

Numbers Chapter 12

- Chapter 11 dealt with the sin of the nation in a corporate sense. This chapter deals with individual sin.

Romans 3:10 “As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one.”

V: 1 Miriam was Moses’ older sister, God used her to save Moses’ life. She was the one who place the pitch covered basket containing baby Moses in the river Nile, and watched it until Pharaoh’s daughter found him. She was older than Moses by several years.

- Aaron was the eldest. (Exodus 7:7)
- Miriam is listed 1st - “spake” is in the feminine tense = she started it.
- Miriam was also a prophetess, a woman of standing.

Exodus 15:20 “And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand;...”

- Initially Miriam and Aaron criticize Moses for marrying an Ethiopian (Egyptian) woman, possibly because she was non-Jew, a gentile – but eventually the conversation turns to criticizing Moses leadership.

Titus 3:2 “... speak evil of no man...”

- When we do, we open a door – and it’s hard to shut, and usually more comes out that we wished – and we expose ourselves in the process.

Jesus taught us:

Matthew 12:34 “... for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

- Apparently Zipporah had passed away, and Moses had re-married. Nothing is mentioned about Zipporah after being reunited with Moses in Exodus 18.
- God has already demonstrated how He feels about complaining in general, now we’ll see how He feels about speaking against His servants.

Psalms 105:15 “... touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”

“... and the Lord heard it...”

V: 2 Thus far the Bible records that God spoke directly to Aaron one time, and that was in Moses’ presence, and there is no mention of God speaking directly to Miriam except in this passage. There is plenty of mention of God speaking to Moses over and over again.

- This statement is indicative of a worldly viewpoint, based on emotion and sin which distort reality as opposed to a Biblical world view, wherein we see things clearly for what they are in truth.

V: 3 I've heard this verse quoted before, but didn't realize where it was from exactly. Reading it now, I realize that Moses is the one who wrote it...

- At first it may seem self-serving in a tongue-in-cheek kind of way, but knowing that all of God's word is inspired, God-breathed – it seems almost like a test of faith or obedience to record what God had given him to write.

2 Peter 1:19-21 “¹⁹We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: ²⁰Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. ²¹For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “¹⁶All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

V: 4 This seems very much like a parental situation, calling their children out on the carpet over their behavior.

Hebrews 12:5-8 “⁵And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: ⁶For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. ⁷If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? ⁸But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

V: 5 They all went to the Tabernacle, but Aaron and Miriam held back, and God calls them out front and center.

V: 6 God will be the one to define what a prophet is. “Hear now My words...” (V:2)

V: 7 The first thing is that Moses doesn't seek to justify himself before them, he doesn't defend himself against the accusation – God is his defense!

Psalms 89:18 “For the Lord is our defense; and the Holy One of Israel is our King.”

Psalms 94:22 “But the Lord is my defense; and my God is the rock of my refuge.”

- Moses is more than a prophet, he has a special, even a personal relationship with God in a way the no other has.
- God describes Moses as a faithful man – he believed God.

Romans 4:3 "... Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him as righteousness."

V: 8 It would seem that Moses got to see more of God than any man alive.

Exodus 33:11 "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto His friend..."

- No reverence = no fear. King David / King Saul? David would not touch God's anointed.

V: 9 Every time the anger of the Lord is kindled, someone gets burned.

- God doesn't say or announce what He's going to do, He just does it.

V: 10 "Leprosy" in Hebrew = "smitten".

Isaiah 1:2-6

- Interesting that the sign of leprosy was one of the signs that God gave to Moses to authenticate his message from God when God first commissioned Moses.
- At that moment Miriam became untouchable, unclean, the very opposite of what she had hoped for.

Jesus said:

Mark 9:35 "... if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all."

- Miriam I some way desire a better position, a higher place, and was put in a lower place, out of the camp.

V: 11-12 Aaron humbles himself and confesses his sin.

Psalms 51:17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart O God, thou wilt not despise."

- Aaron yielded to Moses' authority calling him "lord".
- God is affirming or re-establishing the lines of authority.

Biblical authority:

Hebrews 13:7 “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

Hebrews 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

V: 13 Moses cries out to God on behalf of his brother and sister.

James 5:16 “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

V: 14 Re spitting in face: a sign of utter contempt & disgust.

Deuteronomy 25:9 re: brother no raising up seed, taking responsibility to sister in law.

- Had she been as disrespectful to her earthly father, he would have spit in her face as a sign of contempt and she would have been shamed and put out of the camp 7 days.
- Apart from her death, we never hear anything of Miriam again.

V: 15-16 The whole camp knew why they were stopped, waiting for those 7 days to pass. No doubt a very humbling experience for Miriam.

-
- Speak evil of no man, particularly God’s anointed, His servants.
 - Miriam, a Jewess, a prophetess – one in possession of the word of God, who had actually rejected the word of God through God’s chosen one. Put away for 7 days, then restored.
 - The nation of Israel is often referred to in feminine terms, in possession of God’s word, yet at the same time rejecting God’s word, and the chosen One who would deliver it. The nation would also be smitten with horrible plagues and put away not for 7 days, but for 7 terrible years, then restored – and brought into the Kingdom.
 - We see God’s anger kindled over this sin, we should understand a little more clearly what Jesus has saved us from by taking God’s wrath upon Himself.