

# Numbers 12 Commentary

PREVIOUS [Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission](#)

NEXT

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
Counting & Camping Nu 1-4	Cleansing & Congregation Nu 5-8	Carping & Complaining Nu 9-12	12 Spies & Death in Desert Nu 13-16	<a href="#">Aaron</a> & Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18	Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam Nu 21-25	Second Census 7 Laws of Israel Nu 26-30	Last Days of Moses as Leader Nu 31-33	Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements Nu 34-36
Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		
Old Generation			Tragic Transition			New Generation		
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out			Participation in the Journey: Moving On			Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In		
At Sinai <a href="#">Mt Sinai</a>			To <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Hor</a>			At <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Nebo</a>		
En Route to <a href="#">Kadesh</a> (Mt Sinai)			En Route to Nowhere ( <a href="#">Wilderness</a> )			En Route to <a href="#">Canaan</a> (Plains of Moab)		
A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: <a href="#">Moses</a>								

**Numbers 12:1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman);**

BGT Numbers 12:1 κα λ λησεν Μαριαμ κα Ααρων κατ Μωυσ νεκεν τ ς γυναι κ τ ς Α θιοπ σσης ν λαβεν Μωυσ ς τι γυνα κα Α θι πισσαν λαβεν

NET Numbers 12:1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married (for he had married an Ethiopian woman).

NLT Numbers 12:1 While they were at Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses because he had married a Cushite woman.

ESV Numbers 12:1 Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman.

NIV Numbers 12:1 Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite.

KJV Numbers 12:1 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

YLT Numbers 12:1 And Miriam speaketh -- Aaron also -- against Moses concerning the circumstance of the Cushite woman whom he had taken: for a Cushite woman he had taken;

LXE Numbers 12:1 And Mariam and Aaron spoke against Moses, because of the Ethiopian woman whom

Moses took; for he had taken an Ethiopian woman.

ASV Numbers 12:1 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Cushite woman.

CSB Numbers 12:1 Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses because of the Cushite woman he married (for he had married a Cushite woman).

NKJ Numbers 12:1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

- **Miriam:** Mt 10:36 12:48 Joh 7:5 15:20 Ga 4:16
- **Cushite,** Ex 2:16,21
- **married:** Ge 24:3,37 26:34,35 27:46 28:6-9 34:14,15 41:45 Ex 34:16 Lev 21:14
- [Numbers 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 15:20-21+ **Miriam** the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing ([Dance in worship](#)). 21 Miriam answered them, "Sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and his rider He has hurled into the sea."

Micah 6:4 "Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt And ransomed you from the house of slavery, And I sent before you **Moses, Aaron and Miriam**. (THE TRIO WAS A "TEAM")

### **MIRIAM DOES NOT PROPHECY BUT PROTESTS!**

**Protest** means to express a strong objection to something, in this case someone. Aaron joins the protest. So much for "brotherly love!"

#### **Third Rebellion: Challenge to Moses' Authority** (Numbers 12:1–16)

- Miriam and Aaron's Challenge of Moses (Numbers 12:1–3)
- God Speaks to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam (Numbers 12:4–8)
- The Judgment against Miriam (Numbers 12:9–13)
- God's Reply to Moses, Miriam, and Aaron (Numbers 12:14–15)
- Third Stage of the Journey (Numbers 12:16)

**NET Note** - In this short chapter we find a prime example of jealousy among leaders and how God dealt with it. Miriam and Aaron are envious of Moses' leadership, but they use an occasion – his marriage – to criticize him. Often the immediate criticism is simply a surface issue for a deeper matter. God indicates very clearly he will speak through many people, including them, but Moses is different. Moses is the mediator of the covenant. The chapter is a lesson of what not to do. They should have fulfilled their duties before God and not tried to compete or challenge the leader in this way. There is a touch of divine irony here, for Miriam is turned white with leprosy (ED: INSTEAD OF "GREEN" WITH JEALOUSY!). The chapter falls easily into the sections of the story:

- The accusation (Nu 12:1–3),
- The LORD's response (Nu 12:4–10),
- The intercession of Moses (Nu 12:11–16).

I like **Brian Bell's** title for vv 1-3 - **PRIDE & PREJUDICE!** If you're in a place of leadership expect criticism, even from members of your own family. Happened to Moses, David (Mical/dance) & Jesus (own family He's out of his mind Mk 3:21+) Here we have a family quarrel that effects the whole camp.

**Warren Wiersbe** astutely observes that "People in places of spiritual leadership know that problems usually come in clusters of twos or threes. Why? Because Satan is alive and busy (1 Peter 5:8–9) and sinful human nature fights the holy will of God (Gal. 5:16–17). Just about the time the Lord helps you settle one crisis, another one appears." (Be Counted)

Irving Jensen - The complaint against Moses was double-barreled. The first part was registered to degrade Moses, by suggesting that he had committed a questionable act: he had married a Cushite woman (12:1). It was probably after the death of his first wife, Zipporah, that Moses had married this Cushite woman, who was either one of the foreigners saved out of Egypt with the Israelites,

or a daughter of the Cushites dwelling in Arabia....The second part of the complaint was registered to upgrade Miriam and Aaron by suggesting that Moses was not sole spokesman for God.

**What may have prompted Miriam and Aaron to commit this sin and attack their own brother?** Let me ask it this way -- might a prophetess be jealous of 68 plus 2 men who have the gift of prophecy even if only for a moment? While we cannot be certain, the fact that the 70 elders had prophesied (Nu 11:24-25+) may have stimulated a fleshly reaction, especially given the fact that Miriam was designated as t **prophetess** (Exodus 15:20+) and Aaron had in a sense been a prophet, conveying the words that Moses had received from God (see Ex 4:10-16, 30+) Another event that many have tempted their fleshly reaction was Moses' acceptance of the incident with Eldad and Medad (Nu 11:26-29+).

**Wiersbe** - Miriam is one of ten women in Scripture who were called prophetesses: Deborah (Jdg. 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah (Neh. 6:14), Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3), Anna (Luke 2:36), and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:9). (Ibid)

**Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses - Against** (see also NET Note below) means in opposition to, even conveying a sense of enmity and hostility! The "leaven" of grumbling (taking the form of jealousy) has begun to spread in the camp. Yes it is Miriam and Aaron who speak against (it is primarily Miriam speaking against) Moses, but we need to remember as Paul taught "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of wickedness" (Eph 6:12+, cf 2 Cor 10:3-5+), so this without question a conflict stirred up (cf flaming missiles, Eph 6:16+) by the Adversary himself, **diabolos** (dia = through + ballo = throw ~ "throw between!"), this very word meaning one who comes between and seeks to divide and defeat. Here he takes aim at the leadership and the closest relationships of Moses to bring division!

**A C Gaebelein** - Miriam was a prophetess (Exodus 15:20). Aaron had the dignity of the priesthood. Pride, the crime of the devil (1 Timothy 3:6), lead them to speak against their own brother. Miriam was the leader in this rebellion, for her name stands first and the judgment falls upon her. She may have been moved to jealousy by the elders having received the Spirit and exercising the gift of prophecy among the people. And Aaron reveals the weakness of the flesh. It is the second time he failed in this manner. He could not resist the clamoring of the people when they demanded the golden calf and here he cannot resist his sister, who became the willing instrument of Satan, like the first woman (1 Timothy 2:14).

**NET Note on spoke against** - The preposition bet (בְּ) has the adversative sense here, "[speak] against" (see also its use for hostile speech in 21:5, 7). **Speaking against** is equal to the **murmuring** throughout the wilderness period. The verb of the sentence is וַתִּדְבֹר (vattédabber), the feminine form of the verb. **This indicates that Miriam was the main speaker for the two**, the verb agreeing with the first of the compound subject.

**Miriam** - 13v - Ex. 15:20-21; Nu 12:1; Nu 12:4; Nu 12:5; Nu 12:10; Nu 12:15; Nu 20:1; Nu 26:59; Dt. 24:9; 1 Chr. 4:17; 1 Chr. 6:3; Mic. 6:4

**Because of** - Term of explanation. This explains Miriam's critical spirit. Note it explains it BUT it does not justify it!

**The Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman)** - The **Cushite woman** could be Zipporah, but this is problematic (see NET Note below and also [Gotquestions](#) discussion). She was just a "straw man" so to speak, for their real "beef" was with Moses as the main leader. They might have been a bit fearful (and rightly so as the story unfolds) to bring criticism directly to Moses!

**Constable** - The Cushite woman Moses had married was probably not Zipporah (Exod. 2:21). Zipporah was from Midian that was in Arabia. At this time Cush was a name for Upper Egypt (Ethiopia). "...the Septuagint and the Vulgate translate 'Cushite' in Numbers 12:1 as 'Ethiopian,' the word used by the Greeks and Romans to refer to the region south of Egypt inhabited by people with black skin."

**NET NOTE on the Cushite woman** - It may be that Miriam was envious of **the Cushite woman** Moses married. And, in view of the previous chapter's content about others being given a portion of the Spirit to share in the leadership role, she may have seen this as her chance finally to become just as important in the nation as her younger brother. After all, **she safeguarded his birth and early years** (Exod 2:4-6+). But there are two issues here—the reason she gives ("does the LORD only speak through Moses?"), and the reason the text gives (the Cushite woman). The Hebrew text has חַקְשִׁיטָה (hakkushit, "**the Cushite**") as the modifier of "woman." The Greek text interpreted this correctly as "Ethiopian." The word Cush in the Bible can describe the Cassites, east of Babylon of the later period (Gen 10:18), or Ethiopia (Isa 20:3; Nah 3:5; et al). Another suggestion is that it would refer to Cushan of Hab 3:7, perhaps close to Midian, and so the area Moses had been. **This would suggest it could be Zipporah—but the Bible does not identify the Cushite as Zipporah.** The most natural understanding would be that it refers to an Egyptian/Ethiopian woman. The text does not say when Moses married this woman, or what Miriam's problem with her was. It is clear that it was a racial issue, by virtue of the use of "Cushite." Whether she was of darker skin than the Hebrews would be hard to say, since the Bible gives no further detail. Neither does it say if this is a second wife, or a woman Moses married since Zipporah went home (Exod 18:2). These do not

seem to be the issues the text wishes to elaborate on; it is simply stating that this woman was the occasion for a deeper challenge.

**Henry Morris** - Presumably this woman was Zipporah (Ex 2:21; 4:25), the daughter of Jethro, since there is no other indication that Moses had more than one wife. However, she is also called a Midianite (Exodus 2:16). This leaves her identity somewhat uncertain. Ethiopia is Cush in Hebrew. The Cushites originally settled on the eastern shores of Arabia before moving across the Red Sea to Ethiopia, and were gradually replaced by the Midianites. Thus, the Cushites and Midianites probably experienced considerable intermingling and intermarriage in the process. Habakkuk 3:7 indicates that Cushan and Midian were sometimes considered equivalent.

**Mattoon** - Moses had an excellent spirit. He walked with God and had God's power upon his life, yet, he is still being criticized. Excellence does not give you immunity from criticism, especially spiritual excellence. Christ was the epitome of perfection, but was still maligned and criticized by men. Criticism is going to come, even if you serve the Lord. It will come especially from carnal Christians and unsaved people. (cf 2 Ti 3:12, Jn 17:14, 1 Pe 4:12-13). Some of the most painful criticisms will come from those who are closest to us, family and friends. David

**Brian Bell** analyzes **Miriam** -Keep in mind Moses was 80 at the exodus from Egypt; Aaron was 83; this would make Miriam in her 90's, as she was old enough to watch over Moses when floating in the Nile. This is no squabble among youth. These siblings should know better. Miriam, has led a tremendous life, with tremendous authority – but apparently that is not enough anymore! She has been part of a leadership team that has led a people who faced no chance of survival in the desert, but instead has led them through peril to the land promised them by God. But she sees what her brother has and wants that too.. Question - Have you ever looked past all that you we're blessed with? [We all have!] She had contracted an inward stain. But the bible is a strange book. It puts a blot upon all its portraits (except Christ) & it does so not by mistake but by design. Its blots are as much a bit of the art as are its beauties. But who exactly was Miriam? - See Ex.15:20,21 Miriam leads the woman in song and dance worshiping God for saving them all from certain death. First Prophetess; musician; leader; dancer; singer; poet. You could say Moses was Law; Aaron is Religion; & Miriam was Art. Single whole life, in an age where female celibacy wasn't a consecrated thing. Micah 6:4 says "Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt And ransomed you from the house of slavery, **And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam.**" Miriam isn't just another Hebrew, and she isn't just the sister,...Miriam is one of the three leaders of Israel.

**Mattoon** on Miriam as the leader of the criticism - Miriam is leading the complaining and criticism.

- She is mentioned first.
- The verb "spake" in verse 1 is "feminine."
- She is the one that will be punished most severely as we will see.
- Aaron, by nature, was not a leader. He was easily influenced by others. The golden calf incident reveals this truth.
- The first reason for complaint is a feminine reason.

**Mattoon** continues - This first complaint is a diversion. This happens - many times with people. Discernment is needed to see the real problem at hand. The real problem for Miriam's complaint is not in the person of the wife. The real issue for complaint is in verse 2. It was the position or the rank that was sought. Miriam and Aaron wanted more prestige. They wanted equal status with Moses. This comes after God put His spirit on seventy men. These two folks were left out of this anointing of God. They felt threatened and were jealous. The green-eyed monster of jealousy reared its ugly head. They tried to destroy Moses in order to gain power and position. This tactic is practiced today, unfortunately, in our churches. Envy and jealousy has a devastating effect upon our lives and the lives of others. For this reason, it is likened to a monster. The bitterness and greed for what others possess or have attained, work like acid on the soul. They eat away at the joy, compassion, and common sense of a person. Miriam and Aaron attack God's man. This is not a sign that they are walking with God. It is interesting to note that they did not want to lead God's people in Egypt under the threat of Pharaoh.

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**Spurgeon** - "He had married an Ethiopian woman." —Numbers 12:1

Strange choice of Moses, but how much more strange the choice of him who is a prophet like unto Moses, and greater than he! Our Lord, who is fair as the lily, has entered into marriage union with one who confesses herself to be black, because the sun has looked upon her. It is the wonder of angels that the love of Jesus should be set upon poor, lost, guilty men. Each believer must, when filled with a sense of Jesus' love, be also overwhelmed with astonishment that such love should be lavished on an object so utterly unworthy of it. Knowing as we do our secret guiltiness, unfaithfulness, and black-heartedness, we are dissolved in grateful admiration of the matchless freeness and sovereignty of grace. Jesus must have found the cause of his love in his own heart, he could not have found it in us, for it is not there. Even since our conversion we have been black, though grace has made us comely. Holy Rutherford said of himself what we must each subscribe to—"His relation to me is, that I am sick, and he is the Physician of whom I stand in need. Alas! how often I play fast and loose with Christ! He bindeth, I loose; he buildeth, I cast down; I quarrel with Christ, and he agreeth with me twenty times a day!" Most tender and faithful Husband of our souls, pursue thy gracious work of

conforming us to thine image, till thou shalt present even us poor Ethiopians unto thyself, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Moses met with opposition because of his marriage, and both himself and his spouse were the subjects of an evil eye. Can we wonder if this vain world opposes Jesus and his spouse, and especially when great sinners are converted? for this is ever the Pharisee's ground of objection, "This man receiveth sinners." Still is the old cause of quarrel revived, "Because he had married an Ethiopian woman."

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**LASB** - People often argue over minor disagreements, leaving the real issue untouched. Such was the case when Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses. They represented the priests and the prophets, the two most powerful groups next to Moses. The real issue was their growing jealousy of Moses' position and influence. Since they could not find fault with the way Moses was leading the people, they chose to criticize his wife. Rather than face the problem squarely by dealing with their envy and pride, they chose to create a diversion from the real issue. When you are in a disagreement, stop and ask yourself if you are arguing over the real issue or if you have introduced a smoke screen by attacking someone's character. If you are unjustly criticized, remember that your critics may be afraid to face the real problem. Don't take this type of criticism personally. Ask God to help you identify the real issue and deal with it.

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Jealousy is a blister on the heels of friendship. Anon.

Jealousy is the raw material of murder. Anon.

Jealousy sees too much. Anon.

Many lovely things pass out of life when jealousy comes in. Anon.

Jealousy never thinks itself strong enough. John Bunyan

He that looks through a green glass sees no other colour. Thomas Adams

Envy eats nothing but its own heart. Anon.

Envy never enriched any man. Anon.

Envy is like a disease—it consumes the soul.

Envy eats nothing but its own heart.

Happiness vanishes when envy appears.

Envy slays itself by its own arrows.

A person is truly great when he is not envious of his rival's success.

Envy provides the mud that failure throws at success. Anon.

Every time you turn green with envy you are ripe for trouble. Anon.

If envy were a fever, all the world would be ill. Anon.

As rust corrupts iron, so envy corrupts man. Antisthenes

If there is any sin more deadly than envy, it is being pleased at being envied. Richard Armour

Envy is a coal that comes hissing hot from hell. Philip James Baily

Love looks through a telescope, envy through a microscope. John Billings

An envious man is a squinty-eyed fool. H. C. Bohn

Envy, it tortures the affections, it vexes the mind, it inflames the blood, it corrupts the heart, it wastes the spirits; and so it becomes man's tormentor and man's executioner at once. Thomas Brooks

Envy is a denial of providence. Stephen Charnock

As a moth gnaws a garment, so doth envy consume a man. Chrysostom

Envy is the sign of a nature that is altogether evil. Demosthenes

Envy is the greatest of all diseases among men. Euripides

Envy shoots at others and wounds herself. Thomas Fuller

It is as hard to keep our hearts and envy asunder as it is to hinder two lovers from meeting together. William Gurnall

If we love our neighbour we shall be so far from envying his welfare, or being displeased with it, that we shall share in it and rejoice at it. Matthew Henry

The prosperity of those to whom we wish well can never grieve us; and the mind which is bent on doing good to all can never wish ill to any. Matthew Henry

Envy is its own punishment. William Jenkyn

Too many Christians envy the sinners their pleasure and the saints their joy because they don't have either one. Martin Luther

Envy is a rebellion against God himself, and the liberty and pleasure of his dispensations. Thomas Manton

Envy is a settled, crooked malice. Thomas Manton

There are two sins which were Christ's sorest enemies, covetousness and envy. Covetousness sold Christ and envy delivered him. Thomas Manton

The envious man is an enemy to himself, for his mind is always spontaneously occupied with his own unhappy thoughts. Menander

The jealous are troublesome to others; a torment to themselves. - William Penn

Envy always implies inferiority, wherever it resides. Pliny

There is no worse passion than envy. William S. Plumer

Envy: the green sickness. - Shakespeare

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!  
It is the green-ey'd monster which doth mock  
The meat it feeds on.  
- Shakespeare

There is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy. Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Envy and malice are quicksighted. Richard Sibbes

In spiritual things there is no envy. Richard Sibbes

The cure for envy lies in living under a constant sense of the divine presence, worshipping God and communing with him all the day long, however long the day may seem. C. H. Spurgeon

Envy does nothing with reason. John Trapp

Envy is a self-murder, a fretting canker. Thomas Watson

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**ILLUSTRATION** - A lady walked into a large department store one day. When she did, all of the sudden camera bulbs flashed and a small musical band began playing a tune. An executive from the store walked up to the lady and pinned a beautiful corsage on her dress. He gave the woman a brand new \$100 bill. As he did, he said, "Congratulations for being the one millionth person to walk inside the store." A newspaper reporter who stood by the lady asked, "Why did you come into the store today?" The lady answered, "I was on my way to the Complaint Department." As the curtain opens in this chapter, we find the Complaint Department is still open. In chapter 11, it was the people moaning about the menu. Moses was moaning about the moaners. In this chapter, Miriam and Aaron are moaning about Moses. - Rod Mattoon

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**ILLUSTRATION OF JEALOUSY** - There is a fable of an eagle which could outfly another, and the other didn't like it. The latter saw a sportsman one day, and said to him: "I wish you would bring down that eagle." The sportsman replied that he would if he only had some feathers to put into the arrow. So the eagle pulled one out of his wing. The arrow was shot, but didn't quite reach the rival eagle; it was flying too high. The envious eagle pulled out more feathers, and kept pulling them out until he lost so many that he couldn't fly, and then the sportsman turned around and killed him. [If you're jealous the only 1 you can hurt is yourself]

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**LASB** - Before criticizing someone else, we need to pause long enough to discover our own motives. Failing to do this can bring disastrous results. What is often labeled "constructive criticism" may actually be destructive jealousy, since the easiest way to raise our own status is to bring someone else down. Are you willing to question your motives before you offer criticism? Does the critical finger you point need to be pointed first toward yourself?

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### James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - JEALOUSY AMONG THE LORD'S SERVANTS Numbers 12

“Save me, O my God, from fretting,  
Sin of all other sins begetting;  
Grant that I may understand  
All is 'neath Thy ruling hand.  
Save me, O my God, from fretting.  
Subtle weaver of sin's netting;  
Others may be great, I low,  
Grace give to Thy will to bow.”

Jealousy is cruel as the grave. It is a sad sight to see the Lord's people looking on one another with the self-conceited eyes of envy. Godliness with contentment is great gain. See here its—

1. **Origin.** “Because Moses had married an Ethiopian woman” (v. 1). In this connection it is significant that Miriam's name is mentioned first, as she doubtless first kindled this fire of sedition. The Ethiopian woman being raised to a place of great honour seemed to stir up her envy. Does it make us fretful when some brother of low degree is lifted into prominence in the cause of Christ? Are we more ready to find fault than bless God for it?

2. **Form.** “Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us?” (v. 2). This was a question as to the receiving of the favour of God, and their fitness to take the lead in His word. When there is pride and discontent in the heart it will soon break out in fault-finding. Am I not the servant of God as well as he? A sparrow is under the same care as an angel, but their character and the purpose of their lives are very different. A geologist knows the difference between granite and sandstone, so may any schoolboy, but that does not make him a geologist.

3. **Subject.** “They spake against Moses. Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which are upon the face of the earth” (v. 3). Moses makes no attempt to vindicate his own name. He is conscious that his commission is from God, and he leaves Him to deal with the offenders. What can be more cruel than jealousy? It is so terribly soul-blinding that it will charge the meekest men on earth with vanity and presumption. Dissatisfied and envious Christian workers are not infrequently found throwing such stones at those who are more used of God than they are. Take heed to yourself.

4. **Treatment.** “The Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, Come out ye three, and hear now My words” (vs. 4–8). Suddenly the Lord appears for the defence of His servant Moses. He honours and justifies him before their faces as more than an ordinary prophet, as one to whom He could speak mouth to mouth and face to face (Exod. 33:11). God will always compensate His tried servants for their faithful silence. The way into open reward is through a shut door (Matt. 6:6).

5. **Guilt.** “The anger of the Lord was kindled against them” (v. 9). Those who are jealous of others in the Lord's work should be reminded that they have a jealous God to deal with (Nah. 1:2). He will avenge the wrongs done to those who abide in the secret of His presence. The Lord looketh upon the heart. Is thy heart right with God in this respect? Be sure this sin will find you out.

6. **Results.** The evidence of His wrath upon them is seen in that it—

1. **PRODUCED UNCLEANNESS.** “Miriam became leprous” (v. 10). The sin of the heart soon manifested itself in outward uncleanness. Fault-finders and backbiters will soon be found outside the service of God. When Christian workers become envious and ambitious, look out for an outbreak.

2. **INTERRUPTED FELLOWSHIP.** “Let her be shut out from the camp seven days” (v. 14). The spirit of jealousy quickly withers up the spirit of communion. It is an uncleanness within that unfits for fellowship with God and with His people. This is a law that is unalterable. The lack of brotherly love grieves the Holy Ghost, and so the spirit of prayer and worship is lost, and the soul has to go outside the enjoyment of all holy things. Beware how ye speak about the Lord's servants. This is a solemn question asked by Jehovah, “Were ye not afraid to speak against My servant?” (v. 8). To his own master he stands or falls.

3. **HINDERED PROGRESS.** “The people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again” (v. 15). The whole camp was kept back through her sin. Those who sin in the high places of the Church are great hindrances to

the advancement of the cause of Christ. One fly may spoil the ointment, one Achan may cause defeat to the whole army of God, one sin will hinder growth in grace, mar the testimony, and make the life unfruitful. “Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23).

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**Question:** [Who was Moses' wife? Did Moses have more than one wife?](#)

**Answer:** The Bible does not say much about Moses' wife, [Zipporah](#). We know that she was the daughter of a man called Jethro (or Reuel), who was a priest in the land of Midian (Exodus 3:1; cf. 2:18). The Bible does not explicitly say that Moses had more than one wife. **However, Numbers 12:1 leads many to surmise another wife:** “Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite.” The question of the number of Moses' wives hinges on the identity of this Cushite (or Ethiopian) woman. Is this a reference to Zipporah? Or is this another woman?

First, some background. While he was still in Egypt, [Moses](#) killed an Egyptian guard who was assaulting a Hebrew slave, and he hid the body. Soon, Moses got word that Pharaoh knew what he had done and was going to kill him, so he fled from Egypt to the land of Midian to avoid prosecution. When he got to Midian, he sat down by a well, and there he encountered a family living in that area. The priest of Midian had seven daughters, shepherdesses who came to water their father's flock. Some shepherds tried to drive the women away, but Moses fought the shepherds off and helped the women, even drawing water for their animals. The seven reported this heroic action to their father, and he asked Moses to come and eat with his family. Sometime later, Moses was married to Zipporah, the daughter of Reuel, the priest of Midian (Exodus 2:16–22).

In later chapters Reuel is called Jethro. There is no explanation for this name change, but the title “priest of Midian” accompanies both names, and he is called Moses' father-in-law, so it is safe to assume this was the same man. The only other possibility is that there were two priests of Midian, one called Jethro and one called Reuel and that Moses had married a daughter from each family—but that would be very unlikely.

More evidence that Moses only had one wife is found in Exodus 4:20: “Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt.” *Wife* is singular, and there is no mention of any other wife or wives that Moses had. On the way to Egypt, Zipporah circumcised their son and thus saved her husband's life—Moses had neglected to obey the Lord in this matter, and the Lord would have killed Moses had not Zipporah intervened (Exodus 4:24–26). After this event, it seems that Moses sent Zipporah and his sons back home to stay with Jethro. We don't encounter Zipporah again until after the exodus when she returns to Moses in the wilderness (Exodus 18).

That brings us to Numbers 12:1 and the reference to Moses' marriage to the Cushite, or Ethiopian. It is possible, though not probable, that the Cushite is Zipporah. Arguing against that possibility are two facts: 1) the link between Midianites and Ethiopians is very difficult to trace convincingly; and 2) the objection to the marriage raised by Miriam and Aaron seems to indicate a recent event. Moses and Zipporah would have been married for over 40 years by this time, and it is unlikely that Moses' siblings would just then be protesting. Much more likely is that Zipporah had died (although her death is not recorded in Scripture) and that Moses had remarried.

Some see in Moses' marriages to two Gentiles as prefiguring the gospel message going into all the world, blessing even the Gentiles (see Acts 1:8). Zipporah the Midianite was related to the Israelites but only through Abraham's son by a concubine (Genesis 25:1–2); the Cushite was farther removed from the lineage of Israel. Moses' marriages expanded in a widening circle into the Gentile world, helping to show that [in Abraham's seed](#) all the nations of the world would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). ([GotQuestions.org](#))

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**Question:** [Who was Miriam in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** Miriam in the Bible is Moses' older sister. She is called “Miriam the prophetess” in Exodus 15:20. She plays an important role in several episodes of Moses' life and in the exodus of Israel from Egypt.

Miriam is the sister who watches over her baby brother [Moses](#) among the bulrushes on the banks of the Nile. Their mother had hidden Moses in a basket on the river bank to protect him from Pharaoh's decree to throw all Hebrew baby boys into the river (Exodus 1:22–2:4). As Miriam watches, Pharaoh's daughter discovers and pities Moses, and Miriam quickly intervenes to ask if the Egyptian princess would like a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for her. The princess agrees, and Miriam quickly gets their mother. Pharaoh's daughter commands Moses' biological mother to nurse him and bring him back to her when he is older. By the grace of God, Miriam helps save the infant Moses (Exodus 2:5–10).

Miriam had another brother, Aaron. Their parents, Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20), were both from the Levite tribe of Israel (Exodus 2:1). Together, God uses Moses, Miriam, and Aaron to lead the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land



in Canaan (Micah 6:4+). After miraculously [crossing the Red Sea](#) on dry ground and seeing the Egyptian army overthrown in the sea, Miriam leads the women with a tambourine in worshipping God with song and dance (Exodus 15:20–22). The words to Miriam's song are recorded in verse 21: "Sing to the Lord, / for he is highly exalted. / Both horse and driver / he has hurled into the sea." In this same passage, she is given the title "prophetess," the first of only a handful of women in Scripture identified that way. Others called a "prophetess" are Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Isaiah's wife (Isaiah 8:3), Anna (Luke 2:36), and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:9).

Unfortunately, Miriam later falls into a spirit of complaining. Both Miriam and Aaron criticize Moses for marrying a Cushite or Ethiopian woman, but Miriam is listed first (Numbers 12:1) so it is likely she instigated the complaint. While the complaint was ostensibly against [Moses' wife](#), the discontent ran deeper: "'Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?' they asked. 'Hasn't he also spoken through us?'" (Numbers 12:2). In her criticism, Miriam was questioning the Lord's wisdom in choosing Moses as the leader.

God was angry that Miriam and Aaron were so willing to speak against the servant He had chosen. The Lord struck Miriam with leprosy. Aaron, realizing the foolishness of their words, repented of his sin, and Moses, ever the intercessor, prayed on behalf of his sister: "Moses cried out to the Lord, 'Please, God, heal her!'" (Numbers 12:13). After a week-long quarantine, Miriam was healed and rejoined the camp. As Miriam's leprosy convicted Aaron of the foolish words they had spoken against God's chosen servant, it should also remind us not to judge those around us or live in jealousy when God has given a specific call to someone else (see Titus 3:1–15; James 1:26; 4:11–12; Ephesians 4:31; Philippians 4:8). Miriam had an opportunity to show the people of Israel what it meant to live in love as a servant of God without complaining, and, for most of her life, she did; but she failed in the matter of Moses' wife. We, too, have opportunities to show the grumblers and complainers around us what it is to be a servant of Jesus Christ. Let us draw them to Jesus through our love and servanthood and not be drawn away from Him ourselves.

Our next encounter with Miriam is at the end of the 40-year desert wandering. Because of their grumbling and lack of faith in God, the first generation of Israelites to leave captivity was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. This included the prophetess Miriam. Most of the older generation had already died in the wilderness when Israel comes back to Kadesh, where they had started their wanderings. It's here that Miriam dies and is buried (Numbers 20:1). Hers was a life of responsibility and service, of God's calling and providence, yet it also reminds us that no one is too important to receive [God's discipline](#) for personal sin (see 1 Corinthians 10:12). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

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### James Hastings - MIRIAM'S MISTAKE

1. The whole story of Miriam, as recorded in the Bible, is not a long one. It may be written in a few terse phrases. Our first glimpse of her is during the days of the oppression, by the side of an ark of rushes. She was appointed her brother's guardian, to watch the issue of a last desperate expedient to save his life. How well she watched and how prudently she discharged her mission is known of all. We catch another glimpse of her just after the crossing of the sea, when Pharaoh's horsemen lay stiffening on the shore. It was Miriam who took up the theme of Moses' Jubilate and led the women's song: "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Save for the incident which led to the tragedy of the leprosy we could pass nothing but compliments on Miriam. But, alas for human ideals! This is an integral part of the story. The Miriam of the bondage and of prophetic gift became Miriam the leper.

2. At Hazeroth (Ain Haderah, thirty miles from Sinai), a rebellion arose against Moses, from within his own family. The jealousy of Aaron and Miriam was roused by Moses taking a second wife, an Ethiopian woman. They challenged the exclusive right of Moses to be the mouthpiece of revelation. "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?" Moses apparently made no reply. The writer parenthetically calls him "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth," a meekness which was certainly not his natural character, but the result of self-discipline and grace. The Divine vindication of Moses is couched in remarkable words. Moses was proclaimed to be more than a mere prophet: his communications with God were more direct than the visions and dreams which were the ordinary channels of prophecy: "And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

The Divine anger was shown by Miriam being struck with leprosy, "white as snow," from which she was delivered only after Aaron had confessed their sin and by the earnest prayer of Moses himself. Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days, during which the camp remained at Hazeroth, and was then restored.

3. How did Moses act—he who, years before, had felled an Egyptian with one blow of his fist? Did he pour out a torrent of indignation, assuring himself that he had just cause to be angry? Did he show them the door of the tent, and bid them mind their own affairs? Did he in his anger call on God to strike them down? Nothing of the sort. He answered not a word. In his bearing he

reminds us of Christ in the judgment-hall, who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again."

It may be well to give some rules for the attainment of this meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.

(1) Let us claim the meekness of Christ.—This, of course, was not possible for Moses in the direct way in which it is for us. And yet, doubtless, in his case also there was a constant appeal for heavenly grace. The humility of Jesus did not forbid His proposing Himself as our model for meekness. "Learn of me," He said, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." The likeness of the dove that rested on His head, and the lamb to which He was compared, were the sweet emblems of His heart. And in moments of provocation there is nothing better than to turn to Him and claim His calm, sweet silence, His patience and meekness, saying, "I claim all these, my Lord, for the bitter need of my spirit."

(2) Let us leave God to vindicate our cause.—Moses trusted God to vindicate him; and the Almighty God "rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, he was seen upon the wings of the wind." The Lord heard all that was said, and spake suddenly to the three, and told them that whilst He would speak to others in visions and dreams, it was to Moses only that He would speak face to face, so that he might behold Jehovah's form. "Wherefore then," said He, "were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Num. 12:8). This is the secret of rest—to cultivate the habit of handing all over to God, as Hezekiah did when he spread out Sennacherib's letter in the house of the Lord.

(3) Let us give ourselves to intercessory prayer.—"Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee." When we pray for those who have despitely used and persecuted us, it is marvellous how soon the soul grows calm and tender. We may begin to do it as a duty, in obedience to the command; we soon discover it to be as snow on a fevered forehead, cooling and soothing the soul. Do not wait to feel an inspiration—act on the sense of what your Lord requires; and as you pray, in the calm and holy presence of God, in the secret where your Father is found, you will find that unworthy thoughts will sink, as silt is precipitated to the river-bed, leaving the stream pellucid and clear.

¶ It was a cold bitter day in December, 1900. We two missionaries sat in a large comfortless room, with two Chinese officials, in the city of Yung P'ing Fu, North China, handing out orders for money and deeds of land which, before our arrival, had been arranged as compensation between Christians who had suffered and Boxers who had persecuted, in the terrible rising of the previous summer. It was a soul-wearying business, for the whole district had been in turmoil for months, and, not to mention smaller losses, thirty-three men, women and children associated with the English Methodist Mission, had died as martyrs for the faith of Jesus.

It had come as a shock to us missionaries on our arrival to learn that a certain sum of money had been already agreed upon as compensation for every life that had been taken, but when it is remembered that in many cases the head of the family had been murdered, and children left unprovided for, the arrangement can, in some measure, be understood. The officials had also expressed their willingness to arrest and punish, according to law, any person who could be proved to have actually committed murder, or actively incited to it. But in not a single case was the extreme penalty demanded, though in two instances, one, where seven members of one family had perished, and the other, where four had died, the decision was not reached without a severe struggle between the old heathen notions and the new faith.

The finest episode in all the ghastly business was reached when our old Bible-seller, Ho Ju Ching, a tall, noble-looking man wearing on to sixty years of age, stood up before the officials, the missionaries, and the eager crowd of onlookers to receive his share of the compensation. His crops had been destroyed, his home burnt down, he and his family had been fugitives beyond the Great Wall for over three months. Worst of all, his daughter, a bright and bonnie lassie of seventeen, had been cruelly done to death in their own village, by men who were neighbours to them. When asked whether he wished the murderers of his child to be arrested, the old man simply and quietly replied, "No, I do not wish that. I know them every one. They know that I know them, but I shall never seek to have them punished. For what they have done I forgive them as I hope to be forgiven, and I prefer now to leave them to the mercy of God, and pray that they may yet be led to forgiveness and salvation."

Do you wonder that my colleague, who had spent over twenty-five years of his life preaching Christ to the Chinese, should spring from his seat, and cry out triumphantly to the two wondering officials, "That is what Christianity is doing for your people, and for which they have suffered such tortures"?

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### Jealousy or zeal?

"Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman)" (Nu 12:1)

"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife" (Philippians 1:15).

When the famous sculptor Michelangelo and the painter Raphael were creating works of art to beautify the Vatican, a bitter spirit of

rivalry rose up between them. Whenever they met, they refused to speak to each other. Yet each was supposedly doing his work for the glory of God.

Jealousy often parades behind the facade of religious zeal. Miriam and Aaron criticized their brother Moses for marrying an Ethiopian. But God's anger revealed that it was actually jealousy that prompted their criticism. Out of jealousy, Saul sought to kill David, whom God had chosen to succeed Saul as king. And when the apostle Paul was in prison, some people were so jealous of the way God was using him that they preached Christ in order to add to the apostle's distress.

We can overcome this harmful attitude, but first we must identify it. Jealousy believes that someone else is getting what we deserve—whether money, popularity, wisdom, skill, or spiritual maturity. Second, we must confess it. Call it what it is—sin. And third, we must give thanks. The moment we see someone enjoying any advantage, we must accept it with gratitude. We can keep jealousy in check by refusing to compare ourselves with others.

As we learn to find our satisfaction in God, His grace enables us to rejoice with those who rejoice. When we do that, we have little room for envy. —D. J. De Haan

**When we turn green with jealousy, we are ripe for trouble.**

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### **Numbers 12:1b The Friction of Jealousy**

"Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" (Numbers 12:2).

In the world of technology, friction is an enemy of efficiency. That's why auto engineers put so much emphasis on aerodynamics, easy-rolling tires, and short-stroke engines. They want to reduce the friction caused by air resistance, road contact, and moving parts.

In Numbers 12, we read about a form of friction that creates discord, makes everybody uneasy, diminishes our witness, weakens our worship, and hinders the Spirit's work in our lives. Miriam's jealous revolt against her brother Moses brought God's rebuke and slowed the Israelites' progress. The energy-robbing friction she caused was not unlike personality problems among jealous church members today.

Probably all of us have felt the sting of cruel verbal barbs shot at us by "envious archers." But the greatest pain caused by envy is felt by the person who harbors it. A God-centered, loving attitude is at the heart of the believer's life and health, but envy eats like a consuming disease into the bones and marrow of a person's moral fiber. That's why Socrates called envy "the soul's saw."

Whenever we begin to feel friction due to our envy or jealousy, we must confess it as sin and ask the Lord for His help. Then we must forgive those who have wronged us or apologize to those we have wronged. The friction will disappear, and we'll once again become spiritually

**Numbers 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.**

BGT Numbers 12:2 κα ε παν μ Μωυσ μ ν λελ ληκεν κ ριος ο χ κα μ ν λ λησεν κα κουσεν κ ριος

NET Numbers 12:2 They said, "Has the LORD only spoken through Moses? Has he not also spoken through us?" And the LORD heard it.

NLT Numbers 12:2 They said, "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Hasn't he spoken through us, too?" But the LORD heard them.

ESV Numbers 12:2 And they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it.

NIV Numbers 12:2 "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the LORD heard this.

KJV Numbers 12:2 And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

YLT Numbers 12:2 and they say, 'Only by Moses hath Jehovah spoken? also by us hath he not spoken?' and

Jehovah heareth.

LXE Numbers 12:2 And they said, Has the Lord spoken to Moses only? has he not also spoken to us? and the Lord heard it.

ASV Numbers 12:2 And they said, Hath Jehovah indeed spoken only with Moses? hath he not spoken also with us? And Jehovah heard it.

CSB Numbers 12:2 They said, "Does the LORD speak only through Moses? Does He not also speak through us?" And the LORD heard it.

NKJ Numbers 12:2 So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it.

NRS Numbers 12:2 and they said, "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it.

- **Has the LORD indeed** Nu 16:3 Ex 4:30 5:1 7:10 15:20,21 Mic 6:4
- **Has He not spoken**: Nu 11:29 Pr 13:10 Ro 12:3,10 Php 2:3,14 1Pe 5:5
- **And the LORD heard it**: Nu 11:1 Ge 29:33 2Sa 11:27 2Ki 19:4 Ps 94:7-9 Isa 37:4 Eze 35:12,13
- **[Numbers 12 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And they said** - The text from Nu 12:1 changes to use a plural form. Miriam was most likely the main critic of Moses' Cushite wife, but now Aaron joins in. This recalls the people's murmuring in Numbers 11:1 " the people became like those who complain of adversity **in the hearing of the LORD**"

In Micah Moses, Aaron and Miriam are mentioned together

"Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt And ransomed you from the house of slavery, And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam. (Mic 6:4+)

**Comment** - Everybody in Israel knew that Moses, Aaron, and Miriam were God's chosen servants, but that Moses was the leader. (Wiersbe)

**Wenham** - Miriam and Aaron claim that the LORD speaks with them in the same intimate way that he speaks with Moses. (TOTC-Nu)

**Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?**- Had He? Indeed He had. In Aaron's case God used Aaron to sub for Moses when he weakly excused himself in Ex 4:10-16, 30+

"Then Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue. 11 The LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 "Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say." 13 But he said, "Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will." 14 **Then the anger of the LORD burned against Moses**, and He said, "Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 **"You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. 16 "Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him."**...30) and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people."

We must not allow jealousy to cause us to sin against God and our fellow human beings.

-- Gene Getz

**Miriam** was a **prophetess** and God had put prophetic words in her mouth in Exodus 15:20-21+

Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing. 21 Miriam answered them, "Sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and his rider He has hurled into the sea."

And so both Aaron and Miriam had some grounds (albeit "shaky" grounds) for questioning the fact that Moses was the sole speaker for God.

**FSB** adds an interesting comment that may have contributed to their sinful reaction - As Moses' older siblings, Miriam and Aaron (Ex 7:7) may assume they should hold equal authority, failing to recognize God's choice of Moses as His representative.

**Brian Bell** - Was Moses' wife the real problem? Nope, see Nu 12:2. Their question gets to the heart of the matter. If there be a hidden evil, circumstances will sooner or later occur in which it will be outwardly manifest. You will find that, as a rule, those who complain about the way the ball bounces are usually the ones who dropped it. Miriam & Aaron had a very special place & standing...but it did not entitle them to criticize & rebel against Moses, the one called to lead Israel & to receive divine revelation. Miriam & Aaron were jealous of the authority God had given Moses, & they wanted him to share it. Was this a reaction to what God did for the 70 elders? (Spirit coming upon them) In their self-importance, they accused Moses of arrogance appointing himself as leader, which was the furthest thing from his humble mind.

**NET Note** is very interesting - The use of both קַח and אָחַז (raq and 'akh) (**though us**) underscore the point that the issue is Moses' uniqueness. There is irony in the construction in the text. The expression "speak through us" also uses דַּבֵּר + בֵּעָרְבֵנוּ (dibber + bé). They ask if God has not also spoken through them, after they have spoken against Moses. Shortly God will speak against them —**their words are prophetic, but not as they imagined. The questions are rhetorical. They are affirming that God does not only speak through Moses, but also speaks through them. They see themselves as equal with Moses.** The question that was asked of the earlier presumptuous Moses (in Ex 2:14+)—"Who made you a ruler over us?"—**could also be asked of them. God had not placed them as equals with Moses.** (ED: **APPLICATION**) The passage is relevant for today when so many clamor for equal authority and leadership with those whom God has legitimately called.

Through insolence comes nothing but strife,  
But wisdom is with those who receive counsel.  
-- Proverbs 13:10

**And the LORD heard it.** - This is the frightening part of this passage! The omniscient LORD heard their words, but even more frightening is the fact that He saw the evil intent in their hearts! God hates complaining and grumbling.

**NET NOTE on LORD heard** - The statement is striking. Obviously the LORD knows all things. But the statement of the obvious here is meant to indicate that the LORD was about to do something about this.

**Matthew Henry** - The wonderful patience of Moses under this provocation. **The Lord heard it** (v. 2), but Moses himself took no notice of it, for (v. 3) he was very meek. He had a great deal of reason to resent the affront; it was ill-natured and ill-timed, when the people were disposed to mutiny, and had lately given him a great deal of vexation with their murmurings, which would be in danger of breaking out again when thus headed and countenanced by Aaron and Miriam; but he, as a deaf man, heard not. **When God's honour was concerned, as in the case of the golden calf, no man more zealous than Moses; but, when his own honour was touched, no man more meek: as bold as a lion in the cause of God, but as mild as a lamb in his own cause.** God's people are the meek of the earth (Zephaniah 2:3), but some are more remarkable than others for this grace, as Moses, who was thus fitted for the work he was called to, which required all the meekness he had and sometimes more. And sometimes the unkindness of our friends is a greater trial of our meekness than the malice of our enemies. Christ himself records his own meekness (Matthew 11:29, I am meek and lowly in heart), and the copy of meekness which Christ has set was without a blot, but that of Moses was not.

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

BGT Numbers 12:3 καὶ ἄνθρωπος Μωϋσῆς πρᾶξομεν ὅρα πᾶρ πῆντας τοὺς ἄνθρωπους τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς

NET Numbers 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than any man on the face of the earth.)

NLT Numbers 12:3 (Now Moses was very humble-- more humble than any other person on earth.)

ESV Numbers 12:3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.

NIV Numbers 12:3 (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

KJV Numbers 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

YLT Numbers 12:3 And the man Moses is very humble, more than any of the men who are on the face of the ground.

LXE Numbers 12:3 And the man Moses was very meek beyond all the men that were upon the earth.

ASV Numbers 12:3 Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.

CSB Numbers 12:3 Moses was a very humble man, more so than any man on the face of the earth.

NKJ Numbers 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)

NRS Numbers 12:3 Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth.

NAB Numbers 12:3 Now, Moses himself was by far the meekest man on the face of the earth.

NJB Numbers 12:3 Now Moses was extremely humble, the humblest man on earth.

- **very humble:** Ps 147:6 149:4 Mt 5:5 11:29 21:5 2Co 10:1 1Th 2:7 Jas 3:13 1Pe 3:4
- **on the face of the earth:** Nu 11:10-15 20:10-12 Ps 106:32,33 2Co 11:5 12:11 Jas 3:2,3
- **[Numbers 12 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**(Now the man Moses was very humble (very meek) more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)**- As we see in the word study on anav (below) this could be rendered "Moses was more afflicted than any man" and there would be considerable truth in that rendering as we look at his manifold struggles with the children of Israel! The parenthesis identify this as a parenthetical statement, but it was still inspired by the Spirit and Moses recorded it moved by the Spirit (2 Peter 1:21+). He is not boasting but simply being honest. And keep in mind that the underlying meaning of the Hebrew word for **humble** is description of a person who is afflicted or has experienced affliction. Most of us have a difficult time being humble when we are "flying high" (so to speak). But God loves us so much that He allows afflictions to bow us down, which is the essence of one in a humble position.

**Wiersbe** - Moses proved his meekness (humility) by refusing to fight them; he left his cause in the hands of God. God has promised to defend His servants (Isa. 54:17)...In his writings, Moses was honest enough to record his sins and failures, and we accept what he wrote, so why can't we accept a statement about his godly character? Paul wrote in a similar way in 2 Corinthians 10:1, 11:5, 12:11-12. (See discussion of God as our Covenant Defender)

**Mattoon** - Some folks think that meekness is weakness, fearfulness, and being feminine. On the contrary; meekness is actually strength under control. Meekness is the ability to keep your tongue in check when being attacked by unjust criticism. Meekness has faith to trust God to vindicate you. Meekness is submission to the will of God and His ways. Moses demonstrated this attitude in his life. What a tribute to Moses.... the meekest man on earth. Some folks claim that Moses did not write this verse. A humble man would not write about his greatness. The fact that Moses was humble and did write this shows the divine inspiration of the Bible. God dictated what should be written. The Spirit of God moved Moses in what to write. Moses also recorded his anger and his sin in chapter 20.

**Merrill** - This statement is often adduced as evidence that Moses could not have written the Book of Numbers for he would not have boasted of his own humility. On the contrary, the declaration concerning his humility is the strongest possible support for the traditional view that Moses wrote Holy Scripture as an inspired penman. Only one led by the Holy Spirit could make such a statement about himself, probably against his own natural inclination. (BKC)

**NET Note** says that the point of using the word **humble** is to emphasize "that Moses is not self-assertive. God singled out Moses and used him in such a way as to show that he was a unique leader." Humility is a quality missing today in many leaders. Far too many are self-promoting, or competitive, or even pompous. The statement in this passage would have been difficult for Moses to write—and indeed, it is not impossible that an editor might have added it (**ED**: I THINK MOSES WROTE IT!). One might think that for someone to claim to be humble is an arrogant act. But the statement is one of fact—he was not self-assertive (until Nu 20 when he strikes the rock).

**Humble** (06035)(anav from 'anah = be bowed down, afflicted; cf related word humility = [anawah](#)) means poor, oppressed, afflicted, humble, meek. In Nu 12:3 the Lxx translates it with the adjective [praus](#) used for example in Mt 5:5 "Blessed are the **gentle**, for they shall inherit the earth." [Praus](#) is used to describe the character of Jesus in Mt 11:29+ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am **gentle** and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS."

More frequently **anav** seems to denote an attitude of mind, more characteristic of the poor than of the rich, one of humility and dependence on God.

**Gilbrant** - Affliction occurs in every life, and God intends to use it to develop humility in his people. In the OT,

godliness is connected with suffering much more often than with worldly abundance. The noun 'ānāv expresses the desired moral and spiritual result of affliction. Some uses of 'ānāv emphasize the fact of poverty and need. Solomon said that one who is gracious to the poor will be blessed (Prov. 14:21). But Amos complained that the needy were being sold as slaves for the price of a pair of sandals (Amos 2:6f). Some will trample the afflicted (Amos 8:4). A dominant characteristic of the afflicted is their vulnerability to being abused by the powerful. But God takes the role of protector for the godly who fall in this category. Remembering their plight (Ps. 9:12, 18), God rises in judgment to save them (Ps. 76:9). The Messiah will decide in equity for them (Isa. 11:4). The Lord strengthens their heart (Ps. 10:17), leads them in justice, teaches them his ways (Ps. 25:9), supports them (Ps. 147:6) and promises to beautify them with salvation (Ps. 149:4). They will inherit the land, delight in abundant prosperity (Ps. 37:11) and be filled with gladness (Ps. 34:2). Moses described himself as the one who most fully exemplified this trait (Num. 12:3). This was not an arrogant claim to perfection; it was simply a recognition that he had been most thoroughly humbled by the afflictions God had allowed in his life. He would surely agree that it is better to be of humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud (Prov. 16:19). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Zodhiates** - An adjective meaning poor, oppressed, afflicted, humble. It is used of persons who put themselves after others in importance; persons who are not proud, haughty, supercilious, self-assertive, low in rank or position. Moses in the Old Testament is the prototype of the humble man before God and other human beings (Num. 12:3), but he was not poor or low in rank. The word also refers to persons who are poor, afflicted, low in societal standing, oppressed (Job 24:4; Ps. 10:12, 17; 22:26[27]). God favors the humble or meek to inherit the land, to be blessed (Ps. 37:11); God gives help and grace to the afflicted (Prov. 3:34). A humble or contrite spirit is of great value (Prov. 16:19). God will finally give justice to the poor (Isa. 11:4). The poor were oppressed by the rich and the immoral (Amos 2:7). (Baker - Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament)

**Vine** - 'Ānāv appears almost exclusively in poetical passages and describes the intended outcome of affliction from God, namely "humility." In its first appearance the word depicts the objective condition as well as the subjective stance of Moses. He was entirely dependent on God and saw that he was:

**Anav** - 20x in 19v - afflicted(8), afflicted ones(1), humble(10), poor(1). Num. 12:3; Ps. 9:12; Ps. 10:12; Ps. 10:17; Ps. 22:26; Ps. 25:9; Ps. 34:2; Ps. 37:11; Ps. 69:32; Ps. 76:9; Ps. 147:6; Ps. 149:4; Prov. 3:34; Prov. 14:21; Isa. 11:4; Isa. 29:19; Isa. 61:1; Amos 2:7; Zeph. 2:3

For more insights see related study on **Anav** in this verse in article by Cleon Rogers - [Moses: Meek or Miserable? JETS, 1986.](#)

**Wenham** - The Psalms repeatedly assure the humble that God will deliver them, 'The LORD lifts up the humble'; 'he adorns the humble with victory' (Ps. 147:6; 149:4; cf. 22:26; 25:9; 37:11; 76:9; cf. Matt. 5:5; 1 Pet. 5:6). (Ibid)

**Believer's Study Bible** It is possible that Moses wrote this verse objectively about himself. Paul the apostle made similar statements about himself (Acts 20:19; 26:29; 1 Cor. 4:16; 7:7; cf. also Neh. 13:14, 22, 30, 31), amounting to praise for what God had done through him (cf. Phil. 4:13). One O.T. scholar wrote regarding Moses, "As he praises himself here without pride, so he will blame himself elsewhere with humility." On the other hand, this verse may also be an inspired addition to the text by another writer, like the account of Moses' death in Deut. 34:5-7 (cf. Gen. 36:31; Ex. 16:35; Num. 21:14, 15; 32:34-38 for other possible inspired additions). It may be best, however, to understand the word "humble" ('anav, Heb.) in the sense of "bowed down with care," or "miserable" (cf. 11:10-15). Moses' experience of leading such an obstinate people had emptied him of any cause for pride and made him utterly dependent on God. This is always God's purpose in our affliction (cf. Ps. 10:17, 18; 69:32, 33; 147:6; 149:4; Isa. 61:1).

**Gaebelein** - Moses did not take the case in his own hands. He did not answer back. His gracious character stands out in majestic greatness. How hard it is for a man who holds a high and honored position to bear any attack in silence and not to open his mouth! Moses kept silent, for he was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. In this he is a blessed type of Him who was meek and lowly; who reviled not when He was reviled, who opened not His mouth.

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## **MEEKNESS:STRENGTH UNDER CONTROL BY THEODORE EPP**

In reviewing Isaac's life, we should also take special note of his spirit of meekness. All through his life his temperament was of a passive nature rather than of an active or aggressive nature.

In childhood he was subjected to the insults of Ishmael, but there is no record that he became angry about them. As a young man he was taken to Mount Moriah to be offered as a sacrifice, and in meekness he surrendered and made himself available.

He did not even choose his own wife, as she was chosen for him through his father's arrangements and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Isaac also accepted the rebuke of Abimelech in meekness. There were no reprisals. He and his men yielded whenever they were wrongly driven away from the wells they had dug.

Isaac's meek spirit brought forth praise from even his enemies. They testified concerning his great power and might and their realization that the Lord was with him.

The world thinks little of meekness, yet it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23). The Apostle Paul urged all Christians: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5).

Meekness involves the self-sacrifice of our own desires and interests. Because Isaac gladly gave up his own personal desires, it pleased God to refer to Himself as "the God of Isaac."

"For thus saith the Lord God,... In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15).

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### **Norman Geisler - NUMBERS 12:3—How can this statement have been written by Moses?**

**PROBLEM:** Numbers 12:3 says, "Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth." The conservative view of the Pentateuch is that Moses was the author of these five books. But, how could Moses make such a statement about himself if he were really humble?

**SOLUTION:** Of course, no one would claim that Jesus was being boastful or prideful by saying "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29, KJV). Jesus was simply stating the facts. Likewise, Moses is not boasting or being prideful about his humility. Rather, he was simply stating a fact which was crucial for understanding the significance of the events he was reporting.

Earlier in chapter 11, after the Spirit of the Lord came upon Eldad and Medad so that they began to prophesy, Joshua approached Moses and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" (Num. 11:28) Moses' response is a perfect illustration of the humility that 12:3 describes: "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:29) Moses exhibited the character of a humble man who was not interested in his own glory, but only in the glory of the Lord.

When Moses is confronted by Miriam and Aaron in 12:1, Moses did not respond in his own defense. A humble person does not usually rise to his own defense. Why didn't Moses just tell them? Why didn't he set them straight? Why did God have to speak to Miriam and Aaron in Moses' behalf? The explanation is found in 12:3. Moses was not out for his own glorification. If Moses had responded in his own defense, he would have been justifying their complaints against him. But, Moses was not the leader of the people because of any ambition on his own part, or any self-confidence or self-assertive ladder climbing. He was appointed by God. So verse 12:3 is a vindication of Moses' character. It is not a statement of boastful pride. It is simply a statement of fact. (When Critics Ask)

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### **Moses Was More Humble than Anyone Else?**

Numbers 12:3 is the most difficult text in the whole book of Numbers. Critical scholars (and others) have correctly observed that it is rather unlikely that a truly humble person would write in such a manner about himself, even if he actually felt the statement was true. Many critical scholars are so convinced of the inappropriateness of recording such a note about oneself that they have used this as a strong mark against the Mosaic authorship of the whole book.

One scholar has suggested recently that the word translated "humble" or "meek" should instead be translated "miserable." The idea of "miserable" certainly would fit the context of this chapter very well. To be sure, Moses had a most unmanageable task. He had just said in Numbers 11:14, "The burden is too heavy for me." With all the attacks on his family, he may have passed into a deep depression. Thus, a very good translation possibility is "Now Moses was exceedingly miserable, more than anyone on the face of the earth!"

Those who retain the meaning "humble" usually cite this passage, along with other passages such as the Deuteronomy 34 announcement of Moses' death and burial site, as evidence for post-Mosaic additions authorized by the Spirit of God to the inspired text. Normally Joshua is credited with contributing these comments. Joshua 24:26 says, "And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God"—a clear reference to the five books of the Law, whose authorship is usually ascribed to Moses. This is the view that I favor, though the idea of translating the word as "miserable" is also a possible solution.

Moses, of course, was not a naturally humble man. If he became so, he learned it through the trials he had to experience as the



leader of a very stubborn group of people.

Some have argued for Moses' authorship of the verse, reminding us that the apostle Paul was compelled by challenges to his apostleship to point out his own excellence of character in 2 Corinthians 11:5; 12:11–12. But it does not seem that Moses was facing exactly the same set of circumstances.

Biblical writers speak of themselves with an objectivity that is rarely matched in other pieces of literature. Their self-references usually lay bare their sins and failures. It is rare for them to praise themselves.

The translators of the NIV were no doubt justified in placing this verse in parentheses. The note is a later parenthetical remark made under the direction of the Holy Spirit by Joshua. (Hard Sayings of the Bible)

### **Numbers 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.**

BGT Numbers 12:4 κα ε πεν κ ριος παραχρ μα πρ ς Μωυσ ν κα Μαριαμ κα Ααρων ξ λθατε με ς ο τρε ς ε ς τ ν σκην ν το μαρτυρ ου κα ξ λθον ο τρε ς ε ς τ ν σκην ν το μαρτυρ ου

NET Numbers 12:4 The LORD spoke immediately to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam: "The three of you come to the tent of meeting." So the three of them went.

NLT Numbers 12:4 So immediately the LORD called to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam and said, "Go out to the Tabernacle, all three of you!" So the three of them went to the Tabernacle.

ESV Numbers 12:4 And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." And the three of them came out.

NIV Numbers 12:4 At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, "Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you." So the three of them came out.

KJV Numbers 12:4 And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

YLT Numbers 12:4 And Jehovah saith suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, 'Come out ye three unto the tent of meeting;' and they three come out.

LXE Numbers 12:4 And the Lord said immediately to Moses and Aaron and Mariam, Come forth all three of you to the tabernacle of witness.

ASV Numbers 12:4 And Jehovah spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tent of meeting. And they three came out.

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

NKJ Numbers 12:4 Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out.

- **Suddenly the LORD** Ps 76:9
- **Came out:** Nu 16:16-21
- [Numbers 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SUDDENLY LORD SPEAKS**

**Brian Bell** entitles vv4-10 **God's Woodshed!** We can likely all identify with that title (expounded on in Hebrews 12:5-11+).

**Suddenly** - Why did the LORD act so swiftly? Sin can spread quickly so He acted quickly. The problem is especially acute when leaders sin, and the consequences could have been disastrous. As we have seen the sons of Israel had enough sin on their own without needing a "catalyst"!

**Suddenly** ([06597](#))(pit'om) is an adverb that means unexpectedly, surprisingly, all at once.

**the LORD said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, "You three come out to the tent of meeting."**- Observe the three names

are in reverse order, the order God honored! One can only imagine what was going through Aaron and Miriam's mind! Perhaps they thought God had heard (He had!) and would bless their ministry. Or perhaps they began to become fearful that they had overstepped their bounds (they had)! Either way it was a tense time as the trio tread toward the tent! This recalls another tense meeting at the tent of meeting in Numbers 16:16-21! Both meetings would bring God's hand of judgment on those who were presumptuous and insolent to question Moses' leadership.

When we are falsely accused, we should first and foremost allow God to defend us.

-- Gene Getz

**So the three of them came out** - Immediate obedience in all three.

**Matthew Henry** - Moses did not resent the injury done him, nor complain of it to God, nor make any appeal to him; but God resented it. He hears all we say in our passion, and is a swift witness of our hasty speeches, which is a reason why we should resolutely bridle our tongues (pray Ps 141:3), that we speak not ill of others, and why we should patiently stop our ears, and not take notice of it, if others speak ill of us. I heard not, for thou wilt hear, Ps. 38:13-15. The more silent we are in our own cause the more is God engaged to plead it. The accused innocent needs to say little if he knows the judge himself will be his advocate.

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#### **G Campbell Morgan - The Lord spake suddenly unto Moses.-Num 12.4.**

That is an arresting statement. It marks an action on the part of God, so definite and immediate, that to Moses His speech was that of suddenness. It lends emphasis to the importance of this story. It is the story of rebellion against Moses, the God-appointed leader of the people, on the part of Miriam his sister, and Aaron his brother. The occasion was that of Moses' marriage with a Cushite woman. This was not the reason of it. It gave Miriam and Aaron an opportunity of acting upon a deeper feeling of jealousy which was present in their hearts. They resented the exercise of Moses' authority, evidently desiring to share it with him in a larger degree. The story illustrates a great truth in human experience. Sooner or later, if there be hidden evil, circumstances will occur in which it will be outwardly manifested. Stern and majestic was the Divine method of dealing with this outbreak. The sudden summons of God brought these three people out from the host, and into the immediate presence of God. Then in the plainest terms Jehovah vindicated His servant. Thus are we taught that God will not permit any interference with His appointments. To question the authority of those whom He appoints is to question His authority. There is great beauty in the end of the story. Aaron pleaded with Moses on behalf of his sister. Moses pleaded with God on her behalf. The cry was heard, and after seven days Miriam was restored. Surely He is ever a God ready to pardon. Nevertheless, the warning was solemn and severe, showing that rebellion is most reprehensible when it is manifested by the most highly placed.

**Numbers 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,**

BGT Numbers 12:5 κα κατ βη κ ριος ν στ λ νεφ λης κα στη π τ ς θ ρας τ ς σκην ς το μαρτυ ρου κα κλ θησαν Ααρων κα Μαριαμ κα ξ λθοσαν μφ τεροι

NET Numbers 12:5 And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent; he then called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward.

NLT Numbers 12:5 Then the LORD descended in the pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the Tabernacle. "Aaron and Miriam!" he called, and they stepped forward.

ESV Numbers 12:5 And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward.

NIV Numbers 12:5 Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward,

KJV Numbers 12:5 And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

YLT Numbers 12:5 And Jehovah cometh down in the pillar of the cloud, and standeth at the opening of the tent, and calleth Aaron and Miriam, and they come out both of them.

LXE Numbers 12:5 And the three came forth to the tabernacle of witness; and the Lord descended in a pillar of a cloud, and stood at the door of the tabernacle of witness; and Aaron and Mariam were called; and both came forth.

ASV Numbers 12:5 And Jehovah came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the door of the Tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth.

CSB Numbers 12:5 Then the LORD descended in a pillar of cloud, stood at the entrance to the tent, and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them came forward,

NKJ Numbers 12:5 Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward.

- Nu 11:25 Ex 34:5 40:38 Ps 99:7
- [Numbers 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 13:21-22+ The LORD was going before them in a **pillar of cloud by day** to lead them on the way, and in a **pillar of fire** by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 22 He did not take away the **pillar of cloud by day**, nor the **pillar of fire by night**, from before the people.

## JEHOVAH CAME DOWN

**Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent-** What did this pillar of cloud look like? We cannot be certain but it seems that the pillar of cloud that was normally positioned over the Tabernacle, now descended to **the doorway of the tent!** Imagine the pulse rate of Mariam and Aaron about this time! This recalls the previous "good meeting" in Numbers 11:25+ when "**the LORD came down in the cloud** and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again."

**Pillar of cloud** - 12x in 11v - Ex. 13:21-22; Ex. 14:19; Ex. 33:9; Ex. 33:10; Nu 12:5; Nu 14:14; Dt. 31:15; Neh 9:12; Neh 9:19; Ps. 99:7 The cloud was the unmistakable of the presence of Yahweh.

**Spurgeon on pillar of cloud** in Ps 99:7 - Responses came to Moses and Aaron out of that glorious overshadowing cloud, and though Samuel saw it not, yet to him also came the mystic voice which was wont to thunder forth from that divine canopy. Men have had converse with God, let men therefore speak to God in return. He has told us things to come, let us in return confess the sins which are past; he has revealed his mind to us, let us then pour out our hearts before him.

#### Related Resources:

- [Shekinah glory cloud](#)
- Tony Garland's [The Abiding Presence of God](#)

**Doorway of the tent of meeting-** 44x in 44v - Exod. 29:4; Exod. 29:11; Exod. 29:32; Exod. 29:42; Exod. 38:8; Exod. 38:30; Exod. 40:12; Lev. 1:3; Lev. 1:5; Lev. 3:2; Lev. 4:4; Lev. 4:7; Lev. 4:18; Lev. 8:3; Lev. 8:4; Lev. 8:31; Lev. 8:33; Lev. 8:35; Lev. 10:7; Lev. 12:6; Lev. 14:11; Lev. 14:23; Lev. 15:14; Lev. 15:29; Lev. 16:7; Lev. 17:4; Lev. 17:5; Lev. 17:6; Lev. 17:9; Lev. 19:21; Num. 3:25; Num. 4:25; Num. 6:10; Num. 6:13; Num. 6:18; Num. 10:3; Num. 16:18; Num. 16:19; Num. 16:50; Num. 20:6; Num. 25:6; Num. 27:2; Jos. 19:51; 1 Sam. 2:22

Comment on **doorway of the tent of meeting** - "The Hebrew phrase used here, *pethach ohel mo'ed*, refers to the open area in front of the tent shrine in the tabernacle. This open area is also called the *chatsar hammishkan* ("courtyard of the tabernacle"; see Ex 27:9). This was the area accessible to laypeople, where they carried out their responsibilities for the sacrificial ritual, and met to hear Moses speak the word of Yahweh." (NIVSB)

What a **striking contrast** this situation was with the previous chapter which describes how the LORD **came down** in grace and bestowed the gift of the Spirit on 70 elders (reminds me of Pentecost - Acts 2:1-3+)...

Then **the LORD came down in the cloud** and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again. (Nu 11:25+)

**LORD came down** - exact phrase 4 times = Ge. 11:5 (IN JUDGMENT); Ex. 19:20 (IN GRACE); Nu 11:25

(IN GRACE); Nu 12:5; (IN JUDGMENT)

**NIVSB** - In a sense every theophany (appearance of God) is a picture and promise of the grand theophany, the incarnation of Jesus, both in grace and in judgment.

**Jensen** - The courtroom scene took place at the door of the tent of meeting (12:4, 5). The persons at the trial were God as Prosecutor and Judge, Miriam and Aaron as codefendants, and Moses as the court's key witness. The Prosecutor presented His case. He had three points: (1) I revealed Myself to prophets by visions and dreams. (2) I revealed Myself to this witness, Moses My servant, faithfully ministering in My whole congregation, in a more intimate way—mouth to mouth, that is, openly and not in enigmas, so that he could very clearly behold my form. (3) Why then did you not fear to speak against such a servant of Mine as this man Moses? This last point implied the verdict of guilt, which then brought on the punishment(EvBC-Nu)

**Brian Bell** -Moses didn't defend himself; he waited for God to act. Ps.37:1,7+ "Do not fret because of evildoers,...Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" If we defend ourselves, we may hinder the Lord from defending us (cf Ro 12:17-21+). When we hand our cause over to God...He comes down!

Lord, deliver me from the lust of vindicating myself.

-- Augustine

**And He called Aaron and Miriam** - If there was ever a moment you wished you were dead, this must have been that moment in time for Aaron and Miriam when they heard the voice of Jehovah specifically calling them to Himself!

If you are a Christian, you can expect folks to criticize, but you ought to live so nobody will believe them!"

**Matthew Henry** - Moses had often shown himself jealous for God's honour, and now God showed himself jealous for his reputation; for those that honour God he will honour, nor will he ever be behind-hand with any that appear for him. Judges of old sat in the gate of the city to try causes, and so on this occasion the shechinah in the cloud of glory stood at the door of the tabernacle, and Aaron and Miriam, as delinquents, were called to the bar.

**When they had both come forward** - One has to believe they were both trembling by now. They must have realized that this would not be good news for them!

**THOUGHT** - Do you remember that time in elementary school when the teacher turned to class and said "\_\_\_\_\_, come forward this instant!" (Maybe you were perfect unlike yours truly -- but I remember that day as it was yesterday even though it has been 65 years ago!) Your face flushed, you pulse raced and your knees shook! Dearly beloved follower of Jesus, there is a day coming when Jesus will come down and call us forward. May we enabled by God's Spirit continually heed the command in 1 John 2:28+ "Now, little children, **abide** (present imperative see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

**Numbers 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.**

BGT Numbers 12:6 κα ε πεν πρ ς α το ς κο σατε τ ν λ γων μου ν γ νηται προφ της μ ν κυρ ν ρ μαπι α τ γνωσθ σομαι κα ν πν λαλ σω α τ

NET Numbers 12:6 The LORD said, "Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known to him in a vision; I will speak with him in a dream.

NLT Numbers 12:6 And the LORD said to them, "Now listen to what I say: "If there were prophets among you, I, the LORD, would reveal myself in visions. I would speak to them in dreams.

ESV Numbers 12:6 And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream.

NIV Numbers 12:6 he said, "Listen to my words: "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.

KJV Numbers 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

YLT Numbers 12:6 And He saith, 'Hear, I pray you, My words: If your prophet is of Jehovah -- in an appearance unto him I make Myself known; in a dream I speak with him;

LXE Numbers 12:6 And he said to them, Hear my words: If there should be of you a prophet to the Lord, I will be made known to him in a vision, and in sleep will I speak to him.

ASV Numbers 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream.

CSB Numbers 12:6 He said: "Listen to what I say: If there is a prophet among you from the LORD, I make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream.

NKJ Numbers 12:6 Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.

NRS Numbers 12:6 And he said, "Hear my words: When there are prophets among you, I the LORD make myself known to them in visions; I speak to them in dreams.

- **a prophet:** Ge 20:7 Ex 7:1 Ps 105:15 Mt 23:31,34,37 Lu 20:6 Eph 4:11 Rev 11:3,10
- **in a vision:** Ge 15:1 46:2 Job 4:13 33:15 Ps 89:19 Eze 1:1 Da 8:2 Da 10:8,16,17 Lu 1:11,22 Ac 10:11,17 22:17,18
- **a dream:** Ge 31:10,11 1Ki 3:5 Jer 23:28 Da 7:1 Mt 1:20 2:12,13,19
- **[Numbers 12 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD EXPLAINS WHO MOSES IS!

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** - Yahweh's words were not yet obviously judgmental. After all Miriam was a prophetess and Aaron had served in essence as a "prophet" for Moses, speaking the words that God spoke to Moses which Moses then spoke to him.

**NIVSB on a vision...a dream** - The Hebrew word used here, [mar'ah](#), is related to the verb [ra'ah](#) (meaning "to see") and shows the antiquity of this tradition and passage: a **prophet** ([navi](#)) was formerly known as a **seer** (ro'eh, from ra'ah; see 1 Sa 9:9; Isa 30:10). (**Related** - [What was a seer in the Bible?](#) and [What was a prophet in the Old Testament?](#))...**Dreams** are often connected to prophetic activity and divine revelation (Gen 20:7; 31:10–13; 37:5–11; Dt 13:2, 4, 6; 1 Ki 3:5-14). (**Related** - [What are some biblical examples of dream interpretation?](#))

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

BGT Numbers 12:7 ο χ ο τ ω ς θ ε ρ π ω ν μ ο υ Μ ω υ ς ν λ τ ο κ μ ο υ π ι σ τ ς σ τ ι ν

NET Numbers 12:7 My servant Moses is not like this; he is faithful in all my house.

NLT Numbers 12:7 But not with my servant Moses. Of all my house, he is the one I trust.

ESV Numbers 12:7 Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house.

NIV Numbers 12:7 But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house.

KJV Numbers 12:7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

YLT Numbers 12:7 not so My servant Moses; in all My house he is stedfast;

LXE Numbers 12:7 My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all my house.

ASV Numbers 12:7 My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all my house:

CSB Numbers 12:7 Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My household.

NKJ Numbers 12:7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house.

NRS Numbers 12:7 Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house.

NAB Numbers 12:7 Not so with my servant Moses! Throughout my house he bears my trust:

NJB Numbers 12:7 Not so with my servant Moses; to him my whole household is entrusted;

GWN Numbers 12:7 But this is not the way I treat my servant Moses. He is the most faithful person in my household.

- **My servant:** Dt 18:18 Ps 105:26 Mt 11:9,11 Ac 3:22,23 7:31
- **faithful:** 1Co 4:2 1Ti 3:15 Heb 3:2-6 1Pe 2:4,5
- **[Numbers 12 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Hebrews 3:2-6+ He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as **Moses** also was in all His house (ISRAEL IN THE OT). 3 For He has been counted worthy of more glory than **Moses**, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. 5 Now **Moses** was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; 6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are (CHURCH IN NT = Eph 2:19+, 1 Pe 2:5+), if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our **hope** firm until the end (SEE [Perseverance of the Saints](#)).

**Comment** - "The superiority of Christ over Moses is shown in two comparisons: (1) Moses was a servant, whereas Christ is the Son, and (2) Moses was in God's house, i.e., a part of it, whereas Christ is over God's house. Both were faithful." (NIVSB)

### MOSES IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF PROPHET

**Not so, with My servant Moses** - **Not so** means Moses did not need to see a vision. The Hebrew for servant ('ebed) is translated in Lxx with [therapon](#) (see note below). Moses was first called a servant in Exodus...

Exodus 14:31+ When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His **servant** ('ebed; Lxx = [therapon](#)) Moses.

[Therapon](#) - denotes a faithful friend to a superior, who solicitously regards the superior's interest or looks after his affairs, not a common or domestic servant ([oiketes](#)). **Therapon** is one who serves willingly regardless of whether he is a free man ([eleutheroo](#)) impelled by love or a slave (see [doulos](#)) bound by duty. Thus the services of a **therapon** (Ex 14:31) were voluntary and higher than those of an ordinary [doulos](#) or slave. And so **therapon** denotes the willing service rendered as well as the relationship between the one serving and the one he serves. It also emphasizes an office which was honorable and dignified.

**THOUGHT** - My servant is a beautiful description and should be the one all of God's children strive for and desire to hear from Jehovah. May God's Spirit so work in all of our lives that we might all one day hear from our Master's lips, those precious words "Well done good and faithful slave (servant), I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master." In Jesus' Name. Amen. God is looking for faithfulness in His servants and He will take care of their fruitfulness and their future commendation. Make Steve Green's song your prayer beloved follower of Christ - [Find Us Faithful](#).

**Servant** (05650) ('ebed from 'abad = work in any sense) means a slave or bondservant. Slavery in Israel amounted to indentured servitude. A fellow Israelite could not be held indefinitely against his will. In fact, his time of service was limited to 6 yr (Ex 21:2). The master could be punished if evil intent against the slave was proven (Ex 21:14) or if the slave died (Ex 21:20). These types of servants held a position of honor (Ge 24:2ff; 41:12, 15:2). The phrase, the servant of the Lord, is the most outstanding reference to the Messiah in the Old Testament, and its teachings are concentrated at the end of Isaiah (Isa. 42:1, 19; 43:10; 49:3, 5-7; 52:13; 53:11). Uses in Numbers - Nu 12:8, Nu 14:24, Nu 22:18, Nu 31:49, Nu 32:5, 25, 27, 31.

**NET Note** - The title "my servant" or "servant of the LORD" is reserved in the Bible for distinguished personages, people who are truly spiritual leaders, like Moses, David, Hezekiah, and also the Messiah. Here it underscores Moses' obedience.

**Moses the servant of the LORD** - This exact description of Moses is found 18x in 17 verses - Deut. 34:5; Jos. 1:1; Jos. 1:13; Jos. 1:15; Jos. 8:31; Jos. 8:33; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 12:6; Jos. 13:8; Jos. 14:7; Jos. 18:7;

Jos. 22:2; Jos. 22:4; Jos. 22:5; 2 Ki. 18:12; 2 Chr. 1:3; 2 Chr. 24:6

The seven other uses of this designation for men -**the servant of the LORD** - Jos. 24:29 (REFERS TO **JOSHUA**, THE SERVANT OF MOSES!); Jdg. 2:8 (**JOSHUA** AGAIN); Ps. 18:1 (DAVID); Ps. 36:1(DAVID); Isa. 42:19 - Isa 42:1 refers to the ultimate SERVANT, the MESSIAH!

**Spurgeon** on David's words in Psalm 18:1 - The title deserves attention. David, although at this time a king, calls himself, "the servant of Jehovah," but makes no mention of his royalty; hence we gather that he counted it a higher honour to be the Lord's servant than to be Judah's king. Right wisely did he judge.

**He is faithful in all My household** - Now Aaron and Miriam know this is not good for them. God is lauding Moses and saying he is the one who is trustworthy in all God's household or as the NLT paraphrases it "Of all my house, he is the one I trust." **Faithful** is **aman** which has the basic meaning to support or be firm and here in the Niphal stem it describes Moses as firm, reliable, dependable, one Yahweh could count on. Aman is translated here in the Lxx with **pistos** which describes one who is full of faith, dependable, inspiring of trust, trustworthy.

**Faithful** (0539)(**aman**) conveys the basic idea of providing stability and confidence. To be steady, firm and thus trustworthy. Aman speaks of certainty and thus can mean to confirm or to affirm. Recall that the "**first use**" of a word in Scripture is often very significant as it establishes the primary or most significant meaning, and this general principle is true in the Spirit's inspired use of '**aman**' in Genesis 15:6+ where "Abram **believed** in Jehovah" = Hebrew verb '**aman**' = Greek verb (Septuagint - Lxx) **pisteuo** [see word study]

Paradoxically a bondservant of the Most High God is one of the most privileged, noblest professions in the world. Little wonder that notable men of God in the have always been called the servants of God. The list of names includes:

- **Moses** (Dt 34:5+ Ps 105:26+ Mal 4:4+)
- **Caleb** (Nu 14:24+) But My servant Caleb, **because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully**, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.
- **Joshua** (Josh 24:29+)
- **David** (Ps 18:1+, 2Sa 7:5+, 2Sa 3:18+ Ps 78:70)
- **Paul** (Ro 1:1+; Phil 1:1+; Titus 1:1+)
- **Peter** (2 Pe 1:1+)
- **James** (James 1:1+)
- **Jude** (Jude 1:1+)
- **Prophets** (Amos 3:7; Jer 7:25).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (**Your name dear believer**) (Acts 2:18+; 1Co 7:22+; Ep 6:6+; Col 4:12+; 2Ti 2:24+).

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**Guzik** - Moses enjoyed remarkable communion with God, and it is worth considering why.

1. Because God needed a man this intimate with Him, to be a vessel of revelation and a proper leader for the nation through this remarkable time of the Exodus; this communion was a gift of the sovereign God to Moses.
2. Because Moses was a humble man; only the humble—those who are genuinely others centered—can be responsible with such communion with God.
3. Because Moses, according to God, is faithful in all My house: His walk of righteousness and purity, demonstrated over forty years in obscure service of God in the smallest things, revealed the faithful heart God saw in Moses.

**Numbers 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?"**

BGT Numbers 12:8 σ τ μα κατ σ τ μα λαλ σω α τ ν ε δει κα ο δι α νιγμ των κα τ ν δ ξαν κυρ ου ε δεν κα δι τ ο κ φοβ θητε καταλαλ σαι κατ το θερ ποντ ς μου Μωυσ

NET Numbers 12:8 With him I will speak face to face, openly, and not in riddles; and he will see the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

NLT Numbers 12:8 I speak to him face to face, clearly, and not in riddles! He sees the LORD as he is. So why were you not afraid to criticize my servant Moses?"

ESV Numbers 12:8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

NIV Numbers 12:8 With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

KJV Numbers 12:8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

YLT Numbers 12:8 mouth unto mouth I speak with him, and by an appearance, and not in riddles; and the form of Jehovah he beholdeth attentively; and wherefore have ye not been afraid to speak against My servant -- against Moses?"

LXE Numbers 12:8 I will speak to him mouth to mouth apparently, and not in dark speeches; and he has seen the glory of the Lord; and why were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

ASV Numbers 12:8 with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches; and the form of Jehovah shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?

CSB Numbers 12:8 I speak with him directly, openly, and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. So why were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?"

NKJ Numbers 12:8 I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?"

- **mouth:** Nu 14:14 Ex 33:11 De 34:10 1Ti 6:16
- **dark sayings** Ps 49:4 Eze 17:2 20:49 Mt 13:35 Joh 15:15 1Co 13:12
- **the form of the LORD:** Ex 24:10,11 Ex 33:19,23 Ex 34:5-7 De 4:15 Isa 40:18 46:5 Joh 1:18 Joh 14:7-10 15:24 2Co 3:18 4:4-6 Col 1:15 Heb 1:3
- **were you:** Ex 34:30 Lu 10:16 1Th 4:8 2Pe 2:10 Jude 1:8
- [Numbers 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 34:5-7+ The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD. 6Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.

Deuteronomy 34:10 Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

### MOSES INCREDIBLE INTIMACY WITH YAHWEH

**Wenham** - Whereas ordinary prophets had to be content with receiving God's word through dreams and visions and in riddles, Moses is in a different class. He is God's servant entrusted with looking after all his estate, i.e. Israel, and like other men in his position he has immediate access to the owner of the estate (Gen. 24:2; 40:20) (Ibid)

**With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings-** **Mouth to mouth** and face to face (Dt 34:10). God says Moses has direct access to Him and speaks to Him clearly and not in riddles. This stands in contrast to the previous description of prophets who God spoke to in **visions** and **dreams**. which are not always clear and often require interpretation. Peter alludes to this writing

As to this salvation, the **prophets who prophesied** of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. (1 Pe 1:10–11+)

**Merrill** - The phrase "**face to face**" (cf. Deut. 34:10) is an anthropomorphism meaning that God spoke to Moses without mediation. This is because Moses was faithful in all God's house (Num. 12:7; cf. Heb. 3:2), a reference to Moses' faithful performance of his



role as covenant mediator between God and Israel. How this was done precisely cannot be determined, but it appears from several passages that Moses actually heard the voice of the Lord and saw His glory (e.g., Ex. 19:16–19; 24:17–18; 34:5–11). (BKC)

**NIVSB** - God's revelation does not come with equal clarity to his servants. There may be messages of the Lord that a prophet might not fully understand at the time; to him they may be riddles and mysteries. But to Moses God spoke with special clarity, as though "face to face" (see Dt 34:10). Moses converses with Yahweh plainly, without barrier. (Ex 3:1–6; Ex 19:18–25; Ex 24:9–11; Ex 33:9–11; Dt 34:10–12)

**Wenham** - He speaks to God directly mouth to mouth and therefore can interpret God's will for Israel with total authority. Other men in the Old Testament, e.g. Abraham, Joshua, David and Elijah (Gen. 26:24; Josh. 24:29; 2 Sam. 7:5; 2 Kgs 10:10), are called God's servants, but only Moses is described as entrusted with all my house. (Ibid)

**NET Note** - The emphasis of the line is clear enough—it begins literally "mouth to mouth" I will speak with him. In human communication this would mean equality of rank, but Moses is certainly not equal in rank with the LORD. And yet God is here stating that Moses has an immediacy and directness with communication with God. It goes beyond the idea of friendship, almost to that of a king's confidant.

**And he beholds the form of the LORD**- In Exodus 33:19; 23+ Jehovah said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." 23 "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but **My face shall not be seen.**"

**Brian Bell** has an interesting comment on **beholds the form of the LORD**- By challenging Moses' authority, they were really challenging the Lord's choice & the work He was doing through His servant. He sees the form of the Lord - This was fulfilled on the **Mount of the Transfiguration**. (ED: THIS FITS WITH THE LXX RENDERING WHICH HAS "GLORY" FOR FORM - MOSES SAW HIS GLORY AT THE TRANSFIGURATION). Prior to that he, and others, saw Jehovah in angelic form. He(Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, Col 1:15+ (see [Angel of the LORD](#))

**FSB on the form of the LORD** - Refers to Moses' encounters with the visible Yahweh (Ex 19:18–25; Ex 24:9–11; Ex 33:9–11; Dt 34:10–12). The Hebrew phrase used here, *temunath yhwah yabbat*, has two possible translations: either "he beholds the form of Yahweh" or "he manifests, shines forth the form of Yahweh." The former emphasizes what Moses sees, the latter emphasizes its transformative power.

**NET Note** - The word "form" (תְּמוּנָה, *témunah*) means "shape, image, form." The Greek text took it metaphorically and rendered it "the **glory (doxa) of the LORD.**" This line expresses even more the uniqueness of Moses. The elders saw God on one special occasion (Exod 24:10), and the people never (Deut 4:12, 15), but Moses has direct and familiar contact with God.

**Wenham** - That is not to say he saw God directly and unveiled. This, apparently, was the privilege that Moses requested when he asked to see God's 'face'. On that occasion he had to be content with seeing God's 'back' (Exod. 33:18–23). The word 'form' (Hebrew *tēmûnâ*) is used of visual representations, pictures or images, of earthly and heavenly beings (Exod. 20:4). Job saw someone's form, but could not identify the person from it (Job 4:16). Thus, although Moses enjoyed a much closer relationship with God than any ordinary prophet, he saw only God's form, not the very being of God. (Ibid)

**Merrill** - The "form" refers to a likeness or a representation of the Lord, not the very shape. It is perhaps what is meant by the "back" of the Lord (Ex. 33:23). (BKC)

**Form (08544) temunah** is translated form (7x) and likeness(3x). The first use of **temunah** is in the Second Commandment from God in which He states "You shall not make for yourself an idol or any **likeness**" (Ex 20:4) Moses did behold "the **form** of the LORD" ([Nu 12:8](#)) where *temunah* is translated in the Lxx with **doxa** which is a manifestation of light (radiance, brightness, splendor), a manifestation of God's excellent power (glory, majesty) which would parallel the description in Ex 33:22 where God promises "My **glory** (Heb = **kabod**; Lxx = **doxa**) is passing by." From this the "form" that Moses saw in Nu 12:8 is more accurately described as a manifestation of God's glory.

**Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?**- Obviously they were not. They forgot that Moses was the one who had manifested the glory on his face (see Ex 34:29-30+), etc, etc. Somehow they lost their fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom and did something very unwise.

**Gaebelein** - It is a serious thing to speak against any servant of God. The Lord will always guard those who serve Him and vindicate their character.

**Believer's Study Bible** - The point is that God spoke to Moses directly, person to person, without any intervention or mediation such as visions or dreams. The term "form" (*temunah*, Heb.) refers to a visual representation of some kind -- i.e., Moses was unique in

that he saw the representation of Yahweh as they spoke (cf. Ex. 33:11, note).

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## F B Meyer - Numbers 12:7–8

My servant Moses is faithful:... with him will I speak mouth to mouth.

The meekest of men was vindicated by God Himself. He held his peace, but his Almighty Friend spoke up for him. It is thus that the meek inherit the earth and rejoice themselves in the abundance of peace. Oh, keep still, ye afflicted and tormented souls, God will not let you be trodden underfoot, if only you commit your cause to Him, and are faithful in all that He has committed to you. "That good thing keep which was committed to you: He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him."

Notice to what faithfulness leads! The vision of God is not given to great intellectual ability or mental gift; but to those who as servants are faithful in the administration of God's Household, and the performance of such duties as are entrusted to them by the Great Householder. Such are they that enjoy the face-to-face fellowship, and the mouth-to-mouth speech.

These words about Moses are quoted in Hebrews 3, as though it was pleasant to the Holy Spirit to commemorate in all ages the faithfulness of his servants: and there is this further thought added, that the Household is one, and that all dispensations are included in its precincts. "Whose house are we." It is inspiring to know that we are in the same house with Moses, and may have the same blessing. Are God's dealings with you in dark speeches, in mysterious and perplexing enigmas? Be patient and faithful in well-doing: He is but testing you, and soon He will say, I have called you not servants, but friends; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but all things I have heard of the Father I have made known unto

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## Numbers 12:9 So the anger of the LORD burned against them and He departed.

BGT Numbers 12:9 κα ργ θυμο κυρ ου π ατο ρ κα π λθεν

NET Numbers 12:9 The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he departed.

NLT Numbers 12:9 The LORD was very angry with them, and he departed.

ESV Numbers 12:9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.

NIV Numbers 12:9 The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them.

KJV Numbers 12:9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed.

YLT Numbers 12:9 And the anger of Jehovah burneth against them, and He goeth on,

LXE Numbers 12:9 And the great anger of the Lord was upon them, and he departed.

ASV Numbers 12:9 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them; and he departed.

CSB Numbers 12:9 The LORD's anger burned against them, and He left.

NKJ Numbers 12:9 So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed.

NRS Numbers 12:9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.

NAB Numbers 12:9 So angry was the LORD against them that when he departed,

NJB Numbers 12:9 Yahweh's anger was aroused by them. He went away,

GWN Numbers 12:9 The LORD was angry with them, so he left.

- Nu 11:1 Ho 5:15
- [Numbers 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## YAHWEH'S BURNING ANGER

**So** - Term of conclusion. A bad conclusion for Aaron and Miriam!

**The anger of the LORD burned against them and He departed** - The same expression describes God's reaction to the grumbling of the people in Numbers 11 (see Nu 11:1+, Nu 11:10+, Nu 11:33+). He departed means the pillar of cloud went up from in front of the tent of meeting and apparently once against took His place over the Tabernacle.

**Anger** (nose, nostril, wrath) (0639)(**aph** from **anaph** = to breathe hard, to be angry) is a masculine noun meaning nose, nostril, snout (pigs - Pr 11:22), face (2Sa 25:23) and anger, wrath, resentment, formally, nose, i.e., have a strong feeling of displeasure over a person or a situation, as a figurative extension of the nose as an area that can change color when blood rushes to it while one is angry (Ge 27:45). Both senses are found in Proverbs 30:22 - "For the churning of milk produces butter, and pressing the **nose** (aph) brings forth blood; so the churning of **anger** (aph) produces strife." In the first use God "breathed into (man's) nostrils the breath of life." (Ge 2:7) **Aph** sometimes refers to the entire whole face (Ge 3:19), especially in the expression, *to bow one's face to the ground* (Ge 19:1; 1Sa 24:8). To have *length of nose* is to be *slow to wrath* (Pr 14:29, 16:32). To have *shortness of nose* is to be *quick tempered* (Pr. 14:17; Jer. 15:14, 15). Aph is used in a phrase (goba aph) which means pride, arrogance, formally, high of nose, an improper haughtiness and self-confidence (Ps 10:4). Often speaks of divine anger or wrath (Ps 2:5, 2:12, 6:1, 30:5, 74:1, 77:9, 78:21) and thankfully is "Slow to **anger**." (Ps 103:8; 145:8, both Lxx = makrothumos = long-suffering)

It is interesting that in the OT the nose plays a certain role in the description of anger: Ezek. 38:18, "my anger will rise up in my nose" (text uncertain); and Ps. 18:8f. (Eng. v. 7f.), "for he was angry; smoke rose up in his nose" (charah lo 'alah 'ashan be'appon). Moreover, there is a clear connection between anger and snorting, e.g., in Ex. 15:8; Ps. 18:15; Job 4:9.

**Burned** (02734) (**charah**) means to burn or be kindled with anger, and in the Hithpael, **charah** is used 4x (Ps 37:1, 7,8, Pr 24:19) always meaning "to worry" and describing the agitation, irritation or vexation resulting from active worry. **Charah** is used in reference to the anger of both man and God.

**NET Note** - The common Hebrew expression uses the verb חָרָה (**charah**, "to be hot, to burn, to be kindled"). The subject is אַפּוֹ (**aph**), "his anger" or more literally, his nose, which in this anthropomorphic expression flares in rage (ED: WE'VE ALL SEEN PEOPLE'S NOSES FLARE WHEN THEY BECOME ANGRY!). The emphasis is superlative—"his anger raged."

**Numbers 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.

BGT Numbers 12:10 καὶ νεφελὴ πύσθη πύσθη ἐκ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ εὗρε Μαριαμ λεπτρῶσα ὡσεὶ χιὼν καὶ πύσθηεν Ἀαρὼν πύσθηεν καὶ εὗρε λεπτρῶσα

NET Numbers 12:10 When the cloud departed from above the tent, Miriam became leprous as snow. Then Aaron looked at Miriam, and she was leprous!

NLT Numbers 12:10 As the cloud moved from above the Tabernacle, there stood Miriam, her skin as white as snow from leprosy. When Aaron saw what had happened to her,

ESV Numbers 12:10 When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous.

NIV Numbers 12:10 When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam--leprous, like snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had leprosy;

KJV Numbers 12:10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

YLT Numbers 12:10 and the cloud hath turned aside from off the tent, and lo, Miriam is leprous as snow; and Aaron turneth unto Miriam, and lo, leprous!

LXE Numbers 12:10 And the cloud departed from the tabernacle; and, behold, Mariam was leprous, white as snow; and Aaron looked upon Mariam, and, behold, she was leprous.

ASV Numbers 12:10 And the cloud removed from over the Tent; and, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

CSB Numbers 12:10 As the cloud moved away from the tent, Miriam's skin suddenly became diseased, as white as snow. When Aaron turned toward her, he saw that she was diseased

NKJ Numbers 12:10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.

- **the cloud:** Ex 33:7-10 Eze 10:4,5,18,19 Ho 9:12 Mt 25:41
- **behold:** De 24:9
- **leprous:** Lev 13:2,3-46 2Ki 5:27 15:5 2Ch 26:19-21
- **[Numbers 12 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MIRIAM MADE LEPROUS RITUALLY UNCLEAN!

**But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent** - God withdraws.

**Behold, Miriam was leprous** - (cf 2 Ki 5:27; 2 Chr. 26:19) Aaron helps give us a picture of what Miriam's skin looked like when he said her "**flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb!**" (Nu 12:12) This does not sound like classic leprosy, but is more compatible with an oozing skin condition of some type. In any event, her **leprous** condition would cause her to be relegated to outside the camp as commanded by Yahweh in Nu 5:2-3+.

Sin is appealing to man, but appalling to God.

**Brian Bell** - So God vindicated Moses & rebuked Miriam & Aaron, laying the punishment on Miriam because she had apparently incited this rebellion

**Constable** - The Lord punished Miriam for her dissatisfaction with her divinely appointed role in the nation.

**THOUGHT**- Are you satisfied with the spiritual gift God has given you? Are you content with the role the Spirit has placed you in the Body of Christ?

**As white as snow** - What an ironic phrase for here is a picture of Miriam's sin but the same phrase is used in Isaiah 1:18 where God declares to faithless Israel "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as **white as snow**; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool."

**Sailhamer** has an interesting observation - "In the present narrative, the sign of Moses' leadership was Miriam's 'leprosy, which was white as snow' (Nu 12:10). Similarly, one of the first signs given to vindicate God's election of Moses as leader of his people was the sign of 'leprosy, white as snow' (Ex 4:6). In the initial narratives dealing with the work of Moses, Moses himself doubted his calling and consequently became a leper. Here, however, it is Miriam who doubts and thus becomes a leper. We should also note that the other sign given to vindicate the role of Moses in the earlier narrative was the serpent that came from Moses' rod (Ex 4:3). So also here, when Moses' authority is further questioned by the people at the end of their time in the wilderness (Nu 21:5), God responds by sending serpents against them (21:6)."

**As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she was leprous** - This is an unusual passage, for it has two uses of behold, as if the Spirit is saying to all of us "Look carefully and think twice before you touch the LORD'S anointed!" (Read Ps 105:15+)

**Behold** (02009) **hinneh** is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context."

**NET Note** - The word "leprosy" and "leprous" covers a wide variety of skin diseases, and need not be limited to the actual disease of leprosy known today as Hansen's disease. The description of it here has to do with snow, either the whiteness or the wetness. If that is the case then there would be open wounds and sores—like Job's illness (see M. Noth, Numbers [OTL], 95–96).

Wenham - Though 'leprosy' is the traditional translation of the Hebrew root *šāra'*, it is inaccurate. True leprosy (Hansen's disease) did not reach the Middle East until New Testament times at the earliest. Nor does true leprosy spontaneously disappear, as the various complaints listed in Leviticus 13–14 may do. Rather, biblical leprosy is a patchy, scaly skin complaint, such as psoriasis or severe eczema. It may be that the flaking, peeling scales associated with such complaints prompts the comparison with snow and a still-born infant. (Ibid)

**Henry Morris** - white as snow. There may be an ironic note in this judgment, with Miriam's sudden "whiteness" contrasting with the dark-skinned woman she had criticized. More likely, however, her complaint was that Moses had married outside the nation of Israel, and she was trying to use this as an excuse to usurp Moses' place of leadership.

**Believer's Study Bible** - Leprosy was here a judgment from God for sin. Miriam's sin was that of rebellion against the man to whom God had assigned authority, and thus against God's leadership. The placement of her name first in Nu 11:1 indicates she was probably the instigator of the attack. Nevertheless, however great the sin, God does hear and answer prayer (Nu 11:13, 14); He does respond to repentance with forgiveness (Nu 11:11, 12).

## Related Resources:

- [Why is leprosy talked about so much in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org/Why-is-leprosy-talked-about-so-much-in-the-Bible/)

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## MIRIAM SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY Transfiguration through transgression. - W Harris

“And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle: and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow.”—Numb. 12:10.

I.—This transfiguration was brought to pass on account of the jealousy of Miriam of Moses, and the jealousy of God FOR Moses. “Hath the Lord, indeed, spoken only by Moses?” (verse 2). “Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” (verse 8).

Thoughts that contain the venom of jealousy, when expressed, form the character and pass judgment upon it. “By thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. 12:37). Miriam’s jealousy of her brother came out in her speech, and her speech brought miraculous judgment upon her. God was jealous of the honour of His servant, and His jealousy manifested itself in words of reproof. So a righteous and sinful jealousy led to this transforming judgment. God’s words justified Him, Miriam’s condemned her.

II.—The transformation was in keeping with the expressed jealousy of God and of Miriam.

The narrative leads us to think that Miriam’s feelings broke forth like sudden fire. While she was “musing, the fire burned,” and she spake bitter and angry words. And we are told that the Lord likewise spake suddenly (verse 4) in words of authority and reproof. And the punishment came suddenly. “The cloud departed, and behold Miriam became leprous.” So, we are told, shall the “coming of the Son of Man be” (Matt. 24:27). The indignation of the Lord was great, the bitter feeling of Miriam was intense, and the disease which was the consequence of both was of the most malignant kind.

### LESSONS

I.—That inequalities of position in the Church of God have their origin in the will of God. Vessels belonging to the same owner vary in the amount of cargo they carry because they vary in their capacity. One is 1,000 tons burthen, another 500, and so on. But why do they differ in tonnage? This must be referred to the will of the owner who built each one. The forest trees are all free to grow, but the willow cannot attain to the dimensions of the oak, or the ash to the strength of the cedar of Lebanon. It has not been given to them to do so. So there are intellectual inequalities among God’s servants. “To one he gave five talents, to another two,” &c. (Matt. 25:15). Why not give to each one the same number? Why does not the shipbuilder build each vessel of the same size, or the Creator make each tree exactly like its fellow? Because they are destined for different service, and this destiny must be referred to the will of their owners. Neither Miriam nor Aaron could grow into a Moses.

II.—That God is, from a blessed necessity, a respecter of persons in relation to character. Some of God’s children command more affection and respect than others, because they deserve more. We find ourselves under the necessity of esteeming some more highly than others, and God is, so to speak, under the same blessed necessity. He did esteem Moses more highly than He esteemed Aaron or Miriam, and the reason is found, not in his mental superiority, but because he “was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (verse 3).

III.—That the abstract devil of jealousy within the church of God, hinders its progress more than a legion of personal devils without. “The people journeyed not,” &c. (verse 15). When leaders of an army become jealous of each other’s reputation, they let loose an enemy which will soon take the wheels off the artillery and hamstring the horses; and the same devil in the Church of God has often made the chariot wheels go heavily.

IV.—The practice and precept of the New Testament were anticipated by some Old Testament saints. The river at its well-head may be narrow, but the water is the same in quality as it is when it flows into the ocean. The channel was not so broad, but the spirit was the same. “Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee (verse 13), anticipates, “Lord lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7:60); “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34); “Pray for them which despitely use you” (Matt. 5:44).

### SELECTED—I

I.—Deformity is a fit cure for pride.

Since Miriam would acknowledge no difference between herself and Moses, every Israelite shall now see his face glorious, hers leprous. Because the venom of her tongue would have eaten into the reputation of her brother, therefore a poisonous infection eats into her flesh. That Midianite, whom she scorned, was now beautiful compared with her.

II.—Never any opposed the servants of God, but one time or other they have been constrained to confess a superiority.

Aaron, that so lately made his brother, a fellow in his sad deprecation and prayer to Moses, now makes him his god. “Lay not this sin

upon us," &c. (verse 11), as if Moses had sent the plague, and could remove it.

III.—When God desires or defers to grant our requests, it is for our good, and for the good of others. Moses' prayer for Miriam was not at once answered. If the judgment had been at once inflicted and removed, there had been no example of terror to others. There is no policy in the sudden removal of a just punishment; unless the rain so fall that it lie and soak into the earth, it profits nothing.—Adapted from Bishop Hall.

## SELECTED II

Consider the punishment of Miriam as expressing God's displeasure against those—

I.—Who oppose the civil magistrate.

Rulers may so conduct themselves as totally to destroy the compact between them and their subjects, but religious people should, as far as possible, conform to the injunction, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people" (Acts 23:5).

II.—Who disregard the ministers of the Gospel.

What Moses had done was by the direction and authority of God, and it was at the peril of the greatest people of the land to oppose him. Ministers are ambassadors in Christ's stead (2 Cor. 5:20).

III.—Who neglect the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is that prophet of whom Moses was a shadow. In reference to Him, therefore, the lesson has tenfold weight.

Note.—The murmurs of Miriam and Aaron were not public; "but the Lord heard them."—Charles Simeon.

**Numbers 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.**

BGT Numbers 12:11 κα̅ ε̅πεν Ααρων πρ̅ς Μωυσ̅ν ὁ̅μαι κ̅ριε μ̅ συνεπιθ̅ μ̅ν μαρτ̅αν δι̅ τι γνο̅σαμεν κα̅θ̅ τι μ̅ ῥομεν

NET Numbers 12:11 So Aaron said to Moses, "O my lord, please do not hold this sin against us, in which we have acted foolishly and have sinned!

NLT Numbers 12:11 he cried out to Moses, "Oh, my master! Please don't punish us for this sin we have so foolishly committed.

ESV Numbers 12:11 And Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned.

NIV Numbers 12:11 and he said to Moses, "Please, my lord, do not hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed.

KJV Numbers 12:11 And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.

YLT Numbers 12:11 And Aaron saith unto Moses, 'O, my lord, I pray thee, lay not upon us sin in which we have been foolish, and in which we have sinned;

LXE Numbers 12:11 And Aaron said to Moses, I beseech thee, my lord, do not lay sin upon us, for we were ignorant wherein we sinned.

ASV Numbers 12:11 And Aaron said unto Moses, Oh, my lord, lay not, I pray thee, sin upon us, for that we have done foolishly, and for that we have sinned.

CSB Numbers 12:11 and said to Moses, "My lord, please don't hold against us this sin we have so foolishly committed.

NKJ Numbers 12:11 So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned.

NRS Numbers 12:11 Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, do not punish us for a sin that we have so foolishly committed.

- lay not: 2Sa 19:19 24:10 2Ch 16:9 Ps 38:1-5 Pr 30:32
- [Numbers 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CONFESSION AND CONTRITION

We could also entitle this passage "The irony of a high priest in dire need of priestly intercession!"

**Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord** - Joshua had just addressed Moses with the same words **"Moses my lord."** (Nu 11:28). What a picture is Aaron's greeting of respect here contrasted with the disrespect he (and Miriam) had shown to Moses at the outset of their sin (Nu 12:1-2). God's judgment of leprosy opened Aaron's eyes to their sinful attitudes and accusations.

**THOUGHT** - Judgment has a way of opening our eyes to the hand of God. Unfortunately and sadly some are furthered hardened by what is clearly judgment as in the time of the Great Tribulation, John recording that "huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God (THEY DID NOT HAVE TO GUESS WHERE THE JUDGMENT HAD COME FROM AND YET INSTEAD OF REPENTING, THEY RAILED AT THE LORD WHO SENT THE JUDGMENT!) because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe." (Rev 16:23+). Have you committed sin and recognize some of the consequences to be divinely allowed (or sent) in judgment? If so, the real question is how did you respond? Soften or harden? The same Gospel that melts some people to confession and repentance, hardens others to persevere in their sins! Or as it has been said the same sun that melts wax, hardens clay. Is your heart "wax" or "clay?"

**Lord** (0113) ('**adon**) is a masculine noun meaning lord or master. The most frequent usage is of a human lord, but it is also used of divinity. Generally, it carries the nuances of authority rather than ownership. When used of humans, it refers to authority over slaves (Ge. 24:9; Jdg. 19:11); people (1 Ki. 22:17); a wife (Gen. 18:12; Amos 4:1); or a household (Gen. 45:8; Ps. 105:21). When used of divinity, it frequently occurs with yehōwāh <H3068>, signifying His sovereignty (Ex. 34:23; Josh. 3:13; Isa. 1:24). (Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament)

**Gilbrant** - The basic meaning of 'ādhôn is "lord," "king," "master," "superintendent" or "owner." Examples of 'ādhôn in reference to men are Gen. 45:8, 9; Ps. 105:21 ("head" of, or "superintendent" of, a household); 1 Ki. 16:24; Gen. 40:7; Exo. 21:4, 6, 8, 32 ("proprietor," "master"); Neh. 3:5 ("governor"); Gen. 42:10, 30, 33 ("prince"); 1 Ki. 1:27 ("king"). The sense of a governing authority is the root meaning. 'ādhôn is used in reference to an earthly lord in excess of 300 times. It is also used of a divine lord approximately 30 times. The idea of an authority or lordship conveyed in 'ādhôn is seen in the role of husbands. Genesis 18:12 uses 'ādhôn in reference to Sarah's husband Abraham. In addition, it is used to indicate authority over lands (Gen. 42:30), houses (45:8), political subdivisions such as districts (1 Ki. 16:24), etc. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Vines** - Basically, 'ādôn means "lord" or "master." It is distinguished from the Hebrew word ba'al, which signifies "possessor" or "owner." 'Ādôn basically describes the one who occupies the position of a "master" or "lord" over a slave or servant: (Ge. 24:9). It is used of kings and their most powerful aides. Joseph to his brothers: (Ge 45:8; cf. Ge 42:30). Only once is this word used in the sense of "owner" or "possessor" (1 Ki 16:24). **Ādôn is often used as a term of polite address.** In some cases, the one so named really occupies a position of authority (ED: AS MOSES IN THIS PASSAGE IN NUMBERS 12!). In Ge. 18:12 (the first occurrence) Sarah called Abraham her "lord." On the other hand, this may be a purely honorary title by which the speaker intends to indicate his submission to the one so addressed. Jacob instructed his slaves to speak to "my lord Esau" (Gen. 32:18); i.e., Jacob called his brother Esau "lord." In places where the speaker is addressing someone calling him "lord," the word virtually means "you." **When applied to God, 'ādôn** is used in several senses. It signifies His position as the one who has authority (like a master) over His people to reward the obedient and punish the disobedient: (Hos. 12:14). In such contexts God is conceived as a Being who is sovereign ruler and almighty master. The word is often a title of respect, a term of direct address usually assuming a specific concrete lord-vassal or master-servant relationship (Psa. 8:1). In some cases the word appears to be a title suggesting God's relationship to and position over Israel:(Ex 23:17). In such contexts 'ādôn is a formal divine name and should probably be transliterated if the proper emphasis is to be retained. In the form 'adōnāy the word means "Lord" par excellence or "Lord over all," even as it sometimes does in the form 'ādôn (cf. Dt. 10:17, where God is called the "God of gods, and "Lord of lords"; Josh. 3:11, where He is called the "Lord of all the earth"). (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New

Adon 263 verse - Gen. 18:3; Gen. 18:12; Gen. 23:6; Gen. 23:11; Gen. 23:15; Gen. 24:9; Gen. 24:10; Gen. 24:12; Gen. 24:14; Gen. 24:18; Gen. 24:27; Gen. 24:35; Gen. 24:36; Gen. 24:37; Gen. 24:39; Gen. 24:42; Gen. 24:44; Gen. 24:48; Gen. 24:49; Gen. 24:51; Gen. 24:54; Gen. 24:56; Gen. 24:65; Gen. 31:35; Gen. 32:4; Gen. 32:5; Gen. 32:18; Gen. 33:8; Gen. 33:13; Gen. 33:14; Gen. 33:15; Gen. 39:2; Gen. 39:3; Gen. 39:7; Gen. 39:8; Gen. 39:16; Gen. 39:19; Gen. 39:20; Gen. 40:1; Gen. 40:7; Gen. 42:10; Gen. 42:30; Gen. 42:33; Gen. 43:20; Gen. 44:5; Gen. 44:7; Gen. 44:8; Gen. 44:9; Gen. 44:16; Gen. 44:18; Gen. 44:19; Gen. 44:20; Gen. 44:22; Gen. 44:24; Gen. 44:33; Gen. 45:8; Gen. 45:9; Gen. 47:18; Gen. 47:25; Exod. 21:4; Exod. 21:5; Exod. 21:6; Exod. 21:8; Exod. 21:32; Exod. 32:22; Exod. 34:23; Num. 11:28; Num. 12:11; Num. 32:25; Num. 32:27; Num. 36:2; Deut. 10:17; Deut. 23:15; Jdg. 3:25; Jdg. 4:18; Jdg. 6:13; Jdg. 19:11; Jdg. 19:12; Jdg. 19:26; Jdg. 19:27; Ruth 2:13; 1 Sam. 1:15; 1 Sam. 1:26; 1 Sam. 16:16; 1 Sam. 20:38; 1 Sam. 22:12; 1 Sam. 24:6; 1 Sam. 24:8; 1 Sam. 24:10; 1 Sam. 25:10; 1 Sam. 25:14; 1 Sam. 25:17; 1 Sam. 25:24; 1 Sam. 25:25; 1 Sam. 25:26; 1 Sam. 25:27; 1 Sam. 25:28; 1 Sam. 25:29; 1 Sam. 25:31; 1 Sam. 25:41; 1 Sam. 26:15; 1 Sam. 26:16; 1 Sam. 26:17; 1 Sam. 26:18; 1 Sam. 26:19; 1 Sam. 29:4; 1 Sam. 29:8; 1 Sam. 29:10; 1 Sam. 30:13; 1 Sam. 30:15; 2 Sam. 1:10; 2 Sam. 2:5; 2 Sam. 2:7; 2 Sam. 3:21; 2 Sam. 4:8; 2 Sam. 9:9; 2 Sam. 9:10; 2 Sam. 9:11; 2 Sam. 10:3; 2 Sam. 11:9; 2 Sam. 11:11; 2 Sam. 11:13; 2 Sam. 12:8; 2 Sam. 13:32; 2 Sam. 13:33; 2 Sam. 14:9; 2 Sam. 14:12; 2 Sam. 14:15; 2 Sam. 14:17; 2 Sam. 14:18; 2 Sam. 14:19; 2 Sam. 14:20; 2 Sam. 14:22; 2 Sam. 15:15; 2 Sam. 15:21; 2 Sam. 16:3; 2 Sam. 16:4; 2 Sam. 16:9; 2 Sam. 18:28; 2 Sam. 18:31; 2 Sam. 18:32; 2 Sam. 19:19; 2 Sam. 19:20; 2 Sam. 19:26; 2 Sam. 19:27; 2 Sam. 19:28; 2 Sam. 19:30; 2 Sam. 19:35; 2 Sam. 19:37; 2 Sam. 20:6; 2 Sam. 24:3; 2 Sam. 24:21; 2 Sam. 24:22; 1 Ki. 1:2; 1 Ki. 1:11; 1 Ki. 1:13; 1 Ki. 1:17; 1 Ki. 1:18; 1 Ki. 1:20; 1 Ki. 1:21; 1 Ki. 1:24; 1 Ki. 1:27; 1 Ki. 1:31; 1 Ki. 1:33; 1 Ki. 1:36; 1 Ki. 1:37; 1 Ki. 1:43; 1 Ki. 1:47; 1 Ki. 2:38; 1 Ki. 3:17; 1 Ki. 3:26; 1 Ki. 11:23; 1 Ki. 12:27; 1 Ki. 16:24; 1 Ki. 18:7; 1 Ki. 18:8; 1 Ki. 18:10; 1 Ki. 18:11; 1 Ki. 18:13; 1 Ki. 18:14; 1 Ki. 20:4; 1 Ki. 20:9; 1 Ki. 22:17; 2 Ki. 2:3; 2 Ki. 2:5; 2 Ki. 2:16; 2 Ki. 2:19; 2 Ki. 4:16; 2 Ki. 4:28; 2 Ki. 5:1; 2 Ki. 5:3; 2 Ki. 5:4; 2 Ki. 5:18; 2 Ki. 5:20; 2 Ki. 5:22; 2 Ki. 5:25; 2 Ki. 6:5; 2 Ki. 6:12; 2 Ki. 6:15; 2 Ki. 6:22; 2 Ki. 6:23; 2 Ki. 6:26; 2 Ki. 6:32; 2 Ki. 8:5; 2 Ki. 8:12; 2 Ki. 8:14; 2 Ki. 9:7; 2 Ki. 9:11; 2 Ki. 9:31; 2 Ki. 10:2; 2 Ki. 10:3; 2 Ki. 10:6; 2 Ki. 10:9; 2 Ki. 18:23; 2 Ki. 18:24; 2 Ki. 18:27; 2 Ki. 19:4; 2 Ki. 19:6; 1 Chr. 12:19; 1 Chr. 21:3; 1 Chr. 21:23; 2 Chr. 2:14; 2 Chr. 2:15; 2 Chr. 13:6; 2 Chr. 18:16; Neh. 3:5; Job 3:19; Ps. 12:4; Ps. 105:21; Ps. 123:2; Ps. 136:3; Prov. 25:13; Prov. 27:18; Prov. 30:10; Isa. 10:33; Isa. 19:4; Isa. 22:18; Isa. 24:2; Isa. 26:13; Isa. 36:8; Isa. 36:9; Isa. 36:12; Isa. 37:4; Isa. 37:6; Jer. 22:18; Jer. 27:4; Jer. 34:5; Jer. 37:20; Jer. 38:9; Dan. 1:10; Dan. 10:16; Dan. 10:17; Dan. 10:19; Dan. 12:8; Amos 4:1; Zeph. 1:9; Zech. 1:9; Zech. 4:4; Zech. 4:5; Zech. 4:13; Zech. 6:4; Mal. 1:6; Mal. 3:1

**Constable** - Ironically Aaron had wanted to be like Moses, but instead of being able to intercede directly with God as Moses did, Aaron had to appeal to Moses who interceded with God.

**I beg you, do not account this sin to us** - He is appealing to Moses, presumably for forgiveness.

**Philip** - "Aaron, on seeing the judgment of leprosy come upon his sister, beseeches Moses for mercy. There is surely in his prayer an implicit recognition of the different kind of authority that Moses had. Indeed, he is acknowledging that Moses possessed a power in intercession with God that he himself could not exercise, hence his appeal to his brother." (Preacher's Commentary)

How often people turn for help to the very ones they have criticized!

-- Brian Bell

**in which we have acted foolishly** - Aaron's commentary on sin is that it is foolish! O that this truth were embedded irrevocably in our hearts and minds. Amen.

Aaron was the interceding high priest for Israel and yet he needed an intercessor!

-- Warren Wiersbe

**THOUGHT** - Aaron asked that he and Miriam not be punished for their sin. It is easy to look back at our mistakes and recognize their foolishness. It is much harder to recognize foolish plans while we are carrying them out because somehow then they seem appropriate. To get rid of foolish ideas before they turn into foolish actions requires eliminating our wrong thoughts and motives. Failing to do this caused Miriam and Aaron much grief. (LASB)

**ED:** I would add we all do well to remember the craftiness of sin - we think of sin as something inanimate and largely that is correct. However, sin has life in the spiritual realm which is determined (Ge 4:7 = "crouching" like a wild animal ready to pounce on its victim who fails to remain alert! Sin pounced on Cain and he killed Abel - Ge 4:8! Beware!) and deceptive (Hebrews 3:13-see discussion there of **deceptiveness of sin**).

**and in which we have sinned** - Note that even though Aaron was not judged, he immediately recognized he was complicit in the sinful actions against Moses and so quickly "came clean" (Pr 28:13+). They had missed the mark massively. This was not an accidental sin, but a presumptive, pre-meditated sin against Moses but ultimately against Yahweh, for Yahweh had bestowed on Moses the authority they were challenging. In truth, they were challenging God. Beloved, whenever we sin, whatever the sin is, it is ultimately a sin against God (cf Ps 51)

**Have sinned** (Lxx = [hamartano](#))([02398](#))([chata'](#)) means to miss the way, to fail; to err, to swerve from truth, to go wrong. The literal use describes an accurate shot by slingshot [Jdg 20:16](#) - they could "**not miss** (chata')." Pr 19:2 conveys a related meaning of chata' in those versions that translate it as "miss the way." (Pr 19:2NIV) As Vine says "From this basic meaning comes the word's chief usage to indicate moral failure toward both God and men, and certain results of such wrongs." When man sins he has missed the mark, the goal, or the way that God has set as standard.

**Numbers 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!"



BGT Numbers 12:12 μ γ νηται σε σον θαν τ σε κτωμα κπορευ μενον κ μ τρας μητρ ς κα κατεσθ ει τ μισυ τ ν σαρκ ν α τ ς

NET Numbers 12:12 Do not let her be like a baby born dead, whose flesh is half-consumed when it comes out of its mother's womb!"

NLT Numbers 12:12 Don't let her be like a stillborn baby, already decayed at birth."

ESV Numbers 12:12 Let her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother's womb."

NIV Numbers 12:12 Do not let her be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother's womb with its flesh half eaten away."

KJV Numbers 12:12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

YLT Numbers 12:12 let her not, I pray thee, be as one dead, when in his coming out from the womb of his mother -- the half of his flesh is consumed.'

LXE Numbers 12:12 Let her not be as it were like death, as an abortion coming out of his mother's womb, when the disease devours the half of the flesh.

ASV Numbers 12:12 Let her not, I pray, be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

CSB Numbers 12:12 Please don't let her be like a dead baby whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother's womb."

NKJ Numbers 12:12 "Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!"

NRS Numbers 12:12 Do not let her be like one stillborn, whose flesh is half consumed when it comes out of its mother's womb."

- **as one dead:** Ps 88:4,5 Eph 2:1-5 Col 2:13 1Ti 5:6
- **of whom:** Job 3:16 Ps 58:8 1Co 15:8
- [Numbers 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MIRIAM, THE ORIGINAL "WALKING DEAD"

**Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb-** Her condition was viewed as if she were a "walking dead" person! It is interesting that one of Aaron's job was to identify leprous conditions (Lev 13:2–17+), and clearly he had no difficulty in identifying this one in his own sister!

**NET Note** - The words "**his mother**" and "**flesh**" are among the so-called tiqqune sopherim, or "emendations of the scribes." According to this tradition the text originally had here "our mother" and "our flesh," but the ancient scribes changed these pronouns from the first person to the third person. Apparently they were concerned that the image of Moses' mother giving birth to a baby with physical defects of the sort described here was somehow inappropriate, given the stature and importance of Moses.

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

BGT Numbers 12:13 κα β ησεν Μωυσ ς πρ ς κ ριον λ γων θε ς δ ομα σου ασαι α τ ν

NET Numbers 12:13 Then Moses cried to the LORD, "Heal her now, O God."

NLT Numbers 12:13 So Moses cried out to the LORD, "O God, I beg you, please heal her!"

ESV Numbers 12:13 And Moses cried to the LORD, "O God, please heal her-- please."

NIV Numbers 12:13 So Moses cried out to the LORD, "O God, please heal her!"

KJV Numbers 12:13 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.

YLT Numbers 12:13 And Moses crieth unto Jehovah, saying, 'O God, I pray Thee, give, I pray Thee, healing to her.'

LXE Numbers 12:13 And Moses cried to the Lord, saying, O God, I beseech thee, heal her.

ASV Numbers 12:13 And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, Heal her, O God, I beseech thee.

CSB Numbers 12:13 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "God, please heal her!"

NKJ Numbers 12:13 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"

NRS Numbers 12:13 And Moses cried to the LORD, "O God, please heal her."

NAB Numbers 12:13 Then Moses cried to the LORD, "Please, not this! Pray, heal her!"

NJB Numbers 12:13 Moses pleaded with Yahweh. 'O God,' he said, 'I beg you, please heal her!'

GWN Numbers 12:13 So Moses cried to the LORD, "Please, God, heal her!"

- Nu 14:2,13-20 16:41,46-50 Ex 32:10-14 1Sa 12:23 15:11 Mt 5:44,45 Lu 6:28 23:34 Ac 7:60 Ro 12:21 Jas 5:15
- [Numbers 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES THE MEDIATOR INTERCEDES FOR MERCY

**Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "O God, heal her, I pray** - Moses returns good for evil. He is an Old Testament example of a New Testament truth. (Mt 5:44+, Ro 12:14+, Job 42:10). When you pray for those who have offended you, it helps you guard against bitterness.

**Guzik** - This was the first word spoken by Moses in this chapter. He had not spoken the entire time he was accused, leaving it up to God to answer his critics.. When a leader perceives accusations are petty, false, or self-motivated, the right thing to do is to ignore them, leave them up to God, and keep busy with what the LORD has called the leader to do—even as Jesus was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

**Jensen** - He addressed God here as El, the God of creation, for the appeal was for a creative act which only the God of creation could perform, making living flesh out of that which was dead.

**Wenham** - In final clinching proof of Moses' special relationship to God, his prayer for his sister's healing is immediately answered.

**Brian Bell** - In his meekness, Moses did not rejoice at his sister's punishment; instead, he prayed for her. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you & persecute you

**Numbers 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."**

BGT Numbers 12:14 κα ε πεν κ ριος πρ ς Μωυσ ν ε πατ ρ ατ ς πτ ων ν πτυσεν ε ς τ πρ σωπον α τ ς ο κ ντραπ σεται πτ μ ρας φορισθ τω πτ μ ρας ξω τ ς παρεμβολ ς κα μετ τα τα ε σελε σεται

NET Numbers 12:14 The LORD said to Moses, "If her father had only spit in her face, would she not have been disgraced for seven days? Shut her out from the camp seven days, and afterward she can be brought back in again."

NLT Numbers 12:14 But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had done nothing more than spit in her face, wouldn't she be defiled for seven days? So keep her outside the camp for seven days, and after that she may be accepted back."

ESV Numbers 12:14 But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again."

NIV Numbers 12:14 The LORD replied to Moses, "If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back."

KJV Numbers 12:14 And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again.

YLT Numbers 12:14 And Jehovah saith unto Moses, 'And her father had but spat in her face -- is she not ashamed seven days? she is shut out seven days at the outside of the camp, and afterwards she is gathered.'

LXE Numbers 12:14 And the Lord said to Moses, If her father had only spit in her face, would she not be ashamed seven days? let her be set apart seven days without the camp, and afterwards she shall come in.

ASV Numbers 12:14 And Jehovah said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut up without the camp seven days, and after that she shall be brought in again.

CSB Numbers 12:14 The LORD answered Moses, "If her father had merely spit in her face, wouldn't she remain in disgrace for seven days? Let her be confined outside the camp for seven days; after that she may be brought back in."

NKJ Numbers 12:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again."

- **spit:** De 25:9 Job 30:10 Isa 50:6 Mt 26:67 Heb 12:9
- **let her be:** Nu 5:2,3 Lev 13:45,46 14:8 2Ch 26:20,21
- [Numbers 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days?"** NLT - "If her father had done nothing more than spit in her face, wouldn't she be defiled for seven days?" Spitting was an act of contempt (Dt 25:9; Isa 50:6) The religious leaders spat in Jesus' face to insult him (Matthew 26:67)! What is the point in this passage? God is saying that Miriam's punishment should at least be equal to what she would have experienced if her father had spit in her face.

**NIVSB on spit in her face** - An act of public rebuke (Dt 25:9) demands a period of public shame. A period of seven days was a standard time for uncleanness occasioned by being in contact with a dead body (Nu 19:11, 14, 16).

**Let her be shut up for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again-** As noted earlier skin disorders were to be dealt with by putting the afflicted person outside the camp (Nu 5:1-2+)

**Jensen** - Jehovah's response to Moses' intercession was one of grace and justice (12:14). Grace, in that He promised healing. Justice, in that the formal legal requirements of a solitary waiting period of seven days outside the camp (Lev. 13–14), symbolizing the awfulness and hideousness of sin, would be fulfilled. Miriam was restored, but not until she paid for the sin of haughtiness and envy by the humiliation of being "shut up without the camp"—she who was a prophetess among the people of the camp!

**Wiersbe** - Apparently Miriam was the ringleader, for she was made leprous, and her sin held up the march of the camp for seven days.

It is a serious thing when spiritual leaders become envious of one another, because their sin affects the whole congregation.

-- Wiersbe

**Henry Morris - spit in her face.** This is not a command for a father to do this, but simply a recognition that this was a common practice in the Middle East as an expression of sharp rebuke and contempt for the actions of a grossly disobedient child.

**Numbers 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.**

BGT Numbers 12:15 καὶ φῶρ σθη Μαριαμ ξω τς παρεμβολς πτ μ ρας καὶ λα ς ο κ ξ ρεν ως καθαρ σθη Μαριαμ

NET Numbers 12:15 So Miriam was shut outside of the camp for seven days, and the people did not journey on until Miriam was brought back in.

NLT Numbers 12:15 So Miriam was kept outside the camp for seven days, and the people waited until she

was brought back before they traveled again.

ESV Numbers 12:15 So Miriam was shut outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again.

NIV Numbers 12:15 So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on till she was brought back.

KJV Numbers 12:15 And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.

YLT Numbers 12:15 And Miriam is shut out at the outside of the camp seven days, and the people hath not journeyed till Miriam is gathered;

LXE Numbers 12:15 And Mariam was separated without the camp seven days; and the people moved not forward till Mariam was cleansed.

ASV Numbers 12:15 And Miriam was shut up without the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.

CSB Numbers 12:15 So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was brought back in.

NKJ Numbers 12:15 So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again.

- **shut:** De 24:8,9
- **and the:** Ge 9:21-23 Ex 20:12
- **Miriam:** La 3:32 Mic 6:4 7:8,9 Hab 3:2
- **[Numbers 12 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE SHAME OF MIRIAM

**So** - Term of conclusion.

**Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days-** (see Lev. 13:1–6; 14:1–8; 15:8) Per God's instruction. With this punishment, the whole camp knew what had happened, bringing shame on Miriam. But this also delayed the camp from moving out for seven days...

The rebellious sinner is always a cause of holding back the progress of God's people.

-- Warren Wiersbe

Paul had instruction for sinning leaders

Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. (1 Tim. 5:20)

Miriam and Aaron would have been benefited by heeding the words of the writer of Hebrews...

**Obey** your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. (Heb. 13:17+)

**And the people did not move on until Miriam was received again-** In other words Yahweh did not move the pillar of cloud by day during these 7 days. Had He done so presumably Miriam would have been exposed to the dangers of the wilderness. Is this not another manifestation of Yahweh's great mercy, for He is every the One Who in the midst of wrath remembers mercy, a truth for which we all are eternally grateful! Amen!

**Believer's Study Bible** - Miriam was excluded for seven days, which was the required time for a leper to submit to ritual cleansing after being healed and before restoration to the camp (Lev. 14:9).

Moses would use the example of Miriam to warn the second generation...

**Remember** what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way as you came out of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 24:9)

Wiersbe comments that "Jesus warned that our enemies might be those from our own household (Mt. 10:34–36+; Micah 7:6+).

**Brian Bell** - God would heal her...but she would have to bear the shame of her sin for 7 days. Our intercession may bring pardon & healing; but sin leaves its mark. You are shut out of the enjoyment of the camp & the march is delayed. The people did not journey - For 1 week whole camp waited, sin delaying them again. **The sin of criticism is far more serious than most people realize.**

So also the **tongue** is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which **defiles the entire body**, (THAT CERTAINLY WAS THE CASE WITH MIRIAM!) and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. (James 3:5; 6+)

**Poem:**

**Author Unknown**

As I watched them tear a building down,  
A gang of men in a busy town,

With a ho-heave-ho, and a lusty yell,  
They swung a beam and the side wall fell.

I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled,  
And the men you'd hire if you wanted to build?"

He gave a laugh and said, "No, indeed,  
Just common labor is all I need."

"I can easily wreck in a day or two,  
What builders have taken years to do."

And I thought to myself, as I went my way,  
Which of these roles have I tried to play?

Am I a builder who works with care,  
Measuring life by rule and square?

Am I shaping my work to a well-made  
plan, Patiently doing the best I can?

Or am I a wrecker who walks to town,  
Content with the labor of tearing down?

"O Lord let my life and my labors be,  
That which will build for eternity!"

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

BGT Numbers 12:16 κα μετ τα τα ξ ρεν λα ς ξ Ασηρωθ κα παρεν βαλον ν τ ρ μ το Φαραν

NET Numbers 12:16 After that the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

NLT Numbers 12:16 Then they left Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

ESV Numbers 12:16 After that the people set out from Hazeroth, and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

NIV Numbers 12:16 After that, the people left Hazeroth and encamped in the Desert of Paran.

KJV Numbers 12:16 And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.

YLT Numbers 12:16 and afterwards have the people journeyed from Hazeroth, and they encamp in the wilderness of Paran.

LXE Numbers 12:16 And afterwards the people set forth from Aseroth, and encamped in the wilderness of

Pharan.

ASV Numbers 12:16 And afterward the people journeyed from Hazeroth, and encamped in the wilderness of Paran.

CSB Numbers 12:16 After that, the people set out from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.

NKJ Numbers 12:16 And afterward the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.

NRS Numbers 12:16 After that the people set out from Hazeroth, and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

NAB Numbers 12:16 After that the people set out from Hazeroth and encamped in the desert of Paran.

NJB Numbers 12:16 Then the people moved on from Hazeroth and pitched camp in the desert of Paran.

GWN Numbers 12:16 After that, the people moved from Hazeroth and set up camp in the Desert of Paran.

- **after:** Nu 11:35 33:18
- **the wilderness:** Nu 10:12 13:3,26 Ge 21:21 1Sa 25:1 Hab 3:3
- **[Numbers 12 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Wilderness of Paran

## GOD SAYS IT IS TIME TO MOVE OUT

**Afterward, however** - The punishment for sin had been completed. It was time to move on.

**THOUGHT** - This reminds me of Paul's words in Phil 3:13+ "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead." The Greek word for forgetting means completely forgetting. Miriam and Aaron need to put their sins behind them and move out. Beloved, that is what each of us must do when we sinned against the Almighty One. We don't trivialize our sin, but similarly we don't have a "pity party" over them. We accept God's unconditional forgiveness in the blood of Jesus Christ and we "move out!"

**the people moved out from Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran** The exact location of Hazeroth is unknown, but from the texts it is somewhere between the wilderness of Sinai and the wilderness of Paran.

**Believer's Study Bible** - Israel arrived at Kadesh (cf. 13:26) in the northern part of the Wilderness of Paran, an eleven-day journey from Sinai (Deut. 1:2). This is probably Ain Qudeirat, c. 50 miles southwest of Beersheba.

**Wenham** - The New Testament draws many comparisons between Moses the mediator of the old covenant and Jesus the mediator of the new.

- Jesus is the prophet like Moses (Acts 7:37).
- Like Moses, Jesus is meek and lowly in heart (Matt. 11:29),
- and kept silent before his accusers (1 Pet. 2:23ff.).

- But whereas Moses was but a servant in God's house, our Lord was the son of the house (Heb. 3:1–6);
- Moses saw God's form and heard his word, but Jesus was the Word and in the form of God (John 1:14–18; Phil. 2:6). (Ibid)