

# DISSENSION IN THE FAMILY OF MOSES

## Introduction

- 1) Family quarrels are rarely pleasant, but usually tense and difficult (Lk. 12:13; Gen. 4:8)
- 2) The family of **Moses** would seem to have been an excellent family
  - a) Birth and hiding of Moses (Ex. 2:1-4); his parents demonstrated great faith and courage
  - b) Moses had a sister, **Miriam** (Ex. 2:4), and a brother, **Aaron** (Ex. 4:14; 6:20; Num. 26:59)
  - c) Moses was made the deliverer and leader of Israel (Ex. 3:10)
  - d) Miriam became a prophetess (Ex. 15:20); Aaron became high priest (Ex. 28:1)
- 3) Important family with major leadership positions – appeared to be mature, well-regarded
- 4) So what happened in **Numbers 12** and why? What can we learn from this incident?

## I) **The Criticism (vv. 1-2)**

- A) Miriam and Aaron “spoke against” Moses (criticized – public or private?)
  - 1) Is Miriam the *instigator*? (listed first and receives the severe punishment)
- B) Two issues:
  - 1) Moses had married an Ethiopian (Cushite) woman
  - 2) Moses’ unique and special position as God’s servant
- C) Miriam and Aaron harbor personal resentment against Moses’ marriage and leadership
  - 1) No indication that God had condemned Moses in either of these matters
  - 2) Prejudice and jealousy/envy are evident in their attitude and words
    - a) These insidious attitudes can be buried deep in the best of people (Prov. 14:30)
    - b) Can be prejudicial and jealous of another’s work, family, position, wealth, health, etc.
- D) “And the Lord heard it” – nothing hidden from God (Matt. 12:36-37; Heb. 4:13)
  - 1) Sees their prejudice, envy, murmuring, insubordination. What does God see in our hearts?

## II) **The Divine Response (vv. 3-9)**

- A) The meek character of Moses is revealed, implying that he was not one to strike back, lose temper, itch for a fight, but had his mind and emotions under control
- B) Lord responds with righteous anger – “Come out!” (similar to a parent scolding children)
  - 1) Moses is faithful (“in all My house”), and God’s relationship with him was different
  - 2) Miriam and Aaron did not respect the position of Moses and his relationship with God
  - 3) Disrespect for scriptural authority, roles, and love always leads to dissension and disunity
- C) Moses is a type of Christ (Heb. 3:1-6)
  - 1) Those who do not love God’s word and respect the authority and position of the Son of God will cause dissension and anger the Lord God (Heb. 10:28-31)

## III) **The Divine Punishment (vv. 10-16)**

- A) Miriam is struck suddenly with leprosy (whiteness of skin – terrible, fatal disease)
  - 1) Aaron deeply shocked and humbled – Miriam is as “good as dead” (wages of sin)
  - 2) Aaron confesses to Moses (“my lord”) that their actions were sinful and foolish
- B) Moses intercedes for the ones who had harshly criticized him – loving and selfless
- C) God has Miriam shut out of the camp seven days – shamed and humbled

## Conclusion

Miriam and Aaron died in the wilderness (Num. 20:1, 28). Moses later uses the example of Miriam to warn Israel to be faithful and submissive to God’s authority (Deut. 24:8-9).

- Loving family members need to:
- 1) ***Unite in humility, not divide in jealous bickering***
  - 2) ***Avoid domineering attitudes, and strive for meekness, gentleness, moderation***
  - 3) ***Respect God’s authority and all positions of authority***
  - 4) ***Fear the judgment and wrath of God.***

Let us strive to have families that love God and work together to serve Him and the needs of one another. May our spiritual family (church) also be a place of peace and edification. Have you entered the family of God? Believe and be baptized today!