

Numbers 12, Part 2 - Thursday, August 12th, 2010

- Last week we began Numbers 12 and got to verse 8, because there's so much packed into this most practical and prophetic chapter.
- The reason I say this is that it deals with practical principles of leadership within the church, and a future prophetic picture of the church.
- We'll deal mainly with the practical application, then, we'll see how it's ever so beautifully woven into the fabric of prophetic information.

9 So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed.10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.

- Here we're told that the Lord's anger was against them, and then He departed from them which is when the cloud departed as well.
- It's interesting because Miriam then becomes leprous, as white as snow, which indicates that she was instantly in an advanced stage.
- It's also interesting to note that it was so sudden even Miriam herself may not have known it until Aaron turns toward her and sees it.

"This was the surest token of His anger. His presence is heaven, His absence - misery to His children. ...If Aaron had been made a leper he could not have executed his office; but Miriam's disease was a punishment to both, and possibly she had also been the chief offender."

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- There's something else here that we should take a quick look at as it relates to this punishment before we move on to verse eleven.
- Here's what I'm thinking; at first glance it may seem disproportionately harsh to smite Miriam with leprosy for coveting Moses' position.
- However, when you see this as it really is, you can understand that from God's vantage point, He's actually being very gracious to her.
- To falsely accuse Moses is to arrogantly question God. In effect, Miriam was saying that she should have been exalted to that position.
- This is rooted in the garden with the serpent and it's Satanic in the sense that Lucifer in his pride wanted to be exalted as the most high.

11 So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned.

- Notice how Aaron now responds to his brother Moses. He basically and very respectfully, calls him his lord, or better said, his master.
- Aaron is acknowledging that Moses was right and that he was foolish to join their sister Miriam in gossiping and falsely accusing him.

12 Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!"

- Now Aaron goes from confessing his sin to begging for forgiveness for Miriam that she would be spared and not brought to her death.
- What's interesting about Aaron's pleading and begging is that he is keenly aware of how leprosy will eat away until the person dies.
- Also, as one has well noted, we see here a character flaw in how Aaron is seemingly so easily persuaded to go along with the crowd.
- We saw it back in Exodus with a golden calf, and we see it here in Numbers with a strong sister. It seems he falls prey to peer pressure.

13 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"

- This is utterly amazing. It's the first time in this chapter that Moses actually speaks, and when he does, it's to pray for his sister Miriam.
- Not only does he pray to the Lord, he cries out to the Lord and begs God to heal her. What a remarkable picture of the Savior's prayer.

"Miriam wounded Moses with her tongue, and now Moses uses his tongue to cry, "heal her now, O God." This is the true way to heap coals of fire on the heads of those who injure us. We must pray for those who despitefully use us."

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14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again."

- The Lord tells Moses that in effect, Miriam has done something even more shameful than deserving to have her father spit in her face.
- This is where we see the grace of God and not the harshness of God, because her punishment was to be isolated for seven days.
- This is actually how it is to this day in the Middle East. The ultimate shame for disrespecting your father is to have him spit in your face.

"In cases of extreme provocation a Middle-Eastern father would spit in his child's face, and then the child was banished from the father's presence for seven days: how much more then should Miriam be shut out of the camp for a while when she had so grossly offended, and against the Lord, and had received so terrible a mark of the divine displeasure."

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15 So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again.16 And afterward the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.

- Notice that the people don't move on until Miriam is brought back after being shut out of the camp for a period of seven leprous days.
- It is only when she completes the seven day period and is saved and restored that they are able to go on to their promised destination.
- Do you see what I see? There's a prophetic picture painted on the canvas of the text related to Israel, the Tribulation and the church.

Miriam and Aaron are the brother and sister of Moses	Israel are the brethren of Jesus
Miriam and Aaron reject Moses	Israel rejected Jesus
Miriam and Aaron don't accept Moses as the "only" one	Israel did not accept Jesus as being "only" begotten Son
Miriam is shut out for a period of seven days of leprosy	Israel will be shut in for a period of seven years of tribulation
Miriam is restored at the end of the seven days	Israel will be saved at the end of the seven years
The children of Israel could now move to the Promised-Land	Israel will be restored with the Gentile bride and to the promise of heaven