

ANGER—A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

- A. **Introduction.** Over 500 references in the Bible; over 40 people or groups reported as angry.
- B. **Angry People in the Bible:** Cain, Job, Esau, Jacob, Simeon, Levi, Aaron, Moses, Balaam, Balak, Samson, Saul, Eliab, David, Asa, Naaman, Uzziah, Nebuchadnezzar, Jonah, Sanballat, Ahasuerus, Herod, the Pharisees, the older brother of the prodigal son, the people of Ephesus, Satan, many others.
- C. **The Wrath of God** (Exod. 32:10; Num. 11:10; Deut. 6:14,15; 29:23; Judg. 2:12; Psa. 7:11).
- D. **Righteous Anger—the Example of Christ** (Mark 3:1-5; Matt. 23:23-31; John 2:13-16).
- E. **Other Examples in the Bible of Righteous Anger** (Gen. 39:19; Exod. 16:20; 32:19; 1 Sam. 11:6; Job 32:2,3).
- F. **Righteous Anger in Christians Today** (Eph. 4:26,27).
- G. **Sinful Anger—Examples from Scripture**
 - 1. Cain angry with Abel (Gen. 4:5,6).
 - 2. Esau with Jacob (Gen. 27:34,45).
 - 3. Jacob with Rachel (Gen. 30:2).
 - 4. Simeon and Levi with Shechem (Gen. 34:7).
 - 5. Moses with the Israelites (Num. 20:10,11).
 - 6. Balaam with his donkey (Num. 22:27).
 - 7. Balak with Balaam (Num. 24:10).
 - 8. Eliab with David (1 Sam. 17:28).
 - 9. Saul with Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:32).
 - 10. Naaman with Elisha (2 Ki. 5:11).
 - 11. The soldiers of Ephraim with King Amaziah (2 Chron. 25:10).
 - 12. Ahasuerus with Vashti (Esth. 1:12).
 - 13. Haman with Mordecai (Esth. 3:5).
 - 14. Sanballat, Tobiah, and others with the Israelites (Neh. 4:1,7).
 - 15. Job with the three comforters and with God (Job 7:11; 10:1; 13:26; 21:25; 23:2; etc.).
 - 16. Asa with Hanani (2 Chron. 16:10).
 - 17. Herod with the wise men (Matt. 2:16).
 - 18. The older brother with his father (Luke 15:28).
 - 19. Peter with the people who identified him as Jesus' disciple (Matt. 26:74).
- H. **Why Were These People Angry?**
 - 1. I am being treated unfairly.
 - 2. I am being blamed for something that is not my fault.
 - 3. I or my family have not been treated with proper respect.
 - 4. That person didn't do what I wanted him to do.
 - 5. That person isn't on *my* side.
 - 6. That person dared to tell me I was wrong.
- I. **Sinful Anger in Response to Sin.** Consider Esau's anger with Jacob, Jacob with Rachel, Simeon/Levi with Shechem, Moses with the Israelites, Ahasuerus with Vashti, Job with his three friends. We do *not* have a right to respond in anger to every perceived sin. Why?

1. My perception may be wrong.
2. My anger may be only for the purpose of punishing the person (Rom. 12:19).
3. I have the privilege of passing over a transgression (Prov. 19:11).
4. I may be equating *personal* embarrassment or inconvenience with sin.

J. Anger as a Means of Controlling Others (Matt. 26:74).

K. Ways of Expressing Anger

1. Losing one's temper.
2. Clamming up, getting depressed (1 Ki. 21:1-4).
3. Using the silent treatment.
4. Getting even (Rom. 12:19,20).
5. Using cutting, mocking words (Matt. 5:22).
6. The "gunny sack" approach.

L. Biblical Instructions Concerning Anger

1. We are to be angry, but without sinning (Eph. 4:26,27).
2. We are to stop our sinful anger (Psa. 37:8; Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; Gal. 5:19-21).
3. We are to consider the effects and consequences of our anger (Prov. 27:4; Matt. 5:22; Heb. 12:15; Jas. 1:20; 3:14).
4. We are to be slow to anger (Prov. 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 1 Cor. 13:4,5; 1 Tim. 2:8; Tit. 1:7; Jas. 1:19).
5. We have the privilege of passing over some transgressions (Prov. 19:11; Luke 22:24; 23:34; Phil. 2:5-11; Num. 20:3,8).
6. How we are to deal with other people's anger (Prov. 15:1; 29:8; Prov. 21:14).
7. We are to avoid stirring up anger in others (Prov. 15:1; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21).

M. Dealing with the Problem of Sinful Anger

1. Get rid of excuses (2 Cor. 5:17).
2. Judge anger in our thought life (Eccl. 7:9).
3. Commit our "gunny sack" to the Lord (Prov. 19:11).
4. Memorize and apply Matt. 5:44.
5. Realize we *can* have control (Gal. 5:23).
6. Memorize and apply Phil. 4:8.
7. Don't bottle it up (Rom. 12:21).
8. Realize that things or people that "cause" our anger are tests from the Lord (Psa. 76:10, 1 Cor. 10:13).

N. Summary of Lessons Learned

1. We are to be angry at sin, following Christ's example.
2. Our righteous anger is to be used to help the sinner be delivered from the sin.
3. We must be very clear on the difference between righteous and sinful anger.
4. Most sinful anger centers around what people are doing to hurt *me*.
5. Sometimes our sinful anger is directed toward those who are actively carrying out God's will.
6. Sometimes we use anger as a tool for controlling others.
7. Anger may be expressed by silence, making fun of the person, taking vengeance, etc.
8. "It is [our] glory to pass over a transgression."
9. We must try to avoid provoking others to anger.
10. We must throw away all of our excuses for our anger problem.
11. We must judge anger in our thought life and replace it with the "whatsoever" of Phil. 4:8.
12. We must realize that "the fruit of the Spirit is ... self-control."
13. The things or people that make us angry are a part of God's tests in chastening us.