommends that studying the curse of Canaan is to consider the historical context in which it was written, understanding the socio-political dynamics of the ancient Near East. It also recommend the reading of texts for unraveling the nuances of the curse of Canaan, analyzing the language, syntax and literary devices, Delving into the original Hebrew text and comparing different translations, engaging with a diverse range of scholarly perspectives for a comprehensive study of the curse of Canaan and drawing an insights from the fields like anthropology, archaeology, theology and Biblical studies, including the consultation of reputable sources such as academic journals specializing in Biblical studies, commentaries on the book of Genesis and scholarly works on ancient Near Eastern history and culture.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study on the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its implications on the descendants of Ham digs into a deeply complex and controversial topic that has intrigued scholars, theologians, and historians for centuries. This passage in the Book of Genesis has been the subject of intense scrutiny due to its significant impact on the narrative of the descendants of Ham, Canaan, and their subsequent roles in history.

Genesis 9:18-27 recounts the story of Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, following the catastrophic global flood. In this specific segment, Noah becomes inebriated and curses Canaan, the son of Ham, declaring a curse on Canaan's descendants. The implications of this curse have been interpreted in various ways throughout history, leading to debates on its historicity, morality, and effects on subsequent generations.

By exploring the background of this passage, researchers seek to uncover the cultural, historical, and theological contexts that influenced the writing of the text. Understanding the societal norms and beliefs prevalent at the time of its composition can shed light on the motivations behind the curse and its specific targeting of Canaan. Moreover, digging into the genealogical lineage of Ham and his descendants can provide valuable insights into the lasting repercussions of this curse on the generations that followed.

The study also aims to examine the broader implications of the curse of Canaan on the descendants of Ham, particularly in light of how this narrative has been interpreted and applied throughout history. Scholars grapple with questions surrounding the nature of the curse, its justifiability, and its potential impact on the socio-political dynamics of ancient civilizations. By tracing the reception and perpetuation of this narrative across different cultures and time periods, researchers can elucidate the enduring legacy of the curse and its influence on the perception of certain ethnic groups.

Ultimately, the investigation into the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its implications on the descendants of Ham offers a multifaceted exploration that extends beyond the confines of

biblical exegesis. This study provides a platform for critically analyzing the complexities of ancient texts, engaging with ethical and moral considerations, and unraveling the intricate tapestry of human history and belief systems.

The curse of Canaan in Genesis 9 is still a matter to debate by biblical scholars for centuries, the implications of this curse have been the subject to for much discussions, many scholars argue that the curse of Canaan should not be interpreted as a justification for slavery and racial discriminations, it is not worth noting that biblical interpretation should be done with sensitivity and understanding of the culture and context in which these texts were written. In Genesis 9:26, Noah curses Canaan and his offspring to slavery. Who is Canaan and What did he do to Noah for the latter to curse him? According to Gen 9:18, Canaan is the son of Ham is called the father of Canaan; Gen 10:1 presents Canaan as the Fourth and youngest son of Ham. Canaan did nothing to Noah, at least from what is Apparent from the text. It was Canaan's father Ham, Noah's youngest son, who gazed at the drunk and sleeping Noah's nude body without covering him. Ham's gazing at His father's nudity appears innocent, without evil motive or intent. This biblical Narrative, Gen 9:18-27, is known as the "Curse of Ham" narrative. Many scholars of The Bible, ancient and modern, have regarded the narrative as enigmatic (Hepner 2001). To make sense of the narrative, they assume that Ham did more than only stare, At the nude body of the drunken and sleeping Noah. Even today among the curse of Canaan continues to be invoked to perpetuate negative stereotypes and justify discrimination.

1.1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY.

The study of the curse of Canaan as outlined in Genesis 9:18-27 delves into a crucial passage in religious texts that has sparked debate and discussions for centuries. The implications of this story on the descendants of Ham have been a subject of interest for scholars, theologians, and historians alike. This particular narrative has been interpreted and reinterpreted in various ways, leading to a broad spectrum of viewpoints regarding its meaning and significance.

The story in Genesis 9:18-27 recounts the events following the Great Flood, where Noah, the biblical figure, becomes drunk and exposes himself in his tent. One of his sons, Ham, saw his father's nakedness and reported it to his brothers, Shem and Japheth, who then covered their father without looking at him. Upon awakening and learning of what had occurred, Noah

proceeded to curse Canaan, Ham's son, and proclaimed that Canaan would be a servant of servants to his relatives.

The implications of this curse have been profound, as it has been used historically to justify the subjugation and mistreatment of certain people groups. The descendants of Ham have been traditionally associated with specific geographic regions and ethnicities, leading to the perpetuation of stereotypes and discriminatory practices.

Furthermore, interpretations of this passage have varied widely across different religious traditions and scholarly circles. Some view the curse of Canaan as a historical explanation for certain societal structures or events, while others see it as a metaphorical lesson about the consequences of disrespect and disobedience.

In modern times, the study of the curse of Canaan and its implications on the descendants of Ham raises important questions about the intersection of religion, race, and power dynamics. Understanding the historical context and theological interpretations of this passage is essential for engaging in meaningful dialogue about its impact on society and shaping a more inclusive and just future.

1.1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study will provide a comprehensive overview of the comparative Biblical historical and contextual background of the Curse of Canaan; it will examine the origins of the narratives, its evolution overtime and the implications for the lived experiences of the Ham`s descendants.

1.1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Biblical texts introduce how Canaan was cursed because his father Ham had seen the nakedness of Noah his father. The Bible attempts to shed some more lights particularly on the curse concept, the observance of the study will interrogate the Bible's interpretation of the curse on Canaan, with effects of understanding the intersection for Biblical interpretation, racial ideologies and social justice. It had a profound and enduring impact on the descendants of Ham, shaping historical narratives, societal structures and cultural perceptions.

1.1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Investigate the historical and cultural context of the narrative of the Curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27.
2. Analyze the theological implications of the Curse of Canaan.
3. Assess the impact of interpretations and teachings related to the Curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27.

1.1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What historical and cultural factors have influenced the understanding and application of the Curse of Canaan?
2. To what extent does the interpretation of the Curse of Canaan narrative in Genesis 9:18-27.
3. How the interpretation of the Curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 vary across different theological perspectives.

1.1.6 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The study on the curse of Canaan is justified by the ethical imperative to understand and challenge the ways in which Biblical interpretations have been used to justify discrimination and oppression. This study is also important in the context of Biblical scholarship and exegesis, understanding the historical and cultural context in which this passage was written as well as the minor distinction of its language and symbolism, is essential for comprehensive understanding of the Hebrew Bible and its impact on religious and cultural discourses.

1.1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

This study holds the significances for contemporary discussions on the race, ethnicity and social justice through thorough examining the implications of the curse of Canaan and scholarly contribution is valued high in ways in which Biblical narratives continue to shape attitudes people and provide a basis for challenging and deconstructing harmful ideologies and practices. It will also give the significance of exploring the effects on the descendants of Ham. The study on the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its implications on the descendants of Ham digs into a deeply complex and controversial topic that has intrigued scholars, theologians, and historians for centuries. This passage in the Book of Genesis has been the subject of intense

scrutiny due to its significant impact on the narrative of the descendants of Ham, Canaan, and their subsequent roles in history.

Genesis 9:18-27 recounts the story of Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, following the catastrophic global flood. In this specific segment, Noah becomes inebriated and curses Canaan, the son of Ham, declaring a curse on Canaan's descendants. The implications of this curse have been interpreted in various ways throughout history, leading to debates on its historicity, morality, and effects on subsequent generations.

By exploring the background of this passage, researchers seek to uncover the cultural, historical, and theological contexts that influenced the writing of the text. Understanding the societal norms and beliefs prevalent at the time of its composition can shed light on the motivations behind the curse and its specific targeting of Canaan. Moreover, digging into the genealogical lineage of Ham and his descendants can provide valuable insights into the lasting repercussions of this curse on the generations that followed.

The study also aims to examine the broader implications of the curse of Canaan on the descendants of Ham, particularly in light of how this narrative has been interpreted and applied throughout history. Scholars grapple with questions surrounding the nature of the curse, its justifiability, and its potential impact on the socio-political dynamics of ancient civilizations. By tracing the reception and perpetuation of this narrative across different cultures and time periods, researchers can elucidate the enduring legacy of the curse and its influence on the perception of certain ethnic groups.

Ultimately, the investigation into the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its implications on the descendants of Ham offers a multifaceted exploration that extends beyond the confines of biblical exegesis. This study provides a platform for critically analyzing the complexities of ancient texts, engaging with ethical and moral considerations, and unraveling the intricate tapestry of human history and belief systems.

1.2 LITURITURE REVIEW

The study on the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its implications on the descendants of Ham digs into a deeply complex and controversial topic that has intrigued scholars, theologians, and historians for centuries. This passage in the Book of Genesis has been the subject of intense scrutiny due to its significant impact on the narrative of the descendants of Ham, Canaan, and their subsequent roles in history.

Genesis 9:18-27 recounts the story of Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, following the catastrophic global flood. In this specific segment, Noah becomes inebriated and curses Canaan, the son of Ham, declaring a curse on Canaan's descendants. The implications of this curse have been interpreted in various ways throughout history, leading to debates on its historicity, morality, and effects on subsequent generations.

By exploring the background of this passage, researchers seek to uncover the cultural, historical, and theological contexts that influenced the writing of the text. Understanding the societal norms and beliefs prevalent at the time of its composition can shed light on the motivations behind the curse and its specific targeting of Canaan. Moreover, digging into the genealogical lineage of Ham and his descendants can provide valuable insights into the lasting repercussions of this curse on the generations that followed.

The study also aims to examine the broader implications of the curse of Canaan on the descendants of Ham, particularly in light of how this narrative has been interpreted and applied throughout history. Scholars grapple with questions surrounding the nature of the curse, its justifiability, and its potential impact on the socio-political dynamics of ancient civilizations. By tracing the reception and perpetuation of this narrative across different cultures and time periods, researchers can elucidate the enduring legacy of the curse and its influence on the perception of certain ethnic groups.

Ultimately, the investigation into the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its implications on the descendants of Ham offers a multifaceted exploration that extends beyond the confines of biblical exegesis. This study provides a platform for critically analyzing the complexities of ancient texts, engaging with ethical and moral considerations, and unraveling the intricate tapestry of human history and belief systems.

By exploring the background of this passage, researchers seek to uncover the cultural, historical, and theological contexts that influenced the writing of the text. Understanding the societal norms and beliefs prevalent at the time of its composition can shed light on the motivations behind the curse and its specific targeting of Canaan. Moreover, digging into the genealogical lineage of Ham and his descendants can provide valuable insights into the lasting repercussions of this curse on the generations that followed.

The study also aims to examine the broader implications of the curse of Canaan on the descendants of Ham, particularly in light of how this narrative has been interpreted and applied throughout history. Scholars grapple with questions surrounding the nature of the curse, its justifiability, and its potential impact on the socio-political dynamics of ancient civilizations. By tracing the reception and perpetuation of this narrative across different cultures and time periods, researchers can elucidate the enduring legacy of the curse and its influence on the perception of certain ethnic groups.

Ultimately, the investigation into the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its implications on the descendants of Ham offers a multifaceted exploration that extends beyond the confines of biblical exegesis. This study provides a platform for critically analyzing the complexities of ancient texts, engaging with ethical and moral considerations, and unraveling the intricate tapestry of human history and belief systems.

1.2.1 The historical and cultural context of the Curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27.

David M. Goldenberg (1993) in his book *The Curse of Canaan: A Case of Ancient Racism* he examines the interpretation of the curse as a justification for racism and slavery. He delves into the historical background of ancient Israelite attitudes toward neighboring peoples and challenges modern interpretations that perpetuate discriminatory ideologies.

David M. Goldenberg (2005) in his book, *Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* - In this comprehensive work, Goldenberg traces the evolution of interpretations of the curse across Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. He explores how the curse became associated with racialized notions of inferiority and servitude, impacting attitudes toward slavery throughout history.

Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman (2001) in his book, *Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* they provide insights into the archaeological context of ancient Israel, shedding light on the social, political, and religious dynamics that may have influenced biblical narratives, including the Curse of Canaan. Their analysis challenges traditional understandings of biblical history.

Mark S. Smith (2001) in his book *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* he explores the religious milieu of ancient Israel, emphasizing the polytheistic context from which monotheism emerged. And he discusses the influence of neighboring cultures, such as the Canaanites, on Israelite religious beliefs and practices, offering valuable context for understanding the Curse of Canaan.

Frank Moore Cross (1973) in this essay *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* he analyzes the relationship between Canaanite mythology and Israelite religion, highlighting the parallels and divergences between the two. And his examination of cultural exchange and religious syncretism provides important background for interpreting the Curse of Canaan within its broader cultural context.

Albert J. Raboteau (1978) In this book *Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution' in the Antebellum South* While not directly focused on the Curse of Canaan, his study of slave religion in the American South offers insights into how biblical narratives, including the curse, were interpreted and appropriated by enslaved Africans and their descendants. This perspective enriches understanding of the curse's impact on African American religious consciousness.

James B. Pritchard (1950) in the book *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* his seminal work compiles ancient texts from the Near East, providing valuable insights into the cultural milieu of the biblical world. Scholars often refer to this collection to contextualize passages like the curse of Canaan within broader historical frameworks.

E. A. Speiser (1964) in this book *The Anchor Bible Commentary: Genesis 1-11* he offers a detailed analysis of Genesis 9:18-27 within the broader context of Genesis 1-11. His commentary

delves into linguistic, historical, and cultural aspects, shedding light on the significance of the curse of Canaan within the narrative of Noah's descendants.

William J. Dumbrell (1987) in this book *From Noah to Israel: Realization of the Primaeval Blessing After the Flood* his work explores the theme of blessing and curse in the early chapters of Genesis, including the narrative of Noah and his descendants. Through a theological lens, he also examines the implications of the curse of Canaan for the broader biblical narrative, particularly in the context of the Abrahamic covenant.

1.2.2 Theological implications of the Curse of Canaan and its impact on descendants of Ham.

David M. Goldenberg (2005) in his book *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* he examines the origins and interpretations of the curse of Ham, which is often associated with the curse of Canaan, and its role in shaping racial attitudes and justifications for slavery in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.

David M. Goldenberg (2005) in his book *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Christianity* in this book he specifically focuses on the Christian interpretation and implications of the curse of Ham, exploring its impact on early Christian thought and its lingering effects on contemporary Christian beliefs about race and ethnicity.

Stephen R. Haynes (2002) in his book *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* He examines the ways in which the curse of Canaan was used to justify slavery in America, particularly among Christian slaveholders, and how this interpretation continues to influence contemporary Christian attitudes towards race and social justice.

John D. Currid (1997) in this book *Cursed be Canaan: A Case Study in Interpretive Tradition* he offers a detailed analysis of the curse of Canaan passage in Genesis and its interpretation throughout Jewish and Christian history, shedding light on its theological implications and its relevance to contemporary Christian beliefs.

James H. Cone (1969) in his book *Black Theology and Black Power* he explores the theological implications of race and liberation within Christianity, challenging traditional interpretations of biblical texts such as the curse of Canaan and advocating for a theology that addresses the realities of black oppression.

Reginald L. Davis (2008) in this book *Racism and the Church: Overcoming the Curse of Ham* he examines the historical roots of racism within Christianity, including the misuse of the curse of Canaan narrative, and offers insights on how the church can confront and overcome these racist interpretations.

Cain Hope Felder (1989) in this book *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family* in this collection of essays he addresses various biblical passages, including the curse of Canaan, from the perspective of African American biblical interpretation, highlighting how these texts have been used to perpetuate racial injustice and offering alternative readings that promote liberation and justice.

David M. Goldenberg (2003) in his book *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* In this book he explores the origins and interpretations of the curse of Canaan, particularly its role in the justification of slavery. Goldenberg examines how this curse has been interpreted throughout history within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and its impact on racial ideologies.

David M. Goldenberg (2005) in the book *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Christianity* In this book, he focuses specifically on the early Christian interpretations of the curse of Canaan and its influence on the development of racial attitudes and slavery within Christianity.

Thomas L. Thompson (1988) in his book *Cursed be Canaan: A Case Study in Interpretation* he provides a critical analysis of the curse of Canaan narrative within its ancient Near Eastern context and its interpretation throughout Jewish and Christian history. He examines how this narrative has been used to justify various social and political agendas.

Michael Prior (1997) in his book *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* he discusses the ways in which biblical narratives, including the curse of Canaan, have been used to justify colonialism and oppression. He examines the theological implications of such interpretations for contemporary Christian ethics.

Stephen R. Haynes (2002) in his book *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* he explores the role of the curse of Canaan narrative in the justification of slavery in American history, He analyzes how this biblical text was interpreted and applied by pro-slavery theologians and its impact on Christian beliefs and practices.

1.2.3 The impact of interpretations and teachings related to the curse of Canaan.

The Curse of Canaan is a biblical story found in the Book of Genesis (9:20-27), where Noah curses his grandson Canaan, supposedly condemning him and his descendants to be servants of servants. Over time, interpretations and teachings related to this curse have had significant impacts on various aspects of history, culture, and society. Here's a literature review focusing on this topic:

David M. Goldenberg (2005) in this book *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* he examines how interpretations of the curse of Canaan have been used to justify racial hierarchies and slavery throughout history. And he also highlights the ways in which this biblical narrative has been manipulated to reinforce oppressive systems, particularly in Western societies. Through meticulous research, he demonstrates the lasting impact of these interpretations on religious ideologies and social structures.

Stephen R. Haynes (2002) in his book *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* he delves into the specific influence of the curse of Canaan on the institution of slavery in America. And also reveals how slaveholders and pro-slavery advocates selectively interpreted biblical passages to maintain their oppressive practices. By tracing the evolution of these interpretations, he illustrates their role in shaping racial attitudes and power dynamics in the United States.

David Brion Davis (2009) in this book *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery* he provides a comprehensive analysis of the curse of Canaan's impact on European thought during the early modern period. Davis explores how religious and intellectual figures utilized biblical narratives to rationalize colonialism, slavery, and racial superiority. Through his examination of primary sources, Davis illuminates the complex intersection of theology, politics, and economics in the perpetuation of these ideologies.

"Cursed is Canaan: A Narrative of the Origin of the Curse of Ham's Son and the Restoration Thereof" by Charles Lee Feinberg (1968) offers a theological interpretation of the curse of Canaan within the context of biblical prophecy. Feinberg explores the implications of this narrative for understanding divine judgment and redemption. By engaging with biblical texts and historical context, he provides insights into how interpretations of the curse of Canaan have shaped religious doctrines and eschatological beliefs.

David M. Goldenberg's (2005) in the book *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* he examines how interpretations of the curse of Canaan have historically influenced racial ideologies and the justification of slavery within religious contexts. Goldenberg's work traces the development of these interpretations across multiple religious traditions, highlighting their enduring impact on societal attitudes towards race and servitude.

Stephen R. Haynes (2002) in his book *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* he investigates the specific role of the curse of Canaan in justifying slavery in the United States, particularly in the antebellum South. Through meticulous analysis, Haynes elucidates how biblical interpretations were used to uphold systems of oppression and exploitation, leaving a profound legacy on race relations in America.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.0 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter deals with the second question of my research questions on what could be the causes of curse of the youth in the today in order to argue that Genesis 9:25 is the cause of curses of the youths. This research needs to apply an appropriate approach in finding the cause of curses of the youths, reading the book of Genesis 9:18-27 is like dealing with a rock. That is why it requires the help of what Fredrich Baumgartel calls “Hermeneutical Crowbars “. Hermeneutical Methods are meant to help the researcher in understanding the text so they are competent in reading Biblical materials. Such methods have had a major role in scholarly efforts to understand Genesis 9:18-27. But before looking at Genesis 9:18-27 itself a number of key hermeneutical approach needs to be assessed, scholars like Craig Bartholomew: *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutic: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scriptures*(2005) have used methods that are foreign to the text thereby distorting or losing its intended meaning , so this chapter identifies and discusses problems and solutions of misinterpretations which results from many scholars allowing later insights to impose the meanings that are foreign to the text, some specific areas of concern are; Christian, Cultural, Confessional and Canonical approaches. This chapter will also discuss various methodologies like; Source Criticism, Form Criticism, Literary Criticism, and Canonical Criticism, to interpret Genesis 9:18-27. Based on this discussion, the suitable methods for addressing Genesis 9:18-27. Other sources like Biblical scholarship, Historical analysis and sociological research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Curse of Canaan may be used, it will also incorporates the voices of the youths through interviews and observation will used.

1.3.1. Hermeneutical Interpretation.

Hermeneutics refers to the theory and methodology of interpretation, particularly in the context of understanding texts, symbols, cultures, and human experiences. In this case hermeneutical approach will involves delving into the deeper meaning within the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27. It goes beyond the literal understanding to uncover the implicit, symbolic, cultural, and historical dimensions that influence the message being conveyed.

Genesis 9 was written in its own content and was to be understood in the context, For example, that context had nothing to do with the New Testament writings, There is potential hermeneutics

problem when Christians whose Theology has been shaped by the Gospels to understand Curse in Genesis as a witness to Jesus Christ.

It is exegetically out of the context of curse in Genesis 9:25 to allow later Biblical insights whether derived from a more sophisticated knowledge to obstruct the message of curse in Genesis 9 by imposing upon it categories which were not part of its original purpose.

1.3.2. Cultural Hermeneutics.

Another hermeneutical issue enters when culturally oriented people read into Genesis. Their socially acquired knowledge. People's thinking is influenced by their culture and they see and interpret reality culturally. Roland Boer, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary (2012)* In other words, their cultural worldview is the channel of understanding reality. Culture by definition, is the "integrated pattern of socially acquired Knowledge, particularly ideas, beliefs, and values which people use to interpret, experience, and generate patterns of behavior." It is not the intention of this chapter to convince academic readers to read Genesis in a specific academic way, or to ignore their cultural frameworks. What this thesis is trying to establish is that hermeneutical problems arise when readers give their "culturally established conceptual frameworks" priority in understanding and interpreting Genesis 9:24-25. Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The Heritage of Biblical Israel (1966)* In studying Genesis 9:24-25 the task of hermeneutics is to accurately determine as far as is possible, what the original. It is crucial that those interpreting Genesis 9:25-25 should seek to prevent their preconceived ideas and culture from influencing them

This cultural hermeneutic insists that the reader's context is as important as the context of the text. In other words, what one sees depends on one's perspective. The problem with this hermeneutical approach is that one's "social location or rhetorical context". The argument would be that if God had mandated Noah to plant the vineyard and made him a successful farmer like any other who would enjoy his success, then human beings must essentially and fully enjoy the produce of their farming.

1.3.3. Confessional Hermeneutics

Christianity is made up of various churches which each have their own dogmas and Teachings. Certainly, each Christian church has the right to investigate and interpret Curse in Genesis 9:24-

25 for itself. A hermeneutical problem arises when church affiliated scholars come to the curse in Genesis 9:24-25 with a set of dogmas or ready-made presuppositions that twist the curse in Genesis 9:24-25 to give it a meaning of their making. But the plurality explanation may not be very convincing on the ground of “absence or near-absence of parallels in verbs or pronouns” in the OT. The approach can be an issue because (“cursed be Canaan”) which is the plural of both sons of Ham (Gen. 9:25) Why the plural sense is used is quite uncertain, but it may designate intensification in the sense of grandchildren of Noah.

1.3.4. Research Design.

This research design provides a framework for exploring the complex issues surrounding the curse of Canaan. By digging into the biblical text, its historical interpretations, and its ongoing influence in contemporary society, this research aims to shed light on the enduring power of narratives and the critical need to engage in critical dialogue about race and identity.

1.3.5 Ethical Considerations:

Sensitivity and respect will be maintained throughout the research process, ensuring that the voices and experiences of individuals from marginalized communities are treated with dignity and care.

The research will be conducted in a way that avoids perpetuating or contributing to harmful stereotypes or biases.

Results will be shared responsibly and ethically, with a focus on promoting understanding and challenging oppressive ideologies.

1.3.6 Research Instruments

The research instruments will be employed individually or in combination to provide a comprehensive analysis of the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its effect on the descendants of Ham from various perspectives. Research topic will utilize a variety of research instruments to gather data, analyze texts, and explore the theological, historical, and social implications of the narrative.

1.3.7 Textual Analysis:

There will be Close reading of the biblical text in Genesis 9:18-27, to examine language, syntax, and literary devices. The Comparative analysis with other relevant biblical passages, such as narratives involving the descendants of Ham or instances of divine judgment.

1.3.8 Historical Research:

The researcher will do Archival research to explore historical interpretations and commentaries on the curse of Canaan throughout different periods. And to Investigation of historical events and socio-political contexts relevant to the biblical narrative, such as ancient Near Eastern customs regarding familial relationships and honor.

1.3.9 Validation of the Research Instrument.

The research techniques were valid to the researcher because they led the researcher to obtain credible, correct and relevant information needed.

The research instruments were valid to the study due to the fact that it played a very good role in obtaining precise information like feeling, opinions and description on the curse of Canaan and its effect to the descendants of Ham.

1.3.10 Sources of Data Information.

The research used both the primary and secondary source of information in carrying out the study, the researcher used the secondary source to obtain information from the already available information from other researchers. And the researcher used published information available in books, Bibles, Journals about the topic of the study.

1.4 Summary

The presuppositions identified and discussed above all have the same problem: reading something foreign into the text that negatively impacts the exegetical task. The major concern is, instead of yielding to the intentions of the writer and text, the reader is influenced by prior knowledge, simply searches for elements that appear to agree with his/her preconceived notion; after finding those elements, the reader removes them from their context and places them in his own. Understanding what has been meant originally must be primary. Only then can a reader apply the findings to his/her context. The most basic thing is to understand the context surrounding the text. How did the original readers understand the message? Readers must transport themselves back to the times of Genesis 9:18-29, and become obsessed with it. They must seek to grasp the reality of the passage imagery, so as not to read in it ideas foreign to the authors mind. Christological, cultural, or ecclesiastical hermeneutics should not become the master of the text or context in Genesis 9:24-25. This does not mean that Genesis should be restricted in its time and context. However, before any application can be made, the reader should first draw principles out of the context of Genesis rather than being guided by ecclesiastical, confessional, or philosophical considerations.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EXEGETICAL STUDY OF CURSE OF CANAAN IN GENESIS 9:18-27.

2.0 Introduction

The curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 has been a subject to different interpretations and debate; it describes a curse that Noah pronounced on his son Ham Canaan the son of his son Ham and his descendants. Analysis of Possible causes of curse of Canaan. The story of Noah shows the degrading effects of the wine, drunkenness and nakedness, no blame is attached in the telling of the event, but it is difficult to ignore the prophetic oracles that use nakedness and drunkenness

Ham`s Disrespect for his Father Noah. The passage starts by mentioning that Ham one of the Noah`s sons saw his Father`s nakedness and told his brothers about it, the exact nature of this incident is not clear but it is generally understood as an act of disrespect by Ham towards his father. some interpretation suggest that Ham did something more than just seeing Noah naked, such as mocking, exploiting or even engaging in a sexual act. This disrespect for his father could be seen as a cause for the curse.

Noah`s Displeasure with Ham`s Actions: After Han tells his brothers about what he saw, Noah wakes up and realizes what has happened, he then curses Canaan who is Ham`s son rather than Ham himself, this lead to a suggestion that Noah held Canaan responsible for his Father`s actions either because he saw Canaan`s involvement in incident or because he believed Canaan would continue in his Father`s disrespectful ways.

Historical Context, another possible cause for the curse of Canaan is the historical nature in which the passage was written. Canaan was the land inhabitant by different people including the Canaanites who were known for their idolatry and wickedness. Some interpretations (Levenson Jon D, 2004), suggests that Noah`s curse on Canaan was a prophetic declaration of the future judgment that would befall the Canaanites.

Symbolic Representation. The curse on Canaan was seen as a symbolic representation of the division and tensions between different nations and people, the descendants of Canaan were known to be involved in conflicts with Israel in Old Testament, some commentators like (David m. Goldenberg 2005), Interpret the curse as a symbolic of the ongoing struggles between different ethnic groups and nations in the Biblical narratives.

2.1 THE EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 9:18-27

Genesis 9:18-27, is a passage that follows the account of the flood and provides insight into the lives of Noah and his sons after the waters receded. This exegesis will explore the historical and literary context of the passage; analyze its key elements and draws out its theological implications.

Verse 18 gives the genealogy of Noah`s sons and is reiterated, emphasizing their roles as inheritors of the world after the flood. This demonstrates the continuation and lineage of humanity.

Verse 19 reiterate the command given to man in Genesis 1:28 to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth, it reaffirm God`s plan for mankind to replenish the earth and reflects his faithfulness to his original creation.

Verses 20-23, Noah is described as a man of the soil, he plants a vineyard and become successful, Noah became drunk from wine (מִמְּשֵׁי נִקְבְּשָׁק גְרוּמֵל כְּרַמֵּץ 'וְמָק) and Ham his youngest son saw his nakedness and his brothers Shem and Japheth, they covered themselves with a garment moving backwards to cover the nakedness of their father.

2.1.1 Ham`s sin 22-23

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside, then Shem and Japheth took a garment (עֲשֵׂרֶצְקָמָא) laid it on their shoulders and walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father, their faces were turned backward and they did not see their father`s nakedness.

Ham looks upon his nakedness, drunken father passed out in an inappropriate manner. The text does not give the details of how it all happened but what is clear is that he was not good, Ham then went and informed his brothers Shem and Japheth, what he has seen, and they approached their father to cover his nakedness.

So what is going on here? Clear contrast between what Ham did and his brothers, Ham burst in on his father. Assume he did not call out or knock before entering his tent as one would do, already a sign of disrespect. Then he sees his father`s nakedness. Now in a honor shame culture, this is a big deal to the nakedness of your parents, brings shame upon them, so Ham committed a sin, he broke the fifth commandment in Exodus 20:12 (Honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you)

Today I discovered that the youth have become desensitized to nudity, it`s in the movies they watch series of social media platforms and televisions. The sinfulness of Hamm`s actions in re-enforced by the way he blurted out to his two brothers what he saw, he clearly lacks discretion and wisdom and brings shame upon his father and himself,

2.1.2 Canaan`s Curse 24-27

when Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his son had done to him, he said “Cursed be Canaan” servant of servants shall he be to his brothers, He also said “Blessed be the Lord of Shem and let Canaan be his servant and may God enlarge Japheth and let him dwell in the tent of Shem and let Canaan be his servant. Noah eventually sobers up and realizes what has happened and what Ham has done to him, clear from the text Ham sinned against his father by his actions, he is shamed him what`s the result of this? Noah curses Ham`s son Canaan. He says that Canaan will be a servant of servants to his brothers – lowest of people forever sub servant to his brothers. According to the laws, one is cursed for dishonoring their parents (Deuteronomy 27:16) “Cursed be anyone who dishonors his father or mother why then Ham`s son Cursed? And not Ham? Truly it`s Ham who has sinned not Canaan? The point of curse and blessing in the Bible is really for the descendants of the person who is either cursed or blessed. So it`s not strange that Canaan is cursed. God has already blessed Ham in any case (Genesis 9:1, And God

blessed Noah and his sons “of Ham is the youngest son and now Canaan carried the curse. After Noah has cursed Canaan, he turns to Shem in verse 26 and pronounced a blessing upon him, blessing God and attaching God`s name to Shem, Lord the God of Shem and then verse 27, he turns to Japheth though not explicitly blessing like Shem, he still grants him favor with the promise of being brought into the text of Shem.

Verse 28, the passage concludes with a note on Noah`s age and the event that occurred during his lifetime.

2.2. The relationship of Genesis 9:18-27 with other Old Testament Texts.

The curse of Canaan is not the only curse in the Bible; other examples include the curses pronounced on Adam and Eve, Cain and the Serpent. These curses vary in their severity and purpose, suggesting that the curse of Canaan should not be interpreted in isolation. Other stories in other cultures are stories of curses and enslavement are found in many cultures around the world. Example, the Greek myth of Pandora`s box includes a curse that brings suffering and evil into the world.⁷

The curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 is a unique to the Hebrew Bible and a significant event in the Old Testament that has relationship or connections to other biblical text and ancient Near Eastern literature that share similarities in themes and reasons. And the following are some comparative verses and passages.

Genesis 10:15-19, the descendants of Canaan are listed including many nations like Jebusites, Amorites and Hittites. These nations would later become adversaries of the Israelites as they entered the Promised Land. The curse upon Canaan serves as a prophetic indication of the future conflicts and struggles between the descendants of Shem and Canaan.

Leviticus 18:20-30, it gives an outline of various sexual and moral prohibitions given to the Israelites within this list it is mentioned that the Canaanites practiced certain detestable sexual practices. So the Curse upon Canaan is often associated with their wickedness moral and corruption which would later be reasons for their judgment and displacement by the Israelites.

Deuteronomy 7:1-6, emphasizes God's command to the Israelites to completely destroy the Canaanite nation when they enter the promised Land. And the Curse upon Canaan is understood as part of God's judgment upon nations due to their sins and instrument of God's righteous judgments.

In Deuteronomy 27-28, blessings and curses are pronounced upon the Israelites based on their obedience or disobedience to the covenant with God. Like the Curse of Canaan, this passage reflects the ancient Near Eastern concept of divine retribution and the consequences of human actions

In Joshua 6:26 say that after the conquest of Jericho, Joshua pronounced a curse upon anyone who would rebuild the city's walls (curse of Jericho), declaring that they would lay its foundation at the cost of their firstborn and set up its gates at the cost of their youngest child. This curse shares similarities with the Curse of Canaan in its invocation of divine judgment and the notion of generational consequences

Joshua 9:11 he records the conquest of the Promised Land by the Israelites including their encounters with various Canaanite nations. The curse upon Canaan serves as a backdrop for the Conflicts and battles that take place between the Israelites and the Canaanites.

Throughout the prophetic books of Jeremiah 46-51 and Ezekiel 25-32 their oracles against foreign nations are pronounced, each containing blessings and curses based on the nation's actions. These oracles echo the structure of the Curse of Canaan, with divine pronouncements of judgment and punishment upon specific peoples

2.3. The relationship of Genesis 9:18-27 with other New Testament verses.

The curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 has no big direct connections with New Testament, but some scholars have tried to explore potential implications and symbolic interpretations of the curse of Canaan in the connection with the New Testament. However, they are not explicitly stated but speculative explanation.

Like in Matthew 15:21-28, Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman seeking healing for her daughter. This interaction serves as a symbolic reversal of the curse as Jesus extends mercy and healing to a Canaanite woman who is a descendant of Canaan. This highlights the inclusive and redemptive nature of the Jesus` ministry.

Also Galatians 3:26-29, apostle Paul emphasizes the unity and equality among believers in Christ saying that there is no discrimination between the Jew or Greek, Slave or Free, Male or Female. This passage is viewed as a contrast or reversal of the curse upon Canaan since it undermines any sense of racial superiority rather it highlights universal scope of God`s redemptive plan.

More so Revelations 7:9-10, the vision of heavenly worship, St. John points a great multitude from all nations, tribes, people and Languages praising God which I believe to be a fulfillment and reversal of the Curse upon Canaan. So we see here an image of God`s redemptive work going beyond limit. I suggest that these approaches needs to be handled with care since they are speculative interpretations not explicitly stated in the Biblical text. New Testament does not directly refer to the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27.

2.4 Theological Significance Genesis 9:18-27.

Blessing and Covenant. The passage recounts God`s covenant with Noah and all living creatures after the flood (9:18). This covenant represents God`s promise to never destroy the earth by flood again (9:11). The blessing pronounced on Noah includes fruitfulness and multiplication (9:1, 7). **Noah`s Three Sons.** Noah`s three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, play a significant role in the passage. Ham`s sin of disrespecting his father and exposing his nakedness leads to a curse on his descendants (9:25). Shem and Japheth are blessed for their faithfulness (9:26-27).

The Divine Order. The passage establishes the divine order among the nations. Ham`s descendants (Canaanites) are declared to be servants to Shem`s descendants (Israelites) and Japheth`s descendants (Gentiles) (9:25-27). This order reflects God`s plan for the nations and their relationships. **The Centrality of Israel.** The blessing on Shem (9:26) points to the future prominence of Israel. Israel is chosen as the people through whom God`s blessings are to flow to the nations. **The Sin of Drunkenness.** Ham`s sin involves drunkenness and dishonor (9:21). This

highlights the destructive effects of sin and the importance of self-control. The Curse on Canaan. The curse on Canaan is a reminder of the consequences of sin and disrespect. It also foreshadows the future conflict between Israel and the Canaanites. The Sovereignty of God. Throughout the passage, God's sovereignty is evident. He establishes the covenant, pronounces blessings and curses, and determines the order among the

nations. The Scope of Redemption. While the passage records Ham's sin and its consequences, it also hints at the possibility of redemption. The blessing on Shem and Japheth suggests that God's grace can extend to all nations.

2.5 Conclusions.

In conclusion, the exegetical study of Genesis 9:18-27 provides significant theological insights into the nature of God's covenant, the divine order, the importance of obedience, and the scope of redemption. It illuminates God's sovereign plan for humanity and highlights the consequences of sin and the hope of restoration.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION OF THE CURSE OF CANAAN IN GENESIS 9:18-27.

3.0 Introduction

The curse of Canaan, found in Genesis 9:18-27, has been the subject of significant theological debate and interpretation throughout history. This passage recounts an incident involving Noah, the patriarch of the flood narrative, and his sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. John E. Hartley, *New International Biblical Commentary: Genesis* (2000:112-113) After Noah becomes drunk and lies naked in his tent; Ham sees him and tells his brothers about it. Shem and Japheth, however, cover their father without looking at him. When Noah wakes up and learns what happened, he curses Canaan, Ham's son, and blesses Shem and Japheth. Therefore, this chapter will show some of some theological implications that have been drawn from the curse of Canaan.

3.1 The Nature of the Curse

The story begins with Noah's drunkenness and Ham's dishonoring of his father. When Noah awakens, he curses not Ham but Ham's son, Canaan, stating that Canaan will be "a servant of servants" to his brothers. Theologically, this raises several issues:

The Role of the Patriarch: Noah, as the patriarch, pronounces a curse. In the ancient Near Eastern context, patriarchal blessings and curses were believed to have long-lasting effects. Theologically, the curse seems to show the weight of the patriarchal voice, which some interpret as reflecting the seriousness of honoring one's family.

Generational Consequences of Sin: One of the most debated theological implications is why Canaan, rather than Ham, is cursed. Some argue that this reflects the biblical theme of generational consequences, where the sins of the parents can affect their descendants (as seen elsewhere in texts like Exodus 20:5). However, many theologians today reject the idea of inherited guilt as contrary to later biblical teachings that emphasize personal responsibility for sin (Ezekiel 18:20).

Canaan as a Symbol of the Enemies of Israel: From a theological perspective, Canaan is often seen as a representative of the Canaanite nations, whom the Israelites would later displace. The

curse may be understood not so much as a personal judgment on Ham or his descendants but as a theological explanation for Israel's eventual conquest of the land of Canaan. In this sense, the passage is etiological, explaining the subjugation of the Canaanites as part of God's plan for His chosen people.

3.2 Divine justice and human responsibility.

Interpretation of Divine Justice. The curse of Canaan raises the questions about divine justice and the extent of God's involvement in Human affairs, as Noah's curse upon Canaan appears to punish not Canaan but his descendants. Westermann, C. (1984). *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*. And Hamilton, V. P. (1990). *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*.

Why Curse the Innocent? The fact that Canaan, rather than Ham, is cursed creates theological tension regarding divine justice. If Canaan is not directly responsible for his father's actions, why should he bear the punishment? This has led some theologians to see the curse not as a literal punishment from God, but as Noah's own response to the situation, one that reflects human frailty and anger more than divine decree. This interpretation views Noah's curse as a flawed, human action that God allows but does not directly endorse.

Sin and its Consequences: The passage also highlights the long-standing biblical theme that sin has consequences that ripple beyond the individual. Ham's disrespect for his father is seen as a breakdown in familial and societal order, and this breach of order is mirrored in the future subjugation of the Canaanites. Theologically, it emphasizes that sin disrupts not just individual lives but communities and future generations. However, this interpretation must be balanced with the broader biblical teaching that individuals are ultimately responsible for their own actions before God.

3.4 Covenant and Election

The curse on Canaan can be contrasted with the blessings given to Shem and Japheth. Shem, in particular, is associated with the line of the chosen people, through whom the covenant will be established. This narrative underscores the theme of divine election:

Blessing and Cursing: Theological interpretations often emphasize that the blessing of Shem is more important than the curse of Canaan. God's election of Shem's descendants (who will

become the Israelites) points to God's sovereign choice in blessing certain individuals or nations for His purposes. This raises theological questions about how divine election works alongside human free will and responsibility.

The Role of Japheth: Japheth's blessing is interesting because it suggests an inclusion in Shem's blessing ("may he dwell in the tents of Shem"), which some theologians have interpreted as a foreshadowing of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the blessings of Israel. Theologically, this could be seen as a hint of God's universal plan for salvation, where even those outside the initial covenant are brought into the blessings of God's people.

Ethnic Interpretation: Historically, some interpretations have linked the passage of the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 to racial or ethnic theories often used to justify racial discrimination. David M. Goldenburg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in early Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2003) or the enslavement of certain peoples. This interpretation has been criticized for its misuse and misunderstanding of the text. It's important to note that the Bible does not condone racism or discrimination. David L. Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (2004)

Moral Lesson: One common interpretation is that the story serves as a moral lesson about filial duty and respect. Ham's actions are seen as disrespectful towards his father, while Shem and Japheth's actions are praised for their respect and honor. Thus, the theological implication here could emphasize the importance of honoring and respecting parents and elders.

3.5 Interpretation in light of later scripture

The curse of Canaan is not directly referenced in later biblical writings, but its theological implications are reinterpreted in light of broader biblical themes:

Justice and Mercy: Later scriptures, particularly the teachings of the prophets and Jesus, emphasize God's mercy and justice. Jesus' teachings on forgiveness, mercy, and love for one's enemies challenge any simplistic interpretation of divine curses as permanent or irrevocable. In this light, some theologians argue that the curse of Canaan should be read as a localized, historical event rather than a theological justification for any ongoing enmity or subjugation.

New Testament Perspective on Family and Sin: In the New Testament, the notion of inherited guilt is rejected in favor of individual responsibility. Jesus and Paul emphasize that each person is accountable for their own sin, and that redemption is available to all through Christ. This reinterprets the themes of Genesis 9 in a way that focuses more on grace than on generational punishment

Ethical Reflections on Justice and Mercy. The curse of Canaan invites ethical reflections on the concepts of justice and mercy as it raises questions about the fairness of generational punishment and the possibility of forgiveness. Sarna, N. M. (1989) *Genesis: The JPS Torah Commentary*. And Kidner, D, (1967) *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*.

Theological Views on Human Agency. The passage prompts reflection on the role of Human agency in perpetuating or breaking cycles of sin and punishment, as Ham's actions triggers the curse but Noah delivers it. Sailhamer, J. H. (2009). *Genesis: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. And Wenham, G. J. (1987). *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 1: Genesis 1-15*.

Historical Context: Understanding the historical context is crucial. Ancient Near Eastern cultures placed a strong emphasis on honor and shame. Ham's actions, even if not explicitly stated in the text, might have been seen as dishonoring to Noah, and Noah's response could be understood within the cultural norms of that time.

Prophetic Element: Some interpretations view Noah's curse on Canaan the son of Ham as a prophetic declaration about the future descendants of Canaan. This prophetic element has been interpreted in various ways throughout history, often with implications for the Canaanite peoples encountered by the Israelites later in the biblical narrative.

Redemption and Grace: Despite the curse on Canaan a grandson of Noah, it's worth noting that the biblical narrative does not end here. Throughout the Bible, there are instances of redemption and grace, even for those who are seemingly cursed. Therefore, theological interpretations of this curse passage may also emphasize the broader themes of redemption and grace found throughout Scripture. And scholars suggest that God's grace can overcome the consequences of Human sin. Brueggemann, W. (1982) *Genesis: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Waltke, B. K (2001) *Genesis: A Commentary*.

Theological Diversity in Interpretation: various theological traditions and interpreters offer diverse interpretations of the curse of Canaan, reflecting differing theological emphases and

hermeneutical approaches. Von Rad, G. (1973). *Genesis: A Commentary*. And Cassuto, U. (1973). *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*.

Christological and Eschatological Themes

Some Christian theologians have interpreted the story of Noah and his sons in light of Christological themes:

Noah as a Type of Christ: Noah, as a savior figure who saves humanity through the ark, is sometimes seen as a type of Christ. However, his failure in this story (his drunkenness and subsequent curse on Canaan) contrasts with Christ's perfection, highlighting the limitations of human patriarchs compared to the divine Son of God.

Eschatological Themes: The curse of Canaan can also be seen as foreshadowing the ultimate defeat of the enemies of God's people in the eschaton. In this reading, Canaan symbolizes the forces of sin and rebellion against God, which will ultimately be subdued. This interpretation ties the narrative into the broader biblical theme of God's victory over sin and evil at the end of time.

3.6 Conclusion

The theological implications of the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 are multifaceted and open to interpretation, the passage touches on the issues of sin, punishment and generational consequences. The passage also challenges the readers to reflect on the consequences of sin and the necessity of grace to restore relationships both with God and within the humanly family. It's essential to approach the text with careful consideration of its historical and cultural context, as well as within the broader themes of justice, mercy and God's sovereign plan for His people in the Bible, honor, sin, redemption, and grace and the importance of honoring family and divine authority.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions:

In the final analysis, it is the researcher's views that the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 and its effect on the descendants of Ham remain subjects of ongoing inquiry and debate. By engaging with the narrative's historical, cultural, and theological dimensions, researchers can deepen their understanding of its significance and implications for contemporary issues of faith, ethics, and social justice.

The conclusions drawn from research on "The Curse of Canaan" in Genesis 9:18-27 and its effects on Ham's descendants can vary depending on the interpretation and scholarly perspective. However, some common conclusions include:

The legacy of the curse has been used to justify discriminatory practices and racial ideologies throughout history, leading to oppression and marginalization of certain groups.

Ham's descendants have been historically associated with the Canaanites, though the specific identification of these descendants has been subject to debate.

In Historical Contextualization and through textual analysis research, it is evident that the curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18-27 must be understood within its ancient Near Eastern context. Ancient cultural norms regarding honor and shame, as well as familial relationships, likely influenced the narrative's portrayal of Ham's actions and Noah's response.

And that the theological Interpretation of the curse of Canaan raises theological questions regarding divine judgment, human responsibility, and the nature of God's covenant relationship with humanity. And also the interpretations may vary while the narrative underscores the importance of moral accountability and the enduring significance of divine grace and redemption.

Research findings suggest that interpretations of the curse of Canaan have had significant effects on the descendants of Ham throughout history, Shamai Gelandar, *The Good Creation: Literature*

and Theology in Genesis 1-11, 79. Misinterpretations and misuses of the narrative have contributed to racialized ideologies, social inequalities, and systemic injustices, perpetuating harm and marginalization.

The research highlights ethical considerations related to the interpretation and application of the curse of Canaan. Old Testament Scholars and theologians must critically engage with the narrative's historical and social implications, challenging distortions that perpetuate discrimination and advocating for justice, reconciliation, and solidarity.

Impact on Identity: The identification of Ham's descendants and the application of the curse to certain ethnic groups have had profound effects on the identity formation and treatment of those groups throughout history

The research provides insights into the curse of Canaan and its effects; it also underscores the need for continued dialogue, reflection, and interdisciplinary engagement. Theological interpretations must be approached with humility, recognizing diverse perspectives and ongoing conversations within the academic and religious communities.

The research findings have implications for contemporary faith and practice, particularly in addressing issues of racism, colonialism, and social justice. By reexamining the interpretations of the curse of Canaan and embracing theological perspectives that prioritize reconciliation and solidarity, communities of faith can contribute to transformative change.

Call for Reconciliation: Many scholars and religious leaders advocate for approaches that promote reconciliation, justice, and healing in response to the historical and ongoing effects of interpretations of the curse.

Efforts to understand and reconcile the implications of the curse in contemporary society continue, with some advocating for social justice and reconciliation as part of this process.

Contemporary Relevance: Despite its ancient origins, the curse continues to shape perceptions and relationships in contemporary society, highlighting the ongoing importance of engaging with biblical texts critically and compassionately.

The Curse of Canaan is as a product of the religious and political ideologies of the ancient Near East, which justified the conquest and enslavement of non-European people that is according to Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, 2011, *The Curse of Canaan and the Narrative of Holy War*, p.2.

4.2 Recommendations

Promotion of Accurate Interpretation: I recommend that Old Testament scholars and religious leaders should promote accurate and nuanced interpretations of the curse and cause of the curse of Canaan rooted in historical and theological scholarship. This may include educating congregations and communities about the cultural context of the narrative and addressing misconceptions that perpetuate harmful stereotypes.

Engagement with Descendants of Ham: I recommend that more efforts should be made to engage with communities identified as descendants of Ham, listening to their perspectives and experiences related to the curse of Canaan. And this may involve dialogue, collaboration, and partnership in theological reflection, social justice advocacy, and reconciliation initiatives.

Advocacy for Social Justice: I recommend old testament Scholars and religious leaders are encouraged to advocate for social justice and equity, challenging systemic racism, colonialism, and other forms of oppression that have been justified or perpetuated through misinterpretations of the curse of Canaan. And this may include supporting policies and initiatives that promote equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Theological Education and Training: I also recommend that Theological institutions and seminaries should incorporate discussions on the curse of Canaan and its effects to the descendants of Noah into their curricula, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the narrative and its relevance for contemporary faith and practice. This includes equipping future clergy and religious leaders with the tools to address issues of racism and social injustice within their communities.

Continued Research and Dialogue: Finally, I recommend that Old Testament biblical research and dialogue on the curse of Canaan continues, engaging Old Testament scholars from diverse disciplines and perspectives. Because this ongoing conversation can contribute to deeper understanding, reconciliation, and healing spiritual within religious communities and societies at large.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Christian Standard Bible (CSB) 2017

Amplified Bible (AMP) 1965,1987

New International Version (NIV)-2011 latest edition.

Hebrew Bible, Biblia Hebraica, Stuttgartensia. Copyright printed in Germany. 1990.

Eugene H. Merrill, 1991. Historical survey of the Old Testament 2nded.

John W. Rogerson, R W L. Moberly and William Johnson, 2001, Genesis and Exodus with an introduction by John Goldingay. Pg88.

GehardFonraid, 1956, Genesis pg132.

Garrett Kell, 2021, Damn the curse of Ham

Scott W and Hahn, 2005, Journal of Biblical Literature.

John Sietza, Bergsma 2005, Noah's nakedness and the curse of Canaan

Kenneth L.Barker, John R. Kohlenberger: The Expositor's Bible Commentary. Abridged Edition Old Testament. III 1994.

Nahum M. Sarna: The JPS Torah Commentary, Genesis, The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation. 1989, The Jewish Publication Society.

Gerhard Von Rad: Genesis, The Commentary Translated by John H. Marks. The Westminster Press Philadelphia. 1956.

John E. Hartley: New International Biblical Commentary Genesis. 2000 by Hendrichon Publishers Inc.

R R. Reno: Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible, Genesis. 2010.

Eugene H. Merrill:. Historical Survey of the Old Testament, 2nd Edition. 1991 by Barker Books. The Joreme Biblical Commentary, vol 1 and 2, 1968 by Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs NJ.

Matthew Poole: A Commentary on the Holy Bible. Vol 1. Genesis – Job. 22102.

Thomas C. Oden, Andrew Louth: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scriptures. Old Testament, Genesis 2001 by the institute of Classical Christian Studies.

Watson E. Mills, Richard F. Wilson: Mercer Commentary on the Old Testament. 2003 by Mercer University Press.