

# Bible Workshop

## Joseph and his family\*

### 3. Simeon

**T**HIS MONTH we are going to take a look at dealing with anger and cruelty, and also with punishment. We are not told a lot about Simeon, but we are told enough to enable us to realise what sort of man he was and to take lessons from this. We do know that he was the second oldest son of Jacob, born to Leah (Gen. 29:33). He did not receive the birthright after Reuben failed because he also proved himself unworthy (the birthright went to Joseph).

#### 1 Let us start off with some things that we know about Simeon:

- a) What do we know about what Simeon had done in his life (34:25-31)?
- b) How would you describe his character?
- c) Why did he not receive the birthright?
- d) Can you find any other passages in Genesis where Simeon is mentioned? What are we being told?

#### 2 In Genesis 42:24, we see Simeon was the one brother that Joseph kept in prison in Egypt, while the other brothers went back for Benjamin:

- a) What was Joseph's real reason for keeping one of his brothers in Egypt?
- b) How did keeping Simeon help in that purpose?
- c) Why did Joseph not keep Reuben, the oldest?
- d) Why did Joseph not keep Judah, the leader?
- e) What does this teach us about how God deals with us? (Think in terms of punishment.)
- f) While in prison, do you think Simeon acknowledged why he was there?

#### 3 Simeon and Levi are mentioned together in 34:25-31:

- a) Although they were not the leaders, they probably aided Judah (their younger brother!) in his cruel plots. What does this teach us?
- b) Being around people that think the same way as we do will encourage us to do the things we would like to do. How is this true in their case?
- c) What is the lesson for us?

#### 4 Take a look at Jacob's 'blessing' of Simeon and Levi in 49:5-7:

- a) Why does Jacob 'bless' them together?
- b) What do these verses reveal to us about Simeon's character?
- c) What other verses in the Bible talk of how God views anger and cruelty?
- d) What are some practical ways for us to control our anger?

#### 5. What is the most important lesson you think we can learn from Simeon?

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\* Adapted from a workbook issued to young people attending the Manitoulin Youth Conference in Canada and used by permission. Comments on these questions are invited and should be sent to the Publishing Editor.