

## **Miriam, The Prophet BIBIOGRAPHY**

God appointed Miriam to lead alongside Moses and Aaron to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt. (Micah 6:4) She played a huge role in the most redemptive event in history told in the Old Testament. Can you imagine God creating you with the purpose to deliver the people of Israelites out of Egypt? Will you be content with such a calling?

As most of you know the story, the Israelites, more specifically the sons of Jacob, moved to Egypt because there was a famine in all the land. (Gen. 47:13) The Israelites were multiplying exceedingly while in Egypt and Pharaoh, the new king of Egypt, became afraid that they would join forces with their enemies and escape the land. Pharaoh assigned slavemasters over the Israelites to oppress them. The Israelites continued to multiply. Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill all newborn baby boys, but they feared God and did not kill the boys. Pharaoh then issued an edict ordering that all newborn Hebrew boys be thrown into the Nile. (Ex. 1:1)

Miriam's ministry began at the time of Moses' birth. Her parents were Levites, prayerful people who feared God. Fearing Pharaoh's edict Moses' parents hid him for 3 months. Miriam was Moses' older sister. When Moses was 3 months old his own mother put him in a basket and placed the basket in the Nile. Miriam followed the basket at a distance to see what would happen to him. (Exodus 1:3-4) Miriam, like most older siblings perhaps felt responsible to protect her younger brother. After all, he was already three months old so she probably felt an emotional attachment. Living in harsh conditions, she probably helped her mother hide him from the Egyptians. Like most older sisters she most likely played with him, changed his clothes pamper, and assisted his mother in caring for him. Usually older siblings mostly girls take on the role of caretakers of their

younger siblings. They mature before their time. I am the second oldest of four children. If anything happened to my little brothers my parents question me. I was responsible for their well-being simply because I was older and I should know better. Pharaoh's daughter saw the basket, when her servants brought the basket to her, I imagine Miriam running to the side of Pharaoh's daughter. Perhaps to see her reaction, to make a plea for him, to protect him however she could. Thankfully, when Pharaoh's daughter opened the basket she felt compassion for the Hebrew baby. (Ex. 2:6) Miriam was a wise young girl, she asked Pharaoh's daughter if she could find a Hebrew woman to nurse him, Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and Miriam got her own mother to care for him, and she was paid to take care of him. (Ex.2:7-9) Miriam and her mom took him home and when he grew older Moses was given to Pharaoh's daughter as her son. (Ex.2:10) During this time Miriam's love for her baby brother could have only grown stronger.

**Or**, her soul could have been developing issues of lack of love from her parents. She was sharing her parent's love with her two siblings. This usually leaves a hole in the soul of the older siblings. Scripture says that Jochebed saw that Moses was a fine, beautiful baby, and she hid him. (Ex. 2:2) He probably received most of the attention leaving her to feel rejected. Most older siblings experience these types of soul issues. She was probably starting to feel a bit jealous of her baby brother.

Miriam witnessed the ten plagues. (Exodus 7:14-25, 8:1-32; 9:1-35; 10:1-29; 12:29-30). She participated in the first Passover.(Ex. 12) She not only witnessed the power of God when he parted the Red Sea for the Israelites to escape the Egyptians. She led the women in worship. The word says that..

**“Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. <sup>21</sup> Miriam sang to them:**

“Sing to the LORD,  
for he is highly exalted.  
Both horse and driver  
he has hurled into the sea.”

### **Miriam was a leader of Influence.**

She witnessed firsthand the power of God, His faithfulness, and His love for His people. She witnessed her little brother give the Israelites the 10 Commandments. (Ex. 20) She saw the Tabernacle being built and finished. (Ex. 36-38) She witnessed the glory of the Lord, and God’s provision.

Miriam was born to be known as a great leader. Her name Miriam is spelled Mary in Greek. She is known to be a type of Mary the mother of Jesus in that she helped deliver God’s people.

But, her soul issues came up to the surface and caused her to sin against Moses. In Numbers 12:1-15, we read that “Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses. They criticized his choice of wife. And questioned <sup>2</sup>“Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?” “Hasn’t he also spoken through us?” She compared herself to her baby brother. The Lord heard Miriam and Aaron talking about Moses. (Ex. 12:2b) <sup>4</sup> At once the LORD called Moses, Aaron and Miriam to the tent of meeting. He said to Miriam and Aaron

**“Listen to my words:**

**“When there is a prophet among you,  
I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions,  
I speak to them in dreams.**

<sup>7</sup> **But this is not true of my servant Moses;  
he is faithful in all my house.**

<sup>8</sup> **With him I speak face to face,  
clearly and not in riddles;  
he sees the form of the LORD.**

**Why then were you not afraid  
to speak against my servant Moses?”**

<sup>9</sup> **The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them.**

Miriam’s skin was defiled with leper. God answered the questions they asked in private.

**Miriam was Defiled for her Discontent:** She was displeased and discontent with the assignment God had given her. She wanted to be greater than her brother. She compared her relationship with God to Moses’ relationship with God. Yet, God set her straight. She had

unsolved issues in her heart. Matthew tells us that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. (12:34b ESV)

How content are you with the gift God has given you? Are you criticizing the Pastor? The leaders at the church? Jeremiah teaches us that our hearts are deceitful and that we do not know it. (17:9) Therefore, we must constantly check our souls and actively engage in soul care so that our hearts do not lead us to sin against God's people or rob of witnessing the glory of God. We have to be careful what we ask for? Moses himself struggled with his gift. He told God that it was too large of a burden for him to lead the Israelites.

In Chapter Number 11 the Israelites also complained and wailed against Moses. Moses had enough and called out to God asking him v12-13 "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? <sup>12</sup> Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? ..... And in V. 14 he cries out to God that the burden of the people is too heavy for him to carry by himself. Moses said to the Lord <sup>15</sup> If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me....." God resolves that problem by taking "some of the power of the Spirit that {was on Moses} and putting it on 70 other leaders so that they could share the "burden of the people."

Our souls must be healed for God in order to us to fully witness the glory of God. Paul says that we all have different gifts and that no one gift is greater than the all but that all are necessary. God's wrath fell upon Miriam. It is believed amongst the Jewish tradition that Miriam initiated the complaint and that's the reason she was punished and not Aaron.

**Confined to be Cleansed:** Miriam needed to be desecrated. God placed Miriam outside the camp for seven days to be cleansed. We need to be separated from all of our people and the

things that cause us to sin to allow God to cleanse our souls. Spending alone time with God is the only way we are going to deal with our deep soul issues. It is interesting that when Moses pleaded to God to heal her, <sup>14</sup>The LORD replied to Moses, “If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days?” “What does it mean to be in disgrace? It means to be humbled, to be dishonored before the people. Miriam needed to be humbled before the people. God humbled Miriam.

How humble are we? Are we allowing God to humble us in the areas in our lives where we need to be humbled? God wants to cleanse your soul so that you can serve him with a humble heart.

Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back.” <sup>15</sup> So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on till she was brought back. (NIV)

God separated Miriam from the Israelites. She needed to be confined to be cleansed. We too need to be confined, separated from all of the people that surround us and from all of the things that cause us to sin. Spending time with God alone will purify our souls.

God acted like a good father when he separated Miriam from the people that followed her. She was humbled by God.