

## GENESIS 10: 15–20 CANAANITES

The Canaanites are the descendants of Canaan, the fourth son of Ham. They settled in the land of Canaan, that was later to become known as Palestine. Note four significant facts about the Canaanites.

1. First, the Canaanites were an ungodly and unrighteous people, an utterly immoral and unjust society. The two well-known cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were Canaanite cities. Note what Scripture says about these ancient people:

=> God had to judge Sodom by raining fire down upon the city because of its corruption.

**Gen 19:5, 15** *They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them”...With the coming of dawn, the the angels urged Lot saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here or you will be swept away when the city is punished.”*

**Lev 18:1-3, 6-10, 23-30** *The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them, ‘I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices.... “No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the Lord. Do not dishonour your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her. Do not have sexual relations with your father’s wife; that would dishonour your father. Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether she is born in the same home or elsewhere. Do not have sexual relations with your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter; that would dishonour you....Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion. Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the foreigners residing among you must not do any of these detestable things, for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you. Everyone who does any of these detestable things — such persons must be cut off from their people. Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the Lord your God.”*

- b. Second, the future of the Canaanites had been foretold in the prophecy by Noah. They were to be a conquered and enslaved people (see note, Gen 9:24-27).
- c. Third, the Canaanites were the people who occupied Palestine or the land of Canaan when Israel set out from Egyptian slavery to conquer the land. They were primarily conquered by Israel under Joshua (see Jos 9:22-27; see 9:1-21) and Solomon (1 Kng 9:20-21).
- d. Fourth, the land of Canaan was to become “The Land of Promise” or “The Promised Land” to the Jews.

**Gen 12:7** *The Lord appeared to Abram, and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.*

**Gen 15:18** *On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates.”*

**Gen 17:8** *“The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”*

**Gen 50:24** *Then Joseph said to his brethers, “I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on an oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”*

- 1) The descendants of Canaan. Keep in mind that Canaan himself was the youngest son of Ham, and that Ham was the son of Noah. Noah was the godly grandfather of Canaan. But Canaan apparently paid little attention to his grandfather’s godly testimony. From all indications, he ignored or forsook God just as his father, Ham, had done. (See Gen 9:20-23.)

The descendants of Canaan were these:

- a) *Sidon*: this area was to become a great commercial city that sat on the Mediterranean Sea just north of Canaan. It was a Phoenecian city. Later on in history it was to be eclipsed by the city of Tyre, which was to be founded just twenty miles south of Sidon (1 Kng 5:6; 1 Chr 22:4; Eze 27:8).

**Isa 23:2, 4** *Be silent you people of the island and you merchants of Sidon, whom the seafarers have enriched....Be ashamed, Sidon, and you fortress of the sea, for the sea has spoken: “I have neither been in labour nor given birth; I have neither reared sons nor brought up daughters.”*

- b) *Heth*: the ancestor of the Hittite people. They originally appear in Asia Minor and eventually built a great empire that ruled throughout western Asia. They ruled most of Canaan during Abraham’s time.

**Gen 23:3-4** *Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites. He said, "I am a foreigner and stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead."*

- c) *Jebusite*: the people who settled the area of Jerusalem. They were the citizens of Jerusalem when David conquered the city.

**2 Sam 5:6-7** *The king [David] and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion — which is the city of David.*

- d) *Amorite*: the people who settled mostly in the Judean mountains of Palestine. However, they became so numerous and spread so far over the land that the Canaanites were sometimes called the Amorites. They first appeared during the time of Abraham.

**Gen 15:18-21** *On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates — the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."*

Note that Joshua defeated the Amorites.

**Jos 10:5-7** *Then the five kings of the Amorites — the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon — joined forces. They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it. The Gibeonites sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: "Do not abandon your servants. Come to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us." So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men.*

- e) *Girgashite*: the actual location of these people is unknown. They too are in the list of nations whose territory was promised to Abraham (Gen 15:18-21). Joshua fought against these people.

**Jos 24:11** *"Then you crossed the Jordan, and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands."*

- f) *Hivite*: the name means "villagers" or "settlers in cities". They lived in Shechem (Gen 34:2), Gibeon (Jos 9:7) and at Mount Hermon (Jos 11:3).
- g) *Arkite* and *Sinite*: these people were Phoenecians who settled to the north of Tripolis, just below Lebanon (1 Chr 1:15-16).

- h) *Arvadite*: the Phoenecian settlers of the island city Arvad, which sits right off the coast above Palestine or Canaan. It is only about 100 miles north of Beirut (Eze 27:8, 11).
- i) *Zemarite*: probably the settlers of Simyra or Tsumra in the same vicinity as the other Phoenician cities above.
- j) *Hamathite*: these people settled the northernmost territory of Palestine or Canaan. They were the founders of the Hamath, a large city that sat on the Orantes River (Num 13:21; 34:8; 1 Kng 8:65).
- 2) The territory of Canaan is clearly spelled out (v. 18b-20). They spread out...
- from Sidon in the north.
  - to Gerer in the south,
  - over to the southern area of the Dead Sea where four cities were located: Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboim. The territory of the Canaanites even went beyond these cities over to Lasha, which is an unknown city that apparently sat somewhere along the coast of the Dead Sea. □