

## Simeon and Levi

Dinah's brothers find out that she was raped!

(Genesis 34)

Jacob had purchased land from the city for their family's flocks and they were beginning to settle down. There was a young man from that city called Shechem. It was he who raped Dinah. He was the son of Hamor, who we came to know as a schemer and swindler. After raping Dinah, he has the audacity to ask his father to get Dinah for a wife.

They approach Jacob and her brothers. Jacob holds his tongue, but her brothers do not. They propose a plan to join with the families of Shechem. In his greed for Jacob's goods, Hamor convinces the city to agree to the plan: They circumcised all the men of the city.

On the third day, in their pain, the men of the city were set upon by Simeon and Levi, who took swords and slaughtered all the men of the city. The brothers sacked the city, looted the goods and livestock, and took the women and children as slaves.

Anger! Do you feel it?

Anger is an anti-social emotion. When anger arrives, all the other emotions leave the room! Our head says that our anger is a small thing; We can deal with it; Just pray about it, take a step back, count to ten! Right!

Wrong!

It is a beast from within! When you get angry it overrides all sensibilities. Any thought of consequences goes out the window. You become unrecognisable. No-one and nothing can stop you from lashing out. No scripture comes to mind! You are the rage, the darkness, the fury! And the fuel for the fire is this: How can such injustice exist!

Do not lie and say you have never experienced the hot breath of this beast! There is far too much injustice in this world for us not to be touched.

Consequences!

The consequences of acting on their anger led to Simeon and Levi losing the firstborn rights, which went to Judah. They were poorer for it! The family had to flee in fear from the land that they had purchased. (Genesis 49) In Jacob's dying testimony he remembered their anger. It was a scar on heart of their father that never healed. Death, slavery, and destroyed families!

Nothing righteous was achieved. There was no justice!

James confirms this in his letter: (James 1:19-20) So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to **wrath**; for the **wrath** of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

As an emotion, there is nothing evil about it. It is neither good, nor bad. In fact, if you examined the bible and searched for who was provoked to anger the most, would you be surprised to find out that it was God himself?

Anger is the natural response to injustice! It is what we do with it that matters!

When anger is mixed with evil actions, it turns into unrighteousness. When you are in the grip of the beast, you cannot reason!

The Apostle Paul was a Levite! I wonder if Paul was thinking of the actions of his ancestor, Levi, when he wrote numerous times about anger:

Col 3:8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: **anger, wrath**, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

Eph 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, **wrath, anger**, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

This gives us a clue as to what we can do to tame the beast within:

If you can put away evil speech, bitterness, filthy language...

If you can cling to tender-heartedness, forgiveness, prayer...

Then... you are on your way, but this is just one thing we can do. There is more!

Find someone who will step into the gap for you!

Simeon and Levi had brothers! Which of them acted wisely to spare the men of Shechem? (1 Sam 25) When King David's rage rose hot against Nabal, it took the wisdom of Abigail to placate the King's anger. There was no Abigail for Simeon and Levi!

Find and befriend the Abigails in your life.

What else will protect you from Anger?

Prov 29:11 A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.

Wisdom!

So far, the things we need to deal with that beast from within (anger):

1. Put away the things that, when mixed with anger, create the perfect storm of unrighteousness.
2. Cling to the traits that placate anger: Forgiveness, tender-heartedness, prayer, trust in God!
3. Seek out the Abigails who are willing to intervene in our anger! Will you stand up and keep your brother or sister from the destruction caused by the beast from within?
4. We need wisdom from God to hold back our feelings! (James 1: 5) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

5. Finally: we need a relationship with the Holy Spirit!

A testimony on that last point:

My mother was murdered in her sleep!

I found out in the morning. I cried out to God. I cried tears all day! Yet, throughout the day, the Spirit moved me to declare forgiveness for her killer. It was only then, after I had declared my forgiveness, did I find out the truth: It was my brother who killed her!

Brothers and sisters, we need to be honest. We will never be free of anger, otherwise we are blind to the World around us, but we can put it in its place. Simeon and Levi did not have the luxury of the tools and relationships we have today: They suffered for their anger and caused much suffering. You do not have to do the same. Rise up saints! Be angry, and do not sin! (Psalms 4:4)