

## **HAM, THE SON OF NOAH**

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*Lesson: Genesis 9:18-29*

There are two kinds of men on earth and in the spiritual world, the Writings say, and both of them are depicted in the story of Noah's drunkenness. On the one hand there is Ham. He saw evil in another man, and at once sought occasion to tell what he had seen, On the other hand, there are Shem and Japheth. They refused to look at the evil in another; they stretched a blanket between them and walked backward into their Father's tent. They covered him over and went their way, and said no more about it.

Two kinds of people. You know them both, and you probably know which kind you yourself are. The greatest delight of a Hammite is to find something wrong with somebody else, and then to talk about it. How neat it makes him feel! Talk about someone else's evils and he doesn't have to think about his own. And if he can't honestly find something evil, he can make something up. He can impugn the motives of the other fellow. Sure, he played a good game, but you know very well that he only played for the grandstand. Sure, she wrote a good paper, she's always trying to get in good with the teacher.

Two kinds of men. You know them both, and you know which kind you are. The Shemite and the Japhetite are just the opposite. They honestly try to find what's good in other people, and they do pretty well at it even when it's a hard job. And when they can't help seeing evil in someone else, they try to excuse it, honestly try to put a good interpretation on it. Maybe it isn't really his fault; maybe he didn't know any better; maybe he was trying to do what's right; or maybe the temptation really was more than he could bear.

Two kinds of people. If you don't know which kind you are, figure it out. It's a perfect test for telling whether you are going to heaven or hell. Every devil is just like Ham; every angel is like Shem and Japheth, who walked backward to cover their father's nakedness.

Our unregenerate propriums—and we all have them—find delight in discovering other people's evils, in imputing evils to them, and then in talking about them to everyone who will listen. Why? Is it that secretly we want other people to be as bad as we are? Or are we so stupid that we have no other way of attracting attention to ourselves, except through evil gossip? Or is it that when we talk about another person's evils, our own evils won't be so evident to others? Or does such talk give us a sense of our own personal righteousness, as we look down our noses at others? Or are we like those beasts that find an

actual delight in wallowing in garbage and filth? —can we really be happy only when our minds and mouths are filled with evil?

Ham, the father of Canaan. What do the Writings say about him? We read, “They who are of this character observe nothing else in a man [than his errors and perversions].... Such persons see in the neighbor only what is evil, and if they see anything good, they either account it as nothing, or put a bad interpretation on it.... When they come into the other life, the feeling of hatred shines forth from every single thing [with them]. They desire to examine others and even to judge them; nor do they desire anything more than to find out what is evil, constantly cherishing the disposition to condemn, punish, end torment.... With [them] there is continual contempt for others, or continual derision, and on every occasion a publishing of their errors [unless external fears prevent it].... [They] think nothing but evil of the neighbor and say nothing but evil; if they say anything good, it is for their own sake, or for the sake of others they flatter under an appearance of friendship.” (AC 1075-1088)

The description, perhaps, strikes too close to home.... Boy, is he dumb! Did you hear what she did last night? Sure, he’s good in physics, but you oughta hear him mess up Latin. Okay, she’s pretty; so what; beauty’s only skin deep. There he goes, trying to be a hero again.

Ham, the father of Canaan. Cursed forever.

Arcana Celestia: 1076 That “Ham” signifies the church corrupted, is evident from what has been said before about Ham. A church is said to be corrupted when it acknowledges the Word and has a certain worship like that of a true church, but yet separates faith from charity. Thus from its essential and from its life, whereby faith becomes a kind of dead affair; the result of which necessarily is that the church is corrupted. What the people of the church then become, is evident from the consideration that they can have no conscience; for conscience that is really conscience cannot possibly exist except from charity. Charity is what makes conscience, that is, the Lord through charity. What else is conscience than not to do evil to any one in any way; that is, to do well, to all in every way? Thus conscience belongs to charity, and never to faith separated from charity. If such persons have any conscience, it is a false conscience (concerning which see above); and because they are without conscience, they rush into all wickedness, so far as outward bonds are relaxed. They do not even know what charity is, except that it is a word significant of something;.. And as they are without charity, they do not know what faith is. When questioned, they can only answer that it is a kind of thinking; some, that it is confidence; others, that it is the knowledges of faith; a few, that it is life according to these knowledges, and scarcely any that it is a life of charity or of mutual love.