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## The Tribe of Simeon

### 26: 12-14

**The tribe of Simeon DIG:** What does the Second Census tell us about Simeon's historical roots? Why did the tribe of Simeon decline so greatly from the First Census? Why would the wilderness generation want to know they had common historical roots from their parents, but a completely separate identity from them?

**REFLECT:** What meaningful group (tribe) are you a member of? How does being a part of that group help to support you and make you grow spiritually? How does being a part of it enable you to help others? What can you do to make sure that the positive parts of your past are accentuated in your relationship with God?

**The loss of nearly two-thirds of Simeon's soldiers was the result of their worshipping the gods of Mo'ab.**



**1. The First Census in the past** found **the clan of Simeon** being numbered at **59,300** (**to see link click [Ak](#) - Numbering the Tribes**). When **Jacob** was giving **his** blessings and cursings to **his sons**, he said: **Simeon and Levi are brothers**, and **his near historical**

**prophecy** was that **their swords** would be **weapons of violence** and **cruelty** (Hebrew: *chamas*, meaning *doing evil*). When the men of **Judah** needed help to fight the Canaanites, **they** asked for the help of **the Simeonites** (**Judges 1:3**). Later in **their** history, **the Simeonites** also slaughtered **the Amalekites who had escaped** in **the hill country of Seir** (**First Chronicles 4:42-43**). But **Simeon** and **Levi's** slaughter of **the men of Shechem** was not a holy war, as was the case with **Joshua**; it was a case of unnecessary vengeance (see [Le - The Slaughter at Shechem by Simeon and Levi](#)).

After the slaughter at **Shechem**, **Simeon** and **Levi** **hamstrung oxen** as **they** pleased (**Genesis 49:6b**). After the attack **they** had **seized their flocks and herds and donkeys and everything else of theirs in the city and out in the fields** (**Genesis 34:28**). To **hamstring oxen** means to cut the tendons in **their** legs so that **they** can no longer work. **The oxen** that **they** didn't take - **they hamstrung**, making **them** useless and helpless. All **the men of Shechem** were slaughtered and **their** wives and children were taken as spoil. So there was no one left to tend **the oxen**. This was merely an act of **cruelty**, which, of course, was **their** nature.

Then **Jacob**, speaking on **God's** behalf, said to **them**, "**Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel**" (**49:7a**)! **Proverbs 6:16-19** tells us that **there are six things ADONAI hates, seven things that are detestable to Him**. The first is **haughty eyes**, reflecting a proud heart, the second is **a lying tongue**, the third is **hands that shed innocent blood**, the fourth is **a heart that devises wicked schemes**, the fifth is **feet that are quick to rush into evil**, sixth is **a false witness who pours out lies**, and the seventh is **a man who stirs up dissension among brothers**. It seems like **Simeon** and **Levi** did all **seven** of these when **they** lied to **the men of Shechem** before **they** slaughtered **them**. No wonder **the LORD** **hated** what they did and found **their** actions **detestable**.

Because **Simeon** and **Levi** had joined together to commit **their** crime, **their** punishment was to be **scattered** among **the tribes of Isra'el**. **Jacob** prophesied: **I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel** (**49:7b**), never to receive **their** own territory during the dispensation of the Torah (**Exodus 19:1 to Acts 1:26**). Thus, **they** would be denied one of the major covenant blessings promised by **God** (**15:18-20**). Inseparable growing up, **they** brought out the worst in each other. So, for **their** own good **they** would be separated.

In contrast to the idolatry of **the Simeonites**, the **Levites** sided with **Moses** over the sin of the golden calf at Mount Sinai. But even then **they** used **their swords** as **weapons of violence** in slaughtering **about three thousand** that day (see my commentary on **Exodus**

**Gv - And All the Levites Rallied to Moses).** So in keeping with **Jacob's** curse, **the Levites** did not receive **their** own territory, but scattered in forty-eight **Levitical** cities throughout **Isra'el** when **they** came into the Land (**Num 18:20-24, 35:1-8; Deut 10:8-9; Josh 14:4, 24:1-42**).

In the final analysis, **the Levites** had a change of heart and developed a zeal for **the LORD**, while **the Simeonites** continued **their** passion for **violence** and **cruelty**. Thus, **the Simeonites** started to decline into obscurity while **the Levites** ascended to the prominence of **the priestly tribe**, and **they** would be the custodians of **the Tabernacle** and **the priesthood**. **Moses** declared: **In this way you are to set the Levites apart from the other Israelites and the Levites will be Mine . . . I have taken them as My own in place of the first born, the first male offering from every Israelite woman (Numbers 8:14-17; Deuteronomy 18:2).**



**2. The Second Census in the present:** The descendants of Simeon by their **six clans**, were: of Nemu'el, of **the Nemuelite clan**; through Jamin, **the Jaminite clan**; through Jakin, **the Jakinite clan**; through Zerah, who was also the head of one of the clans of Judah (Genesis 46:12), but since Simeon was absorbed into Judah, it is plausible to assume that representatives of this clan became linked to both tribes, **the Zerahite clan**; and of Sha'ul, **the Shaulite clan**. A sixth clan, **Ohad** (also missing in First Chronicles 4:24), occurs in Genesis 46:10 and Exodus 6:15, possibly because it later disappeared.<sup>576</sup> It is even possible that the extremely wicked **Zimri** was the leader of the **Ohadite clan**, and that the **plague** destroyed it completely. These were the families of the **Simeon** that survived the **plague** that **broke out** as a result of the participation of **Zimri**, the leader of one of the clans from the tribe of Simeon, and many other Simeonites in the worship of Moabite gods (see [Ea - Taking a Stand for God: The idolatry of Israelite men](#)).<sup>577</sup> By the time the Simeonites were ready to enter the Promised Land there were only 22,200 soldiers left (26:12-14). The tribe of Simeon suffered the greatest decline in population of all the tribes since the First Census (see [Ai - The First Census: The Old Generation of Rebellion](#)), a net loss of 37,100 or sixty-three percent! The largest decrease of any of the tribes. Opposed to the First Census, the Second Census is more interested in the clans and families rather than the founders of the clans (who were long dead), for families are the basis of society (see the commentary on [Ephesians Bu - The Necessary Foundation](#)). The list of Jacob's sons in Genesis (see the commentary on [Genesis Lf - Simeon and Levi are Brothers, Their Swords are Weapons of Violence](#)) forms the basis of this clan list, with the names of the sons transformed into the names of the clans.

There is one sad note in the listing of these tribes in Deuteronomy and First Chronicles. Simeon is not listed. There is always a reason why one tribe is omitted from the list of tribes in the Scriptures. We know that Simeon and Levi had taken cruel revenge on the men of Shechem for the rape of their sister Dinah. Jacob had condemned both of them. But because the tribe of Levi was the only tribe to show their allegiance to ADONAI during the golden calf incident, they were set apart by God for His service. While it is true that Simeon's territory was absorbed into that of Judah (Joshua 19:1) as seen in this map, the real reason for their decline was much more sinister. Simeon was implicated in another great sin in the wilderness. Zimri and his Midianite priestess partner Cozbi were attempting to transform the worship of ADONAI into Canaanite worship. Moses ordered that all who participated in that sin should be killed. As a result, many from the tribe of Simeon died. The only reason the carnage stopped was because Phinehas, in his zeal for ADONAI, thrust his spear all the way through both of them (see [Ea - Taking a Stand for God](#)).

**3. The Messianic Kingdom in the future:** The lists of names and numbers are the material and tangible signs of **God's** blessing, **God's** faithfulness to past promises, and the surety of **God's** future promise keeping (see [Ae - Stars of Heaven, Grains of Sand, and the Promises of God](#)). In **the far eschatological future**, we see **the tribe of Simeon** will be included in the **144,000** during the Great Tribulation (see the commentary on [Revelation Cr - Then I Heard the Number of Those Who Were Sealed, 144,000 from all the Tribes of Isra'el](#)), and the allocation of land during the Messianic Kingdom ([Ezeki'el 48:24-25](#)). During the Eternal State (see [Revelation Fq - The Eternal State](#)), **Simeon's** name will also be etched into one of **the great pearls** that will serve as **gates** to the **New Jerusalem** (see [Revelation Fu - A Great High Wall with Twelve Gates](#)). We will remember **him** for all eternity. Like **Simeon**, our sins can have a long range, tragic consequences. Sin takes you further than we want to go, and costs us more than we want to pay. However, like **Simeon**, all of our sins will be forgotten when we enter the future Messianic Kingdom and Eternal State.

**On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Isra'el (21:12).** Those who believe in "Replacement Theology," (who believe that all of **ADONAI's** promises to **Isra'el** have been forfeited by **her** and given to the Church) have a tough time with this verse. For all eternity **the twelve tribes of Isra'el** will be remembered. **The LORD** has not replaced **Isra'el** with the Church. These **gates** will be an eternal reminder that it was through the faith of **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**, with **the twelve sons of Isra'el** that the Gentiles first entered into the great family and **City of God**.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for always being righteous and just (**Psalms 89:14**). When **You** get angry, it is always a righteous **anger** because of sin. **Simeon and Levi's anger**, though provoked by the rape of their sister Dinah, was an out of control wrath that was more of a revengeful wrath that wiped out the sinners; as opposed to your righteous wrath that desires to correct sinners and to bring them back into a restored fellowship with **You**. **Your** righteous **anger** is provoked when **Your** people turn from **You** and follow other gods (**First Kings 14:9, 16:2, Jeremiah 11:17, 32:32, 44:8, Ezeki'el 8:17, 16:26**). **You** desire to bless **Your** people, but instead **You** must discipline. Yet even in your discipline **You** are a perfect balance of love and holy correction for the good of **Your** children. **My son, do not take lightly the discipline of ADONAI or lose heart when you are corrected by Him, because ADONAI disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He accepts (Hebrews 12:5-6).***

***Your** holiness is always matched by **Your** gracious love. **You** are always loving and caring for each of **Your** children. Trials are allowed to purify **Your** children and bring glory and*

honor to **Your Name**. **These trials are so that the true metal of your faith (far more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire) may come to light in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Messiah Yeshua (First Peter 1:7).** Our **trials** will soon be over and all who love **You** will enjoy an eternity of peace and joy with **You** forever in **Your** heavenly home. **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).**

**You** are such a wonderful and loving Heavenly **Father!** I can always feel safe in **Your** care. When **You** are **angry** and discipline, it is out of love to bring me back to **Your** blessing. **You never sleep, nor slumber** but are constantly caring for me. **He will not let your foot slip. Your Keeper will not slumber. Behold, the Keeper of Isra'el neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalms 121:3-4).** It is a joy to love and to follow **You**, my Awesome and loving Heavenly Father! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen