

DO NOT CHALLENGE GOD'S ANOINTED!

(Scripture. Numbers 12:1-4)

Numbers 12:1-4. 1Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman); 2and they said, Is it a fact that the LORD has spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard this. 3(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any person who was on the face of the earth.) 4And the LORD suddenly said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, You three go out to the tent of meeting."

Introduction: Churches may be running very smooth, but suddenly somebody may bring an issue against the leader and challenge the leader(s), and that can divide the body. Such people must be extremely careful, for the Word of God says in *1 Cor.3:16,17 that 16Do you not know that you are a [f]temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17If anyone destroys the [g]temple of God, God will destroy [h]that person; for the [i]temple of God is holy, [j]and that is what you are.* We must always think twice, thrice, pray a lot before challenging God's anointed. Do not allow the devil to tempt you to challenge the anointed. This story is a serious warning for all of us.

Numbers 12:1,2. 1Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman); 2and they said, Is it a fact that the LORD has spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard this.

There are few reasons, scholars think that Miriam instigated this challenge unnecessarily. Her name is shown first there, and she was the only one who was punished in this story. But that does not mean that Aaron was guiltless. He must have been passive aggressive behind this story. He must have stood behind her and agreed with her charge against Moses 'wife.

Who is this Cushite woman? Was it the same Zipporah or someone else? The Hebrew word Cushite could mean not only Ethiopian, but also other parts of Arabia like Nineveh. What happened to Zipporah? Some scholars think that she must have died, but that may be unlikely because we heard her name only about 14 months back with her son being circumcised. She did not like that experience at all. Probably, she left Moses, and returned to her father after few months? In that case, is this Cush woman his second wife, probably chosen from the rabble, or mixed crowd? Not clear.

There were two charges against Moses. One is about marrying the Cushite woman, but the second charge is about God speaking not only to Moses, but to them also!

The first one was more of a racial charge. God had forbidden them from marrying in the land of Canaan. But there was no prohibition in other places. Joseph married an Egyptian woman. Males could marry foreigners but not females. Miriam was just trying to accuse Moses that he was not that obedient as he claimed to be.

The second charge was more serious! “Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?” Both Aaron and Miriam had great titles also. Aaron was the high priest, which is the highest honor, and Miriam was called prophetess in Exodus 15:20. So they were trying to equate themselves with Moses.

Numbers 12:3,4. 3(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any person who was on the face of the earth.) 4And the LORD suddenly said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, You three go out to the tent of meeting.” So, the three of them went out.

The Word of God says that Moses was the most humble person on the face of the earth. He was indeed carrying himself as a servant, not as a political leader, or as a prophet. He was not trying to elevate himself with “I and me”. He was nothing but a conduit between God and the Israelites. His self was totally crucified. He was focused on pleasing God, and God alone. He did not entangle himself with the worldly affairs, that he may please God always. He always esteemed others better than himself. He had so much authority and power of God, yet he never abused it to elevate himself.

Lord heard Miriam’s attack on Moses, and He came down to defend Moses! He told them to report to His office! (tabernacle courtyard), just like the misbehaving students are called to the principal’s office!

Numbers 12:5,6. 5Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent; and He called Aaron and Miriam. When they had both come forward, 6He said, Now hear 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.

God came down in a pillar of cloud. They would not have seen God, but they could see the pillar of cloud descending and standing in front of the tabernacle. He called out Aaron and Miriam, and they stepped forward. Then the Lord spoke: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord will make myself to him in a vision or dream! God’s word for them came to them, if at all it came, it must have come only in dreams or vision. He was not speaking to them face to face. But with Moses, it was very different!

Num. 12:7,8. 7 It is not this way for My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My household; 8With him I speak mouth to mouth, That is, openly, and not [a]using [b]mysterious language, And he beholds the form of the LORD. So why were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?”

God said that His interaction with Moses was not through dreams and visions. God told them that Moses was the most faithful of all God's household. That is what we should be striving for. When we meet Jesus, our Lord, face to face, that is what we should hear from Him, "well done my faithful servant." Are we walking to get the praises of our loved ones and friends or from the Lord? Focus on doing the right things that brings praises from God. Jesus says that if we are faithful in little things, we will be faithful in much also. How faithful are you in God's ministry?

God was not speaking indirectly or mysteriously with Moses through dreams and visions, but directly face to face! (Mouth to mouth, not a monologue prayer, but back and forth conversations, mostly God speaking and Moses listening and obeying. But we tend to turn our dialogue with God as a monologue toward God! Learn to sit at the feet of the Holy Spirit and listen to Him and obey. Ask Him questions if you do not understand and express your concerns and needs. That is real prayer. Unfortunately, we are being taught to pray a monologue prayer toward God always, which is nothing but chanting to God, and not a conversation with God. Connect with the Holy Spirit properly and have a conversation with Him every moment of your life. That is what real prayer is.

2 Cor. 3:18 says," 17Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

We must also behold the glory of the Lord and must change from glory to glory.

Moses not only spoke to God face to face, he was beholding His form or some form of glory also! In other words, Moses was walking very close to the Lord! Sometimes, we start Judging the servants of God who are walking very close to the Lord! Stop judging! We should be afraid of speaking against those who walk very closely with God.

Numbers 12:9,10. 9And the anger of the LORD burned against them, and He departed. 10But when the cloud had withdrawn from above the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she was leprous.

God was extremely angry. Why? Because Miriam and Aaron accused Moses falsely. Second, they coveted Moses' position, and they tried to equate themselves with him!

Let God elevate you. We should not try to show off our wisdom, prophetic gift, and the gift of the gab to elevate ourselves? Corinthian church did just that. Paul was not eloquent in speaking. So, some of them put Apollos before Paul. It is ridiculous to push out Paul, the Father of the Corinthian church through whom the church was planted. If anyone feels that superior, then they should go out and plant another church somewhere else. God will be extremely angry over such power struggle. Whom God has installed as the anointed leader, let us honor that person. Let us not butt against him for no apparent reason. We are not bulls here, but sheep. Do not walk around with horns to butt and push people around.

God was burning with anger, and He left that place in anger. But when the cloud had withdrawn, lo, and behold, Miriam turned white, and she was leprous! Yes, God smote Miriam pride through leprosy. In a twinkling of an eye, she turned from a popular prophetess to no good leper which everyone detests.

Do not provoke God unnecessarily. He will smack us suddenly. When I was 10 years old, I really misbehaved while we were eating lunch together as a family. Perhaps, I was fighting for some portion of the delicious meal. I got up from the dining table and came back to hallway and was lying down on a bed on my tummy. My father did not say a word at the dinner table. He finished his lunch, washed his hands, and as usual he was on his way to his bed for his afternoon siesta nap! Without saying a word, he bent down near my bed, smacked me hard on my butt just once, and went off. That hit stung me so hard, I cried even more. Finally, my mom came and consoled me. Never provoke God! The smite could be harder. But remember, God chastens whom He loves! The interesting part about this story is that Aaron was not punished by God. Why? Aaron was just a passive player in this story. We are judged by what we speak. Also, Aaron was in a very high position. Aaron had a sensitive heart, and he was a quick learner, as we can see from the next verse.

Numbers 12:11,12 11Then Aaron said to Moses, Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not [c]hold us responsible for this sin by which we have turned out to be foolish, and by which we have sinned. 12Oh, do not let her be like a dead person, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother s womb!"

Aaron realized his mistake, and repented immediately, and confessed! He realized that it was a foolish mistake. Then he pleaded for Miriam. Let her not be like a dead person, more like a maimed aborted. baby. Moses responded magnanimously.

Numbers 12:13,14 13So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, God, heal her, please!" 14But the LORD said to Moses, If her father had only spit in her face, would she not be put to shame for seven days? Have her shut outside the camp for seven days, and afterward she may be received again."

Moses was sympathetic to his brother's plea and cried unto the Lord. But the Lord said to him, "have her shut outside the camp for seven days, and afterwards she may be

received again!”. The Lord compared this incident to father spitting on her face. Let us not behave in such a way that our Heavenly Father should spit on our face. Let us not provoke Him to anger. He will smite us hard. I have seen with my own eyes to those people who had stood against God’s anointed and challenged them. It can be devastating. Do not challenge God’s servants unnecessarily. You will be the one who will suffer drastically.

Numbers 12:15,16. 15So Miriam was shut outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again. 16 Afterward, however, the people moved on from Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

What a shameful punishment for Miriam! It was totally unnecessary. Now the whole camp did not move until she was received again.

Conclusion: This story can be simply summarized in one line:

Do not butt against God’s anointed servants unnecessarily. God will plead for them.

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