

Aaron and Miriam Rebel**Introduction**

TEXT: Numbers 12

STORY ELEMENTS:

- **Setting:** approx. 1446 B.C., in the Wilderness of Paran.
- **Main Characters:** God, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam
- **Plot:** Dissatisfaction continues to spread through Israel – even to Moses’ siblings, Aaron and Miriam, who criticize Moses for his marriage to a Cushite and dismiss his divine commission.
- **Key word(s):** “and the LORD _____” (vs. 2)
- **Climax:** “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.” (vs. 10)

Jealous Gossipers

1. Miriam and Aaron began to criticize and gossip about Moses privately. The reason for this disparagement was that Moses married an Ethiopian woman. A few explanations help put the story in perspective:
 - a. The King James uses the word “Ethiopian” to describe Moses’ wife’s ethnicity. The Hebrew word is actually “Cushite” – or an _____.
 - b. This wife could have been Zipporah, the Midianite, because Midian was a part of Cush. Both lands are mentioned together in Hab. 3:7.

Hab 3:7 I saw the tents of _____ in affliction: and the curtains of the land of _____ did tremble.

- c. This wife of Moses could have been a new wife – perhaps _____ had died and Moses married a new wife.
2. The other topic of the criticism was the charge that Moses was not the only person through whom God has spoken. (vs. 2)
 - a. Indeed, Aaron was a _____ for God. (Exo. 4:14)
 - b. Miriam, also, was called a _____. (Exo. 15:20)
 3. With a little background, we can figure out the real reason for the sharp tongues on Miriam and Aaron:
 - a. Previously, in chapter 11, Moses chose the seventy elders to help him lead the nation _____.
 - b. Miriam and Aaron, who were passed over, probably felt jilted and acted out of _____.
 - c. Since Miriam was mentioned first and was the one who received the judgment, it’s probable that she was the instigator. Perhaps there already was some personal tension between the _____.
 - d. It’s also possible (assuming this wife is indeed Zipporah) that they were bristling at the seventy elders because it was Zipporah’s father’s idea initially to have such an arrangement for _____.

Judgment of God

4. The LORD heard their gossip (vs. 2); Moses probably ignored it (hence the mentioning of his _____ in vs. 3).
5. When the LORD suddenly summons the three siblings before the Tabernacle, He reminds Aaron and Miriam that Moses’ office was of a different nature than other prophets – Moses received revelation _____. (vss. 6-8)
6. As the instigator, Miriam is stricken with _____ – a judgment God compared to a father shaming his wayward daughter. (vs. 14)
7. Moses intercedes on behalf of Miriam, and the judgment is lifted after a seven-day _____.

Application

- At the heart of the matter was a discontent with how God was working in the lives of His people. Miriam and Aaron’s gossip was fueled by something more insidious than mere sibling rivalry – it was driven by a rebellious discontentment with God’s _____.