

# “Family Jealousy”

## Numbers Chapter 12

Numbers 11:35 “And the people journeyed from Kibrothhattaavah unto Hazeroth; and abode at Hazeroth.”

### Num 12:1 1) Miriam and Aaron’s Accusation vs 1-3

Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman);

- Cush was the son of Ham, grandson of Noah. They were known to settle in the area of southern Egypt, possibly the Sudan or Ethiopia. (KJV & NKJV read that Moses married an Ethiopian woman.)
- This verse is debated because in Exodus 2:16-21 Moses married the daughter of Jethro, Zipporah who was a Midianite. There are a few of possibilities:
  - Zipporah had died and Moses remarried.
  - Moses took a second wife.
  - Jethro was from Ethiopia but only dwelt in Midian as a priest.
- The verse doesn’t really tell us what they were so upset about with regards to Moses’ wife. It implies some sort of prejudice.
  - Many Ethiopians have a darker complexion. (this really wasn’t ever problematic in the Bible)
  - Maybe due to remarriage or a second wife not being from the Children of Israel.
- But as we read on this problem was only a surface issue. There was really an entirely different issue they were having a problem with.

### Num 12:2 and they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard it.

- Has the Lord spoken through Aaron and Miriam?
  - Miriam
    - a) Care for Moses as child Exodus 2
    - b) Prophetess - Exodus 15:20
    - c) Lead all Israel in a song of deliverance Exodus 15
    - d) Micah 6:4 suggests Moses, Aaron AND Miriam as a Leaders in Israel
  - Aaron
    - a) Exodus 4:30 It was Aaron, Not Moses who initially spoke to the leaders in Egypt to introduce what God was doing through Moses.
    - b) Exodus 12:1 Aaron was with Moses when the plan of the Exodus revealed from God.
    - c) Aaron was the only High Priest
- Mark 6:4 “But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.” Families of a minister are the people who know and see the real man. They see hopes, fulfillment, victories, challenges, disappointment, failure, hurts, weaknesses, and struggles.
- The issue is that Miriam & Aaron do not have the same leadership responsibilities as Moses even though they too hear from God. They are accusing Moses of some pride that he has that elevates him in his eyes over everyone else. They think he believes he is a one man show.
- “The Lord Heard It” - The last chapter we saw that the Lord heard the mixed multitude complain. He heard Israel complain. And now he hears Miriam and Aaron complain.

### Num 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)

- Theologians contemplate this verse is possibly added by Joshua after Moses had died.
- This word has another understanding than meek or humble. It could also be interpreted as afflicted or low. Meaning that this could be one of the lowest points in Moses life.
  - Attacks from family or dear friends (betrayal) cause wounds that have a more sever hurt than any other.

## 2) Miriam and Aaron Hears God's Rebuttal vs 4-9

The Lord deals with this conversation quickly. It seems the Lord interrupts the conversation.

Num 12:4 **Suddenly the LORD said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, "You three come out to the tent of meeting." So the three of them came out.**

Num 12:5 **Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent, and He called Aaron and Miriam. When they had both come forward,**

- God acting quickly against this rebellion among leaders. He is not speaking in soft tones. He is making known His stern response to this rebellious conversation and demands quick response.
- They came out immediately.
- The Lord came down in a pillar of cloud showing His authority that cannot be confused or mistaken.
- He calls Miriam and Aaron to come forward. Can you imagine the feeling of being caught and hearing the stern voice of God calling you forward for judgment?

Num 12:6 **He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream.**

- If there is a prophet, God is saying, I will speak to him in dreams and visions. What ever way the Lord desires.

Num 12:7 **"Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household;**

Num 12:8 **With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?"**

- But with Moses it was different.
  - It was a conversation (mouth to mouth) not a monologue.
  - The conversation was different. PLAIN without ambiguity.
  - He beholds some form of the Lord, yet not in entirety. *"You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"* (Exodus 33:20)
- The Lord ask *"why then were you not afraid"* - for they considered themselves having the same intimacy as Moses. God made it clear they didn't.
  - Aaron and Miriam are now having that "face to face" with God. They criticized Moses thinking they were up to the same task. Well, now they are experiencing it. God will at times reveal our own hearts to us.
  - Moses also did not have to defend himself. God defended him better than Moses ever could anyway.
- Their criticism against Moses was:
  - Petty - Moses wife was not an issue with God.
  - False - Moses Pride but he was humble
  - Filled with Self Interest. - They wanted a share in Moses' recognition

Num 12:9 **So the anger of the LORD burned against them and He departed.**

- God let his anger be known and then left.
- Again imagine the uncomfortable pause Miriam and Aaron felt as they thought "What now"

## 3) Miriam and Aaron's Punishment vs 10-16

Num 12:10 **But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she was leprous.**

- It seems that Miriam hadn't realized that judgment had come upon her. It took Aaron to turn to her to notice that she had become leprous.
- It is so interesting that the judgment is a skin disease and Miriam's first complaint to Moses was about his wife. Possibly that she was dark skinned. Now Miriam was White skinned with leprosy.

Num 12:11 **Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not account *this* sin to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned.**

Num 12:12 "Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb!"

- Notice that judgment changes the perspective of the person judged. Aaron once complained that both he and Miriam were Moses' equal. But now he calls Moses lord.
- We do not see that Aaron had the same judgment of leprosy. He may be wondering that this is strike two for him. Once with the golden calf and now this rebellion. What is going to happen?
- The fear of judgment causes him to cry out in fear for his sister and for himself. The fear of judgment opens the eyes to what foolishness man commits.
- "WE HAVE SINNED" there we find the place we all have need to come to. Humble before the Lord for you and I have sinned against Him.

Num 12:13 Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "O God, heal her, I pray!"

- Here we see just how great Moses is. I probably would have let my sister squirm a little. I would have said, "Let's see if we can learn a lesson from this Miriam." Or worse, "Well you asked for it"
- Moses cries out, because, no doubt, he loves Miriam. He cries out for her healing.

Num 12:14 But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut up for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again."

- The Lord is speaking to Moses in a reasoning, plain sense.
- If Miriam caused disgrace in her family and her father had spit in her face (a custom but not found in the law), she would have to bear her shame and be put out of the camp for seven days.
  - Leviticus 14 we learned that the cleansing ritual for the Leper was 7 days; after which he was pronounced healed.
- So the Lord said "Let's do that."

Num 12:15 So Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again.

Num 12:16 Afterward, however, the people moved out from Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

- They obeyed the voice of the Lord and the camp waited for Miriam to be received back.
  - Reflection time to learn a lesson
  - Knowing that she desired to be a leader yet the camp was on hold because of her failure. A fitting judgment. It is quite a painful judgment to know that a body of people are held up or stalled in their walk with the Lord because of the leader.
- After that the camp moved to the wilderness of Paran

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