

Desert Lessons Part 3: Miriam's Madness Numbers 12

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, April 7th

1 Cor 10:10,11 *"Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition."*

All of God's children will pass through desert seasons! Mt 7:15 *"Strait is the gate and narrow (Thli'bō: troubled, afflicted) is the way that leads to life"*

Satan meets us during these "troubled times" seeking to sidetrack us from God's plan. This is the essence of sin! (harmartano): **"To miss the mark and so not share in the prize."**

Our disappointments can affect our disposition, producing a critical, complaining spirit.

This affects us and infects those around us. (Numbers 11:1-7; 10-15; Heb. 12:15)

God uses desert experiences to determine as well as to develop our faith. James 1:2-4

Last week we discussed how Satan uses the difficult disappointments of life to motivate us to bitterness & complaining.

His purpose is to push us away from God's providence and toward his (Satan's) purposes. Today we'll examine how Satan uses internal, unresolved issues (pride, envy, conflict, etc) to accomplish the same goals.

Miriam's Madness Numbers 12

The last time we heard from Miriam, she was supporting Moses' leadership: (Ex. 15:20-21)

This time she's subverting it! Vs 1

1. *"Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses"* Numbers 12:1

A. Their alleged (surface) problem/concern was criticism over past decisions. *"because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married."*

1) They obviously disagreed with how he handled this situation.

a) Ex. 2:21 (18:2) tells us he married Zipporah, who was clearly a Midianite. Gal. 4:25

b) Historical Background. Stephen revealed: *"Moses was Mighty in words and deeds"* Acts 7:2

(1) Josephus records* that prince Moses defeated the Ethiopian kingdom of Saba.

As was customary, he was given the Ethiopian princess "Tharbis" as his wife.

(2) When Moses fled Egypt in fear, He left Tharbis behind, later marrying Zipporah.

(3) Tharbis apparently rejoined him (40 years later) at the Exodus.

This was complicated and at least 40 years old!

➤ What could Moses have done about it now?

➤ God didn't appear to have a problem with it, *But Miriam (and Aaron) did!*

B. The Real (root) issue: Envy born of Pride! Vs 2 *"Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?"*

Remember Jesus at Nazareth? Mt. 13:57 *"they were offended in him. But Jesus said... A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house."* (also Luke 4:16-30)

1) The stated (surface) issue is seldom the real issue!

Pr 13:10 *"Only by pride (zādôn: arrogance, presumption) cometh contention"* (maṣṣâ': strife)

From nāṣâ': to expel, lay waste or leave desolate.

2) Pride always leads to waste and desolation!

a) That's Satan's Nature! (Jn. 10:10; Rev. 9:11) Satan (satanas') means "the accuser!"

In Rev. 12:10 he's called *"the accuser of the brethren"*

3) They were projecting their sin on to Moses! (Romans 2:1; Mt. 7:1-5)

2. *“And the LORD heard it.”* Numbers 12:2b

He always does! Psalm 139:4 *“there is not a word in my tongue, (or heart Heb. 4:12) but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.”*

Jer. 17:9,10 *“The heart is deceitful...who can know it? I the Lord search the hearts...”*

A. God’s Intervention: 3-8

1) Moses doesn’t defend himself. Vs 3 *“Now ...Moses was very meek, (ânâv: Humble) above all the men which were upon the ...earth.”* Remember Numbers 11:25-29!?!
James 3:13-16 reminds us that God’s Wisdom is always meek, but worldly wisdom is

“earthly sensual devilish” and produces strife and confusion! (See 1 Cor. 14:33)

a) It’s natural for our “flesh” to defend itself!

b) It takes *“faith”* to trust God to do so. Ro. 12:19 (*Jesus modeled this. 1 Peter 2:23*)

B. God’s Explanation. Numbers 12:4-9

1) They wanted to hear from God so God spoke up.

C. God’s Confrontation and Correction Vs 10-14 *“Miriam became leprous...”*

1) Aaron repented. 11,12 *“Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech, lay not the sin upon us wherein we have done foolishly and wherein we have sinned.”*

2) Moses Prayed. Vs 13 *“Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.”*

3) God explained. 14 *“the LORD said unto Moses, ...let her be shut from the camp seven days...”*

4) Israel watched and waited. Vs 15 *“people journeyed not til Miriam was brought in again.”*

➤ Questions to consider:

1. Why was Miriam (not Aaron) punished? 1 Kgs 21:25 *“whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.”*
2. Why such a public judgment (leprosy)? Nu 32:23 *“be sure your sin will find you out.”*
3. Why wait 7 days before healing her? Rev 2:21 *“I gave her space to repent...”* (Aaron did!)
4. Why require Israel to wait for/with her? 1 Tim 5:20 *“rebuke before all that others may fear”*

➤ Principles to Ponder: 1 Cor 10:11 *“all these things...are Written for our admonition”*

1. God uses flawed people! 2 Cor 4:7
2. Leaders are natural targets. Mt 26:31 (*Any decision can produce disagreements!*)
3. The stated (surface) problem is seldom the real problem. 1 Cor 4:1-3,5
4. Pride *poisons* our perspectives! Mt 7:1-5 (*That’s why we need God’s perspective!*)
Jms 1:5 *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God”* from saphes meaning to make *clear!*

Application: James 4:5-8 *“The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy...”*

But He giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

- 1) *Submit yourselves therefore to God.*
- 2) *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
- 3) *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”*