

# Show Me Your Glory

## Lessons from the Life of Moses

### Lesson 14 Numbers 11–12

#### *Day One:* God's People on the Move

It had been almost one year since the Israelites arrived and set up camp at the base of Mt. Sinai. The first ten chapters of the book of Numbers records all that was accomplished during that time. The people were united as a new nation under God's law, ready to obey Him. The Tabernacle had been constructed and dedicated; the Levites were consecrated as priests; the first census had been taken; and all the people were assigned a place in the camp according to their family banners as well as a position in the marching formation according to their tribes. Numbers 1:54 records: *"Thus the children of Israel did; according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so they did."* They no doubt had grown comfortable in the familiarity of their surroundings, but they were about to pull up their tent pegs, pack up all their belongings, and set out across the wilderness of Paran.

The cloud had moved, meaning that moving day had arrived! As the priests sounded two silver trumpets (10:1–2), each tribe moved into position, joining the procession. While the priests and Levites dismantled the Tabernacle and its furnishings, the tribe of Judah went first to lead the march, followed by the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun. Next came the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; followed by Ephraim, Manassah, and Benjamin. Bringing up the rear were the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. Whenever the people stopped and started again, Moses prayed for God's presence to guide them and reside among them. Moses continued to set the example by putting God first in every situation.

Read Exodus 10:11–11:35. For the purpose of study, today we'll look at 11:1–9.

The people departed from Mt. Sinai, marching for three days with the Ark of the Covenant going before them (10:33).

1. At the end of their first march, what did the people do? vv. 1–2
  - a. How did the Lord respond to them?
  - b. When the people cried out, what did Moses do?

Moses called the name of the place *Taberah*, meaning “to burn” or “burning.” Just three days into the journey some of the people were complaining; apparently their feet had gone farther than their faith! Whatever the exact cause of their complaint, God heard it, becoming angry and striking out at those who were ungrateful.

2. What did the people complain about next? vv. 4–9
  - a. Who were the instigators this time? What did they enjoy back in Egypt that they craved again?

The Hebrew word for *mixed multitude* in verse 4 is *asapsup*, meaning “rabble” or “riffraff.” This is the only time in the Old Testament the word is used and it speaks of those who accompanied the Israelites out of Egypt but who did not place their faith in God. This particular group of individuals remained the source of many problems for Moses and God’s people throughout their years of wanderings.

### *Look closer . . .*

The *mixed multitude* we read about here wasn’t unique to Moses’ day; they are very much in existence today among God’s people. If Satan can’t get hold of Christians outside the church, he will infiltrate it by placing *rabble rousers* inside the church to do his bidding. Believers must be on guard at all times, watching for those whose mission is to sow discord among the brethren.

- a. How did Jesus describe these individuals in Matthew 13:24–30? When will He deal with them?
- b. The Apostle Paul referred to these intruders as “false brethren” (Galatians 2:4). What is their mission according to Acts 20:28–30?

### *Selah . . .*

Following God through the wilderness meant enduring hardships along the way. Christian, the same is true for you!

- ❖ What did Paul say is the reality you can expect? Acts 14:22

Remember, God is more concerned with your eternal condition than your temporal comfort. In today’s memory verse below, Jesus spells out what following Him requires. How are *you* doing?

*Heartbeat . . .* “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Matthew 16:24

## Day Two:

## Shared Leadership

Is it possible to listen to the incessant complaining of the people around you from morning till night, day after day, and not be adversely affected by it? We can sympathize with Moses indulging in a little self-pity; after all, he was responsible for leading nearly two million people! Yet, the sins of the Israelites were so great that Moses wanted to abandon his God-assigned role as their leader and mediator.

Read Exodus 11:10–30.

1. In your own words, describe Moses' heart attitude at this point in time. v. 11
  
2. How does Moses convey the weight of his responsibility in the following verses?
  - a. v. 10
  
  - b. v. 12
  
  - c. v. 13
  
  - d. v. 14
  
  - e. What is Moses' ultimate cry of despair? v. 15

Moses saw only futility ahead, realizing the numbers of people, the lack of resources, and the barren environment. As far as he was concerned, he had not created this nation of people, they weren't his problem, and it was not his idea to lead them in the first place! The word for *displeased* in verse 10 speaks of having feelings of inferiority brought on by a very negative attitude. It was the *old Moses* ("Lord, send someone else please") surfacing again. God had answered the two previous complaints of the people here in Exodus 11 with judgment; now He would use this occasion to support Moses and teach him a very valuable lesson in shared leadership.

3. What did the Lord tell Moses He would do to allow others to carry some of the burden of the people? vv. 16–17

The Lord told Moses to prepare the people for His next visit when He would come down and answer their complaints by giving them enough meat to eat for a whole month!

4. Explain why God would send such an excess of quail. vv. 19–20
  - a. How did Moses respond; and what was the Lord's reply to him? vv. 21–23

Moses conveyed the Lord's words to the people and gathered together the seventy elders at the tabernacle of meeting. Apparently there were two men—Eldad and Medad—who remained in the camp, but who began prophesying along with the seventy.

5. Who was disturbed by this display and why did he take issue with Moses?  
vv. 26–30

a. What does Moses' reply tell you about his character?

The Lord sent a wind and with the wind, quail fell around the camp in every direction, extending as far as a day's journey, and piling up to the height of two cubits (a cubit was a measurement calculated upon the distance between the elbow to the middle finger; or approximately 17–21 inches). The people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day gathering the quail (v. 32).

6. What happened while the people still eating? v. 33

God let them have their own way: "*So He gave them what they asked for, but He sent a plague along with it*" (Psalm 106:15 NLT). Moses called the place of this event *Kibroth Hattaavah*, meaning "graves of lust."

*Look closer . . .*

God gave the people what they asked for, but while they were still eating, the Lord's anger was kindled against them and many perished for their ungratefulness for His goodness and provision.

- ❖ The Apostle Peter issued a warning that would have been applicable in Moses' time. What was Peter's warning to God's people? 1 Peter 2:11  
How can you personalize this warning today?

*Review this week's memory verse.*

### *Day Three:* The Dissension of Aaron and Miriam

While the people were camped at Hazeroth (11:35), Moses was faced with perhaps the most difficult test so far—difficult because it was personal, aimed at him by those closest to him—his own family.

Read Exodus 12:1–16.

1. Initially, why did Aaron and Miriam speak out against Moses? What was the real reason for their complaint? vv. 1–2

2. Discuss why Moses didn't defend himself. v. 3

The meekness of Moses is visible in his refusal to defend himself. Meekness does not mean weakness; it is power under constraint (control). Moses did not attempt to justify himself, but the Lord heard what was said and took abrupt action, calling Moses, Aaron, and Miriam out to the tabernacle of meeting.

3. While there, what did He make crystal clear to Aaron and Miriam?

- a. v. 6

- b. v. 7

- c. v. 8

4. How does God judge their jealousy? Who was more culpable—Aaron or Miriam—why? vv.9–10

God does not always draw near to deliver; there are times when He comes close to judge the heart, and consequences will follow. It's probable that Moses' wife, Zipporah, had died and when he took another wife, Miriam may have felt her position was threatened. In addition, the Spirit given to the seventy elders may have caused her to believe she was losing her authority as one of Israel's leaders. Aaron, a man easily swayed by others, went along with her, but clearly, the burden of responsibility was hers.

*Selah . . .*

Moses, Aaron, and Miriam were called as a team to lead the nation of Israel. Each had their own place of ministry: Aaron as high priest; Miriam as a leader among women; but Moses had the greater responsibility in the eyes of the Lord. To question his authority was to question God's!

- ❖ Do *you* know the place God has for you to serve Him? Would you be willing to accept a lesser role in ministry if it meant God would be glorified by it? (Think carefully about your answer, as it will reveal your true heart motive.)

## *Day Four:*

## Restoration Follows Forgiveness

Some people simply have to learn their lessons the hard way rather than take to heart the lessons found in Scripture. Miriam is an example of strength as a leader, but she fell to the sin of jealousy, and her failure was a very public one. She serves to remind us of the words in 1 Peter 5b–6: *“All of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”*

Read Exodus 12 for review.

As the cloud departed from the tabernacle, Miriam became leprous, as *white as snow*.

1. What did Aaron do that reveals his responsibility in the matter? vv. 11–12
2. How did Moses further reveal his meekness (humility)? v. 13
3. What was the Lord’s reply to Moses’ intercession? v. 14

Miriam would indeed be healed, but in accordance with the Levitical laws (see Leviticus 13:1–6 and 14:1–8), she would remain outside the camp for seven days because of her defilement.

4. How would this add to Miriam’s shame?
5. How would Miriam’s sin affect the entire nation of Israel? v. 15

We’re learning how broad the scope of sin is and how it can affect the lives of those around us much more than we can even fathom! Think for a moment about the difference it would make to you if *your sin* was splashed all over the headlines of the newspaper or broadcast on the evening news for millions of people to see! That’s what Miriam had to deal with, and it no doubt had a tremendous effect on this woman of God.

Repentance is still the only remedy for sin. We are assured in 1 John 1:9, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* Because Aaron and Miriam had a mediator—Moses—to intercede for them, God forgave them and restored them. If you have fallen into sin, you too have a mediator who is interceding for you—Jesus Christ, the Righteous. Put your name in the verse written below (Hebrews 7:25) and let it lead you into prayer.

*“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost \_\_\_\_\_ who comes to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Day Five:*

## Praying with Purpose

**Selah . . .** Be still and consider how to *work out* in your daily life what God has *worked into* your heart through your study of His Word. Then pray each aspect through.

❖ **A Point Pondered:** Is there an example from the lesson or a truth from Scripture that has taken on a new meaning this week? Please note it below.

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❖ **A Path Pursued:** Knowledge must be applied in order to make a difference. Name one thing you can act upon in obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading.

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❖ **A Promise Possessed:** If God has spoken a particular verse or word of hope to your heart, write it down and pray it back to Him.

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❖ **A Praise Proclaimed:** God loves to hear you praise Him! What aspect of God's character particularly blessed you this week? Will you praise Him today?

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❖ **A Prayer Presented:** Write out the most pressing request on your heart and lift it to the Lord.

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**Other requests:**

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