



BETHEL AG CHURCH
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE

THE TRIBE OF SIMEON & LEVI

TO BE CIRCULATED AMONG CHRISTIANS ONLY

The Tribe of SIMEON & LEVI

Meaning of Simeon: "Hearing" – God has heard.

His Lineage: Second son of Jacob, born to Leah.

Jacob's Blessings upon Simeon: Along with his brother Levi, Simeon attacked the people of the city of Shechem to avenge the assault on his sister Dinah (**Genesis 34:24-31**). Jacob rebuked Levi and Simeon saying *"their swords are weapons of violence. Let me not enter their council... for they have killed men in their anger... I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel"* (**Genesis 49:5-7**).

Moses' Blessings upon the tribe of Simeon: Moses did not mention the tribe of Simeon in his blessings.

Significant people from this tribe:
No significant people from this tribe.

Meaning of Levi: "Attached" (Leah believed that because she gave birth to another son, Jacob would become attached to her.)

His Lineage: Third son of Jacob, born to Leah.

Jacob's Blessings upon Levi: Along with his brother Simeon, Levi attacked the people of the city of Shechem to avenge the assault on his sister Dinah. Jacob rebuked them for the attack. " (**Genesis 49:5-7**)

Moses' Blessings upon the tribe of Levi: *"Bless all his skills, Lord, and be pleased with the work of his hands"* (**Deuteronomy 33:11**).

Significant people from this tribe:
Moses, Aaron (the first high priest), Miriam, Ezra, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, and Barnabas.

The priests were chosen from the tribe of Levi. Levites, who were not chosen to be priests, also participated in caretaking of the Tabernacle (**Numbers 3:5-10**)

What did Jacob prophesy over the tribe of Simeon and Levi?

Both the tribe of Simeon and Levi received a negative blessing from Jacob.

Genesis 49:5-7, *"Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they hamstrung oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel"*

Why did Jacob prophesy curses to the tribe of Simeon and Levi instead of blessings?

The particular crime to which Jacob referred is recounted in **Genesis 34:1-31** and can be summarized as follows:

Dinah, the only daughter of Jacob and Leah and thus the sister of Simeon and Levi, was seduced by Shechem, son of Hamor, a prominent Canaanite prince. Afterward, Shechem expressed to his father a desire to have Dinah as his wife. Hamor approached Jacob with the request that he give Dinah to his son as his wife; Hamor suggested their willingness to compensate Jacob for what had happened to the girl and also suggested that the two groups consider intermarriage with one another.

Simeon and Levi, however, were furious that their sister had been defiled in this manner and they conspired to deceive Hamor and Shechem. They reminded the Canaanites that they could never give their daughters to uncircumcised men and demanded that every male in the Shechemite clan be circumcised. The whole town agreed and soon all of them were circumcised. Three days later, Simeon and Levi suddenly came into the city with swords in hand and viciously slaughtered all the males, who were unable to adequately defend themselves. They plundered the city and took the wives and children captive.

While every sensitive soul can sympathize with the brother's outrage over their sister's disgrace, it cannot be denied that they went far beyond any legal justice in the cruel vengeance they perpetrated on the men of Shechem. What a tragic example of acting under the impulse of an uncontrolled anger! This one incident caused them to lose not only their privileges, but also their father's blessings. Jacob made it clear that he did not want to be part of these sons' quarrels, grudges, and revenge because if they suddenly got angry, they did not hesitate to kill innocent people and harm them heartlessly. Such anger is indeed sin and displeasing to God. It can only be cursed.

By the prophetic words over his two sons, Simeon and Levi, Jacob seems to imply that people with uncontrolled anger should not be together because the havoc they create will be doubled. The best thing for them is to be scattered. The prophetic words Jacob had for Simeon and Levi were that in the future they would indeed be scattered and would have little or no influence at all in Israel.

Why is uncontrolled anger not good; does it lead to sin?

Anger is the most fundamental problem in human life. It has been in existence since the beginning of humanity. Very often, human anger is an expression of unfulfilled lust, covetousness, hatred, resentment, or a desire to take vengeance on someone else. In many cases, it arises rapidly and with very little provocation, it is accompanied by wicked thoughts of vengeance and violence, and it lasts a long time. Cain's anger had its roots in his jealousy toward his brother Abel.

This type of anger is evil. Most human anger is a *"work of the flesh"*

(Galatians 5:19-20).

James 1:20, *"For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."*

Proverbs 15:18, *"A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention."*

Proverbs 22:24, *“Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man.”*

Ephesians 4:31, *“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”*

Human anger rooted in our sinful nature produces *“quarrelling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder”* (**2 Corinthians 12:20**). It produces *“enmity, strife . . . fits of anger [i.e. tantrums], rivalries, dissensions, [and] divisions”* (**Galatians 5:20**). Sinful anger is so common in us that we must be regularly reminded to put away *“anger, wrath, [and] malice”* (**Colossians 3:8**) and that *“everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment”* (**Matthew 5:22**).

What is Righteous Anger?

The common question – ‘Is all anger bad?’ has a simple answer, “No. Anger is not a sin, it is an emotion. What we do in this emotional state of anger can be a sin.” In fact, in some situations, anger is an appropriate emotional response when it comes to injustice, abuse, persecution, slavery, and other such evils. This is called Righteous Anger. Righteous Anger is being angry at what makes God angry. God is not fundamentally angry. He is fundamentally righteous. God’s anger is a by-product of His righteousness.

Righteous Anger doesn’t look or feel like sinful anger because Godly Righteous Anger is governed and directed by love. God is righteous and He is also love (**1 John 4:8**). Love is patient (**1 Corinthians 13:4**). That’s why God repeatedly describes himself in Scripture as *“merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness”* (**Exodus 34:6**).

When we are in Righteous Anger, we must be very careful not to cross the line into unrighteous anger. That’s why Paul wrote, *“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity”* (**Ephesians 4:26-27**). Even when we are righteously angry, it’s so easy to step over the line into wounded pride, giving the devil a foothold in our lives. Whenever you begin to plot vengeance under the guise of Righteous Anger, you’re out of line. The Bible is clear that vengeance belongs to the Lord.

God is in perfect control of His anger as He is righteous, but man requires the assistance of the Holy Spirit to be righteous and angry at the same time.

How do I overcome anger in my life?

- **Anger Must Be Surrendered:** The only way out is to surrender your anger to God. Do not control or manage it in your flesh. Let the Spirit move you to action or bring you to brokenness. God is the judge, not you or me (**James 4:11-12**).

Are you ready to step down from the throne of your mini-judgment seat and allow God to be God? Remember, *“vengeance is mine,”* says the Lord

(**Romans 12:18–21**). Surrender your sinful anger to God and He will give you the grace in your time of need.

- **Reflect** whether the problem started with you. Have you done something, or said something, that instigated the problem? Deal with yourself first before you deal with others who made you angry.

- **Develop** the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We must overcome anger by cultivating the fruits of the Holy Spirit. **Galatians 5:22-23**, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

- Finally, **release** the person or persons who wronged you into the hands of God. Forgive them and begin to bless them. Realize the Hand of God in your life to accomplish what God began in you (**Philippians 1:6**).

How is it that the prophecy, which proved to be a curse for the Simeonites, actually turned into a blessing for the Levities?

The answer is found in **Exodus 32**, which records the awful sin of the Israelites: worshipping a golden calf. When Moses came down from the mountain top with the Ten Commandments, the Israelites camp was worshipping the golden idol and that made Moses furious. The Biblical text itself says it best in **Exodus 32:25-29**,

“Now when Moses saw that the people were out of control—for Aaron had let them get out of control to the point of being an object of mockery among their enemies— then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side, come to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him. He said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘Every man strap his sword on his thigh and go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and every man kill his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbour [all those who continued idol worship].’” So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people [of Israel] were killed that day.”

The Levites demonstrated their zeal in a righteous cause as they stood for the Lord. For this right passion, they were awarded the special place as the priesthood tribe throughout Jewish history. We see the same attribute of standing up for God in the Levites again in **Numbers 25**, when the people of Israelites were found in a similar situation. In Shittim, the people again became engaged in idolatry and immorality, along with the Moabites. God’s anger burned against His people; Then, Moses called all the leaders of Israel and told them that God wanted to put to death everyone in the camp who was sinning against Him.

Refer (**Numbers 25: 11-13**)

Once again it was the Levite who did not hesitate to stand up for Lord. It was this act of standing up for what was right that won the Levites the blessings of Moses and the favour of God. This uncompromising loyalty of Levites towards God set them apart for generations as the priesthood of Israelites and their curse turned into a blessing.

What are the life applications for us from the life of Simeon and Levi, and their descendants?

- Choose to fulfil godly convictions, rather than selfish motives like Simeon who took revenge in his own hands.

Romans 12:17-21, *"Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' To the contrary, 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

- Choose to stand up for God and His Kingdom principles.

1 Corinthians 15:58, *"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."*

- Trust in God who is able to turn a generational curse into a blessing.

1 Peter 1:18-19, *"Live in this way, knowing that you were not liberated by perishable things like silver or gold from the empty lifestyle you inherited from your ancestors. Instead, you were liberated by the precious blood of Christ, like that of a flawless, spotless lamb."*

Conclusion:

It is important to remember that although the tribe of Levi was set apart to perform the sacrifices and lead worship in the Tabernacle and Temple, God never intended the descendants of Levi to be the only priestly figures in the nation of Israel. In fact, the Lord originally called His people out of bondage in Egypt so that the entire nation would serve Him as *"a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"* (**Exodus 19:1–6**). The priestly institution itself was needed only because the sin of the people had not yet been finally dealt with, and an intermediary was required between Israel and God, lest His Holiness break out and destroy His sinful people (**Amos 5:6**).

By His sacrifice of shedding His blood on the Cross, Our Lord Jesus Christ permanently made us the priesthood that God always intended His people to be (**Hebrews 10:10-14**).

There is only one mediator between God and man – that is Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, there is a true priesthood of all Believers. All of us, who trust in Jesus alone for our salvation, have free access into His presence and all of our lawful vocations are set apart for true God-honouring service.

1 Peter 2:9, *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light"*.