**The Curse of Ham**

*Chapter 9*

When Mathabane’s mother tries to explain how Europeans have historically viewed black people, she mentions the “cursed Ham.” In the Old Testament of the Bible, Ham is one of the three sons of Noah, who built an ark to survive a great flood that covered the entire earth. According to the Bible, after the flood, Ham saw his father, Noah, lying in a tent drunk and naked. For the sin of viewing his nakedness, Noah punished Ham by placing a curse on Ham’s son, Canaan; “a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”

The Bible says that Noah’s descendants populated the earth. Egypt became the land of Ham. Thus, Ham was considered the ancestor of Egyptians and of the people in the rest of Africa. Many groups of whites have used this story from the Bible to justify racist views and practices. As Mathabane’s mother says, racist white have declared that all black people were “condemned by God to be forever servants of the white man.”