

Miriam was the sister of Moses and Aaron by birth (Numbers 26:59, ESV). She was the youngest child of Jochebed and Amram. Scripture also describes her as a prophetess—a rare and honored position for a woman in ancient Israel. Together, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam were uniquely chosen by God to guide His people out of Egypt and through the wilderness (Micah 6:4, ESV: “For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.”). This shows God’s purpose in raising both men and women for His work.

Miriam’s leadership was especially significant for women in Israel. After the Lord overthrew Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea, she led the women in worship. The Bible says, “Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. And Miriam sang to them: ‘Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea’” (Exodus 15:20-21, ESV). This act of praise highlights her role in encouraging corporate worship and thanksgiving.

However, Miriam’s story also serves as a sobering lesson about pride and speaking against God’s chosen servant. In Numbers

12:1-10 (ESV), Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses because of his Cushite wife. Yet the Lord rebuked them, affirming Moses' unique relationship with Him: "He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord" (Numbers 12:7-8, ESV). As a consequence of her rebellion, "when the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow" (Numbers 12:10, ESV). This judgment shows God's seriousness about respecting His appointed leaders.

Moses interceded on Miriam's behalf, demonstrating his humility and compassion, and the Lord restored her after seven days of isolation (Numbers 12:13-15, ESV).

Sadly, Miriam did not enter the Promised Land. She died at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, and was buried there (Numbers 20:1, ESV). Her death reminds us that even those greatly used by God are still subject to His discipline and judgment.

Miriam's life leaves us with a rich example: she was a worship leader, a prophetess, and a servant of God, but also a reminder of the danger of pride and the importance of honoring God's ways.

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