

MIRIAM'S AND AARON'S SIN

BIBLE TEXT : Numbers 12:1-16

LESSON 100 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they 'watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Hebrews 13:17).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Numbers 12:1-16 (KJV)

¹ And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

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.)

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.

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?

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,

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Rebellion of Miriam and Aaron and God's Defense of Moses

1. Miriam and Aaron, motivated by jealous envy, spoke against Moses, exhibiting their true spirit of self -exaltation and lust for worldly power, Numbers 12:1, 2;
Proverbs 25:6-7 (KJV)
⁶ Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great *men*:
⁷ For better *it is* that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.
Isaiah 14:12 (KJV)
¹² How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!
Isaiah 14:15 (KJV)
¹⁵ Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.
Obadiah 1:4 (KJV)
⁴ Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.
Matthew 23:12 (KJV)
¹² And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.
2. The Lord heard their words of pride and rebellion, Numbers 12:2;
1 Chronicles 28:9 (KJV)
⁹ And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.
Psalms 44:21 (KJV)
²¹ Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.
Jeremiah 17:9-10 (KJV)
⁹ The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?
¹⁰ I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.
3. The character of Moses was of a quality that would itself automatically deny every one of the charges made against him, Numbers 12: 3;
Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV)
²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
1 Peter 3:4 (KJV)
⁴ But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.
Matthew 5:5 (KJV)
⁵ Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
Psalms 37:10-11 (KJV)
¹⁰ For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*.
¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
4. God vindicated His servant, Moses, in the presence of the accusers and told them of the close relationship He had

Miriam *became* leprous, *white* as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, *she was* leprous.

¹¹ And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.

¹² Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

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*.

¹⁵ And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in *again*.

¹⁶ And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.

with Moses, more than with any other living person, Numbers 12:4-9;

Psalm 76:8-9 (KJV)

⁸ Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,

⁹ When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

Deuteronomy 34:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

Deuteronomy 34:12 (KJV)

¹² And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.

II The Punishment of the Sin

1. God's anger was kindled against the rebels, Numbers 12:9;

Amos 9:2-4 (KJV)

² Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down:

³ And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them:

⁴ And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.

2. A severe punishment was meted out: leprosy upon Miriam, and the consequent remorseful knowledge in Aaron's heart that their sin had caused this disgraceful condition, Numbers 12:10;

Leviticus 13:38 (KJV)

³⁸ If a man also or a woman have in the skin of their flesh bright spots, *even* white bright spots;

Leviticus 13:46 (KJV)

⁴⁶ All the days wherein the plague *shall be* in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp *shall* his habitation *be*.

Psalm 75:6-7 (KJV)

⁶ For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

⁷ But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

3. Aaron interceded for his sister's healing and their forgiveness, Numbers 12:11, 12

4. Moses prayed an effectual prayer for Miriam's healing, Numbers 12:13;

Ezekiel 33:14-16 (KJV)

¹⁴ Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

¹⁵ *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

¹⁶ None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

James 5:14-16 (KJV)

¹⁴ Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

¹⁵ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

¹⁶ Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

5. Even though the offenders were healed and restored to a measure of God's favor, there remained a certain penalty, or self-inflicted consequence of their misdeed, upon them, not only because of the gravity of their sin but also for the example they would be to others, Numbers 12:14;

Leviticus 14:1-57 (KJV)

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

² This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest:

³ And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, *if* the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper;

⁴ Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive *and* clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop:

⁵ And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water:

⁶ As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird *that was* killed over the running water:

⁷ And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

⁸ And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days.

⁹ But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.

¹⁰ And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil.

¹¹ And the priest that maketh *him* clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

¹² And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them *for* a wave offering before the LORD:

¹³ And he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the holy place: for as the sin offering *is* the priest's, *so is* the trespass offering: it is most holy:

¹⁴ And the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot:

¹⁵ And the priest shall take *some* of the log of oil, and pour *it* into the palm of his own left hand:

¹⁶ And the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD:

¹⁷ And of the rest of the oil that *is* in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering:

¹⁸ And the remnant of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD.

¹⁹ And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering:

²⁰ And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

²¹ And if he *be* poor, and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb *for* a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering, and a log of oil;

²² And two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering.

²³ And he shall bring them on the eighth day for his cleansing unto the priest, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD.

²⁴ And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them *for* a wave offering before the LORD:

²⁵ And he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, and the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot:

²⁶ And the priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand:

²⁷ And the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger *some* of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before the LORD:

²⁸ And the priest shall put of the oil that *is* in his hand upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering:

²⁹ And the rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make an atonement for him before the LORD.

³⁰ And he shall offer the one of the turtledoves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can get;

³¹ *Even* such as he is able to get, the one *for* a sin offering, and the other *for* a burnt offering, with the meat offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed before the LORD.

³² This *is* the law *of him* in whom *is* the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get *that which pertaineth* to his cleansing.

³³ And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

³⁴ When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession;

³⁵ And he that owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, It seemeth to me *there is* as it were a plague in the house:

³⁶ Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go *into it* to see the plague, that all that *is* in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house:

³⁷ And he shall look on the plague, and, behold, *if* the plague *be* in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight *are* lower than the wall;

³⁸ Then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days:

³⁹ And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look: and, behold, *if* the plague be spread in the walls of the house;

⁴⁰ Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague *is*, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city:

⁴¹ And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about, and they shall pour out the dust that they scrape off without the city into an unclean place:

⁴² And they shall take other stones, and put *them* in the place of those stones; and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaister the house.

⁴³ And if the plague come again, and break out in the house, after that he hath taken away the stones, and after he hath scraped the house, and after it is plaistered;

⁴⁴ Then the priest shall come and look, and, behold, *if* the plague be spread in the house, it *is* a fretting leprosy in the house: it *is* unclean.

⁴⁵ And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry *them* forth out of the city into an unclean place.

⁴⁶ Moreover he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up shall be unclean until the even.

⁴⁷ And he that lieth in the house shall wash his clothes; and he that eateth in the house shall wash his clothes.

⁴⁸ And if the priest shall come in, and look *upon it*, and, behold, the plague hath not spread in the house, after the house was plaistered: then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed.

⁴⁹ And he shall take to cleanse the house two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop:

⁵⁰ And he shall kill the one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water:

⁵¹ And he shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times:

⁵² And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet:

⁵³ But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean.

⁵⁴This is the law for all manner of plague of leprosy, and scall,
⁵⁵And for the leprosy of a garment, and of a house,
⁵⁶And for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot:
⁵⁷To teach when *it is* unclean, and when *it is* clean: this is the law of leprosy.

6. The people of God were hindered in their march to the Promised Land by the sin of these who rebelled against God's leader, Numbers 12:15, 16;

Joshua 7:10-12 (KJV)

¹⁰And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

¹¹Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put *it* even among their own stuff.

¹²Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Isaiah 59:12 (KJV)

¹²For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions *are* with us; and *as for* our iniquities, we know them;

NOTES:

A Prophet Without Honor

The disgraceful rebellion of the Children of Israel had just been and the encampment had moved when the incidents recorded in the text of our present lesson took place. Moses had often heard the Israelites, as a group, murmur against him and Aaron and against the Lord, because of the difficulties encountered. But now he experienced a different and far more cutting form of criticism, a criticism more stinging because of the fact that its authors were those near and dear to him.

The former rebellions and murmurings began in the edges of the camp, among the mixed multitude and those who were not living close to God. These people, possibly, did not see God's workings in the unmistakably plain manner that many in Israel witnessed, because they did not especially frequent the inner circle where God's power dwelt. It is easy to see that such could find it in their hearts to complain of their lot and then inject the virus of their dissatisfaction into others. It is easy to see how that scourge would travel throughout the camp and cause a rebellion. But this incident did not begin in the outskirts of the camp, nor owe its inception to the mixed multitude. It began in the nearest persons, officially, to Moses. It began with those who supposedly were united with their faithful leader, heart and soul, and who shared with him the common interest of the welfare of the Israelites.

Jesus endeavored to tell those among whom He was reared, those of His own station in life prior to the inauguration of His official ministry, the way of eternal life, but almost every effort He put forth was repulsed. He left behind Him at Nazareth the stinging rebuke that "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house" (Matthew 13:57).

However, the conditions facing Moses were not alone the refusal of those of his own house to see and recognize his prophetic call and authoritative commission. Miriam and Aaron admitted that Moses had all these; but, in that insidiously working and eventually damning sin of pride which we classify

as self-exaltation, they insisted that they, too, were called and commissioned by God.

"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:16). The jealous envy that prompts men to seek after position and place in the world of men, in temporal affairs, or even in the work of the church, originates in the pride that is in their hearts and its desire to exalt their own selves. Those people who are in any way whatsoever motivated by the desire for their own self-exaltation stand condemned by the words of Jesus; for He said, "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

The Watchful Eye and Attentive Ear

But the actions and intents of this rebellious pair did not go unnoticed. A scriptural phrase that might possibly escape the particular notice of a casual reader tells us that God heard their words. And when God hears an accusation made against His duly anointed and commissioned servants He takes notice of it and brings judgment upon the offender, that the wrongdoer might repent of his sin and that the name of God might not be dishonored or His authority challenged.

"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chronicles 16:9); and the strength thus shown can only confuse and confound the one who would dare to oppose the person whose heart is perfect toward God. There is no escape from God! He knows every heart and sees its deep-dwelling purpose. He hears all that is said and observes all that is done.

How vain is man's attempt to hide from the all-seeing eye of God! The eye that penetrated the Edenic canopy, and saw sin lurking in the hearts of Adam and Eve there, can still penetrate every device that man erects to conceal his true, sinful condition. "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee: . . . great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 32:17, 19).

The Accusation and Its Consequences

Sin always excuses itself, putting out in front of its black character a more welcome front or plausible excuse. In this case the real sin was that of pride, self-exaltation, rebellion, and insubordination. But the accusation that was first brought was apparently none of these, but concerned the wife of Moses. The flimsy charge was chosen as the occasion for the rebellion, but the envy and pride rankling in the hearts of those who rebelled was really the cause of the insubordination. They wanted the power and worldly prestige they imagined would go with the position of joint leadership of so great a nation as Israel.

Nothing produces hotter disputes among men than

jealousy of power or authority. Natural affection, honor, pleasure, profit, duty, and safety, to say nothing of the assurance of God's smile and approval given those who fear Him, are all trampled under foot when men strive for the grandeur of power and the authority to rule. This incident urges us to examine closely our own souls; for if those of such qualifications, privileges, and calling, as Miriam's and Aaron's, were capable of such sin, we cannot allow ourselves to feel that we are free from that danger.

It is thought that because Miriam's name is mentioned first and because she alone was stricken with the leprosy that she was the instigator of the rebellion and the prime mover in the revolt. Some say that Aaron was characteristically pliant and unstable and was led by his misjudging sister into the act that tarnished his name as well as hers. We do know that the Lord was angry with both, so we know both were guilty before Him. Miriam was stricken with a loathsome, ghastly malady, for which they knew no cure and which banned its victim from all association with loved ones and friends. But Aaron did not totally escape punishment.

The filial bonds were strong in the family of Amram and Jochebed. The young daughter, Miriam, had stood through the burning heat of the Egyptian day to watch an ark of bulrushes that held her tiny brother, Moses, who was supposed to have been killed but who had been spared by the parents. She met the daughter of Pharaoh when the ark was found, and tactfully suggested that a nurse be selected from the Israelitish women to care for the child until it reached maturity. She had later led the women of the Israelites in the singing of the choral response to the song of Moses at the crossing of the Red Sea. She had stood with her brother, many times, in difficulties and emergencies when it seemed that the cause of God was all but lost.

Aaron, too, had exhibited some remarkable traits of character in spite of the weakness that seemed to be inherent within him. He had lived close enough to God to be able to hear the whispered instructions that sent him on a journey of scores of miles from the security of Egypt, through the uncertainty of the wilderness, to an unparalleled meeting with Moses, whom he had not seen nor heard from for 40 years, so far as we are told. He was trusted by God with the important responsibility of voicing the divine edicts in the court of a despotic earthly ruler. He had physical and spiritual qualifications that God knew He could appropriate and use as He chose. And, finally, Aaron was a type of the Mediator who was to take the case of every repentant sinner before the Great Tribunal and plead for his pardon, having purchased that pardon with His own innocent Blood.

It can go without saying that to punish Aaron it was not necessary for God to strike him with a disease that would render him useless for the official position to which he had been called. The sight of a devoted sister covered with that flesh-consuming infection, and the realization that, officially, he must be the one to say the words that would bar her from the camp of Israel forever, was a severe punishment in itself. Many times the sight of a loved one suffering agony and pain is more difficult to bear than the actual suffering itself would be. How often the prayer has been heard that has asked the

transfer of an infirmity to the healthy onlooker because of the anxiety that seems to be unbearable when a loved one lies in the grip of some anguish or distress.

God's Vindication and Man's Accusation

QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the name of Moses' wife?
- 2 Give the names of Moses' father, mother, sister, and brother. 3 What was the first accusation brought against Moses?
- 4 What was the final, and real, charge that was laid against him at this time?
- 5 Who apparently was the leader in this revolt?
- 6 Quote the famous verse in our lesson that speaks of the character of godly Moses.
- 7 Quote other verses from the Bible that tell the ultimate rewards of the person having this quality which was found so abundantly in Moses.
- 8 What difference was there in the matter of revelation as given to Moses and to the others who have prophesied in God's name?
- 9 What was God's attitude toward the rebels?
- 10 How was the sin punished?

The highest testimony of the official pre-eminence of Moses over any person living in his time came in consequence of this assault made upon him. There is comfort for the victims of unjust accusation in this incident. God will be their defense if they will, like Moses, retain the spirit of meekness that never raises its hand or voice in self-defense. But there is also a warning to those who would allow the satanic power of envy to take possession of their reason and voice. God hears their words and remembers their thoughts. He will some day confront them with His sudden and sure judgment.

It has been said by atheistic critics of the Bible that the statement regarding the meekness of Moses is definite proof of the fact that the Bible is not divinely inspired. They argue that if Moses wrote the Book of Numbers he could not possibly have made this statement about himself, because the very fact of its inclusion would prove that he was not a meek man. But this is no difficulty to the believer. To him this statement is no self-eulogy inspired by vanity. It is a simple, truthful portrayal of personal character that is necessary to the proper understanding of the lesson. It was not prompted by self-love, but was inspired and dictated by the Spirit of God under whose influence Moses wrote when he penned these glorious chapters.

How many times Moses had sought God's honor rather than personal glory or fame! At one time he could have accepted the edict of God that would have exterminated the whole nation of the Israelites and made another from his own line. He could have failed to intercede the many times he did when he fasted and prayed until his strength must have temporarily departed from him, and could have seen the just judgment of God meted out upon a murmuring, complaining, and unthankful people. But he proved again and again that he was a faithful shepherd of the tribes of Israel. He demonstrated over and over that his supreme interest and desire was to see God honored and the Holy Name revered. His was true meekness! His was true humility! His was true leadership and intercession! He was the prophet that prefigured another Prophet, who came in the fullness of time and who received a testimonial from the highest Heaven of His divinity and authority on the Mount of Transfiguration.

This incident in the account of the wilderness wanderings teaches us the solemn fact that even in the heart of a "Miriam" and an "Aaron" can be cradled the terrible seeds of envy and jealousy that would, if allowed to remain and grow, finally dare to speak out against the most carefully chosen of God's anointed men and women. God save us from the treacherous workings of that terrible sin!