**A FAMILY DISPUTE**

Sunday School Lesson 14

*Wandering in the Wilderness*

Numbers 12

4/13/2025

**Lesson Review:** For the past two weeks, we looked at Numbers 11 and Moses’ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Moses was overwhelmed by the weight of dealing with a discontent people. Leadership had begun to feel more like a punishment than a privilege. Thankfully, he was able to go to the Lord and vocalize his frustrations and desire to quit. While Moses was foolish for wanting to die, he was wise to bring his problems directly to God. Moses was then met with an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the Lord, not His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The Lord very graciously provided Moses with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to help him deal with the difficult people. The Lord gave His Holy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the elders as a way to give Moses the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that was needed in the situation. It was clear that Moses needed to be reminded of God’s power and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. For the first time in the wilderness, he questioned the power and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God. As the leader, Moses was the needed voice of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the people. He assured them that God had heard their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. After God enabled the elders, Moses’ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was put to the test. The Lord had enabled the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that Moses had previously chosen. Their leadership had the potential to cause \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. For today’s lesson, we will be looking at a little family dispute that arose after Moses’ breaking point:

1. **AARON & MIRIAM LOST RESPECT FOR MOSES AFTER HIS VULNERABILITY WAS VISIBLE.**
2. **Notice that Aaron and Miriam no longer saw anything unique or special about Moses’ leadership.** *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. 3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) 11:25 And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.* After the Lord enabled the elders, they were given the ability to prophesy. This means that they were proclaiming forth the Word of the Lord. This is what Moses had done. He was the voice of the Lord to the people. What made him qualified to lead Israel out of Egypt? His qualification had nothing to do with being the prince of Egypt. He was qualified because the Lord appeared to him and spoke to him through the burning bush. Now that the Lord had spoken through these elders, Aaron and Miriam did not see anything special about their leader. He was a meek man. He was not a natural leader from the world’s view.
3. **Notice that Aaron and Miriam viewed themselves as equals with Moses, so there was no reason to continue following him.** *Numbers 12:2b hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it. Exodus 4:15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.15:20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.* Aaron and Miriam had experienced prophesying as well. We know that Aaron was used as the mouth piece for Moses in the past. This means that he was given the task of proclaiming God’s message. He was also given a job as the priest. Exodus 15 calls Miriam a prophetess; thus, we know that she was given some ability to proclaim revelation from the Lord. The breaking point of Moses caused these two individuals to see themselves on the same level with Moses.
4. **AARON & MIRIAM USED AN OLD ISSUE TO MAKE A PERSONAL ATTACK AGAINST MOSES.**
5. **Notice that Aaron and Miriam took issue with Moses’ marriage – something that had already taken place sometime previously.** *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.* In chapter 12, we see the randomness of their complaint. Nothing had been spoken previously about this marriage, but they decided now to take issue with it. Some think this refers to a second marriage of Moses, but it is more likely that this is referring to his wife that he had married before delivering the people from Egypt. Either way, these two leaders used something that was an old, random issue to form a personal attack against Moses. We don’t know if this was an issue that had been on their minds for a while or something that got their attention because of their discontentment.
6. **Notice that Aaron and Miriam needed to find something to speak against Moses in order to justify their rebellion against him.** *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.*The complaint about Moses’ marriage was simply a tool they used to open the door for their true concern—his authority. Their real issue was not about who Moses had married, but about the fact that God was continuing to use Moses in a way that He wasn’t using them. Miriam and Aaron masked their pride behind a personal attack, making it seem as though they were standing for something righteous, when in truth, they were grasping for influence. This tactic is still used today. People will raise side issues or stir up controversy, not because they care about the issue itself, but because they want to discredit someone who is being used of God. When we are not content with how God is working, we can easily find ourselves tearing others down in an effort to lift ourselves up and feel better about ourselves.
7. **AARON & MIRIAM WERE CALLED TOGETHER BY GOD TO MEET WITH HIM AND MOSES.**
8. **Notice that God made sure that this family issue was confronted and properly resolved.** *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. 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.* The Lord dealt with Aaron and Miriam quickly. He came down and demanded a meeting between the four of them. Aaron and Miriam had made themselves two witnesses against Moses, and that required for the Lord to bring the issue to trial. He stood as the witness for Moses. Notice that Moses did not confront Aaron and Miriam over their problem with him. The Lord took care of it for him. It’s unclear whether the two of them ever spoke directly against Moses about their problem, but the Lord shows us here that issues among brethren must be dealt with.
9. **Notice that God made it clear which party was of the wrong mindset.** *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. 7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. 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?* If there were any questions about the marriage or the authority of Moses, those were quickly put aside. The Lord made it clear that Aaron and Miriam were wrong in their mindset. God had given Moses a special relationship with Him, and nothing He had done for the elders had changed that. When there is an issue, it is important for clear wrongdoing to be acknowledged and addressed. Too often, issues are resolved with superficial platitudes instead of real humility.
10. **Notice that God dealt with the one who was responsible for leading the rebellion.** *Numbers 12:9 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed. 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.* It is interesting that only Miriam was punished for this act of rebellion. This seems to be a clear indicator that she was leading the charge against Moses. God’s anger was carried out against her, and He caused leprosy to come upon her. The Lord could have easily brought this punishment on both of them, but He chose to only bring it on her. There are really only two explanations. First, she was leading the charge. Second, Aaron was a priest, and the Lord showed mercy on him because of his position. Either way, the Lord would not stand by and allow for Moses to be attacked, even by his own family.
11. **AARON & MIRIAM FOUND SWIFT FORGIVENESS FROM MOSES, SHOWING HIS UNIQUENESS.**
12. **Notice that Moses had no desire to see Miriam or Aaron suffer, and he quickly called out to the Lord to heal Miriam.** *Numbers 12:13 And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. 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.* When Miriam was given leprosy, Aaron immediately cried out to Moses for forgiveness and relief from the punishment. Moses did not want to see his brother and sister suffer. He did not have a bitter heart against them. This was one of Moses’ great qualities, and it made him unique. The Lord answered the call for healing, but He did require for Miriam to go seven days before returning within the camp.