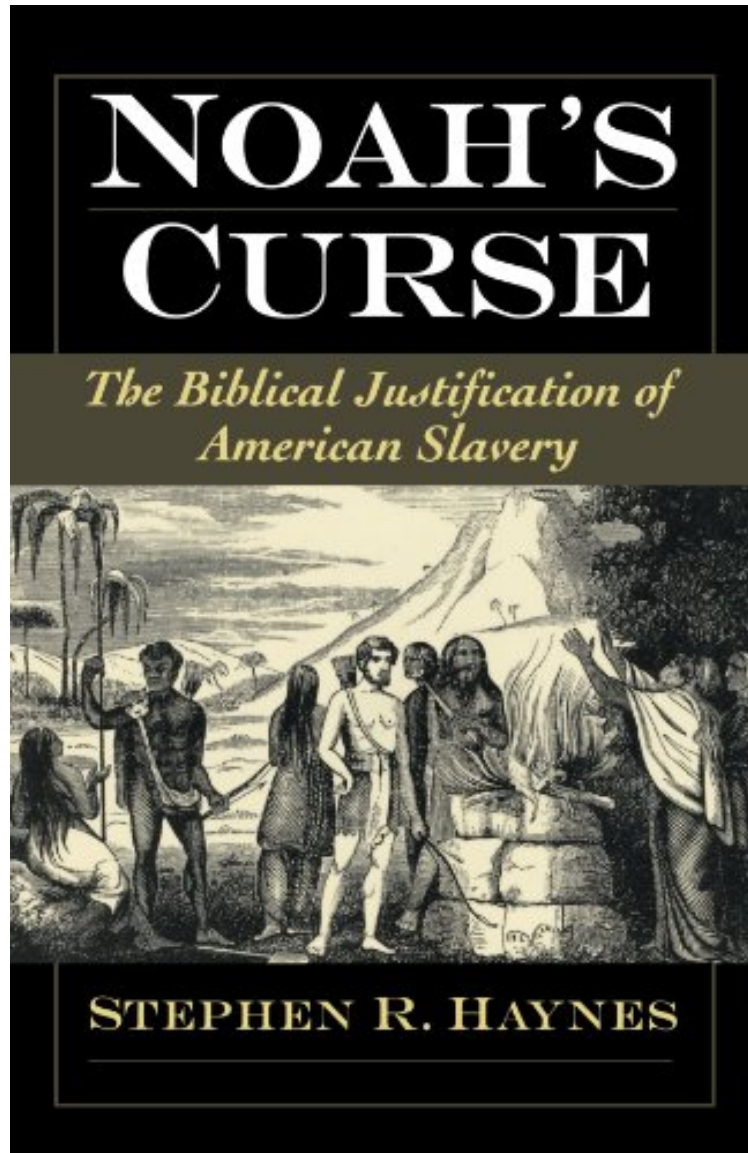


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# Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery (Religion in America)

*Stephen R. Haynes*

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**Stephen R. Haynes : Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery (Religion in America)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery (Religion in America):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Frederick G. Widdowson  
Fundamental to anyone studying the Antebellum South and American religious history. This is an outstanding and thoroughly sourced work.  
0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Rename it to "The Genesis Justification of Slavery"  
By J. Lake  
I would re-subtitle the book the Genesis Justification of Slavery. From a biblical approach he narrowly looked at the historical and theological traditions of Genesis' interpretation. Of this scholarship it was magnificent, but if one names the book "Biblical justification of slavery" I would expect it to cover more than just Genesis. He does not approach the issue of slavery from a systematic theology perspective at all.  
3 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Why care about Noah?  
By Barrie W. Bracken  
The Old Testament has never been of much interest to me either theological or literary. Perhaps being able to read this book is one reason I rate it with four stars. There are faults with this work, not the least of which is the author's over use of quotations. He points out many interesting writers on the subject, but comes short in discussing the varied views they represent. He does offer the point that Noah's curse on his son has a place in the proslavery literature in America. He presents us with many quotations of many authors without informing us of the acceptance or rejection of these beliefs by the layity. One of the most interesting people he presents is Josiah Priest, "a New Yorker known for his frontier adventure stories, Indian captivity narratives, and 'true' tales of the Revolutionary War. [page 42]...whose Slavery as It Relates to the Negro or African Race (1843) was widely read before the Civil War [page 69]." The statement of Priest's position in the authorities of the slavery movement takes the author 47 pages. For someone unacquainted with Josiah Priest this is a long delay. ( This very influential book is available in a reprint from .) Bishop John Hopkins of Vermont is also cited on page 75 but the author again neglects to place him in perspective of the 19th century crisis. The modern scholar Bertram Wyatt Brown is cited by the author 10 times in relation to part sSouthern honor played in the interpretation of Noah's curse. He should have spent more time on contemporary authors if he wanted to show the place of this scripture in the 1800's. Benjamin M. Palmer, a 19th century cleric, ranks very high with the author; Palmer is considered from page 125 to 174. Perhaps my problem with this book is that the author tries to make a book out of the handling of Noah's curse on Ham and the tenuous connection of it with American slavery. If you are interested in the curse itself or in Noah or the Old Testament then you will probably enjoy this book. If I were not interested in the place of religion in the justification of slavery I would not have bought it. Upon reflection I can't say it was a good buy. Personal prejudice creeps in here. I do not believe that Noah ever existed, that there was ever a curse on poor Ham because he had sex with his mother, or that it would make any difference if this all took place. I am more interested in the effect these writings had on the populace of the time. If the reader's main interest is in the life of Noah or Ham this is probably a good buy.

"A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." So reads Noah's curse on his son Ham, and all his descendants, in Genesis 9:25. Over centuries of interpretation, Ham came to be identified as the ancestor of black Africans, and Noah's curse to be seen as biblical justification for American slavery and segregation. Examining the history of the American interpretation of Noah's curse, this book begins with an overview of the prior history of the reception of this scripture and then turns to the distinctive and creative ways in which the curse was appropriated by American pro-slavery and pro-segregation interpreters.

"Well-researched, interdisciplinary, and strongly moral. Historians of American religion, race relations, or slavery, as well as theologians interested in the interplay between the Bible, culture, and social problems, will find this book as excellent resource."-- The Journal of Religion  
"Noah's Curse must be recognized as the most innovative and enlightening study of the Biblical defense of American slavery ever published. The dubious legend of Noah, as Stephen R. Haynes points out, is still with us, along with the Confederate symbols flying over public places and fundamentalists denouncing racial mixing. The Southern mind, he brilliantly explains, has woven the conventions of honor, the burdens of shame, the practice of race subordination, and the concept of divine grace into a single cultural fabric. In the field of religious and sectional history, this work will take an honored place next to the studies of Eugene Genovese and Donald Mathews. No one interested in American religious history can ignore this intellectually powerful study."--Bertram Wyatt-Brown, University of Florida; Author of Southern Honor and The Shaping of Southern Culture  
"The ancient rabbis suggested that every biblical text has seventy legitimate meanings (and no doubt an infinite number of illegitimate ones). Stephen Haynes has produced an amazing history of interpretation of the Ham and Nimrod narratives. It becomes clear through his careful research that such texts are supple and vulnerable to misguided theological passion. This book lets us reflect on old mistakes and, by inference, invites us to reflect on our own availability for parallel misreadings. Noah's Curse is an exercise in historical disclosure not to be missed by those who care about the crisis of reading in the church and in a Bible-rooted culture."--Walter Brueggemann, Professor of Old Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary; Author of Spirituality of the Psalms  
>"Haynes's study provides a thorough and rich sense of the interpretive history of the scriptural story"--Christian Century  
About the Author  
Stephen R. Haynes holds the A.B. Curry Chair of Religious Studies at Rhodes College, where he has taught since 1989. His publications include Reluctant Witnesses: Jews and the Christian Imagination (1995) and, as co-editor, To Each its

Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application (1993)