

GOD'S PROPHETESSES IN SCRIPTURE

I. Miriam: God's Servant Who Learned Her Role

(Exodus 2:1-9; 15:20-21; Numbers 12:1-16; Deuteronomy 24:9; Micah 6:4)

I. Introduction

- A. When God created the first woman, He made her to be a helpmeet for the first man, Genesis 2:20-23.
- B. Four women were prophetesses of the Lord whose ministries are recorded in Scripture, and their ministries involved specific relationships with men, revealing God's idea of a woman's being a man's proper helpmeet.
- C. We view each prophetess in her ministry to learn God's lessons on a woman's godly role as a helpmeet.

II. Miriam: God's Servant Who Learned Her Role, Ex. 2:1-9; 15:20-21; Num. 12:1-16; Deut. 24:9; Mic. 6:4.

- A. Though she is not named in Exodus 2:1-9, Miriam was Moses' older sister whose first ministry for the Lord was watching over her infant brother Moses as he floated in an ark of bulrushes on the Nile River:
 - 1. Miriam's parents were Levites in Egypt at the time when Pharaoh had ordered that every male child that was born to the Hebrews was to be cast into the Nile River, Exodus 1:22-2:1.
 - 2. However, when Miriam's mother delivered an infant son who was a beautiful baby, she believed that her son could well be another Joseph who would end up in Pharaoh's court to save the descendants of Jacob from starvation (Exodus 2:2a with Genesis 50:15-21), so she hid him for three months, Exodus 2:2b.
 - 3. When she could hide him no longer, she made a basket of bullrushes, dabbed it with bitumen and pitch to keep it afloat, put her baby in the basket and placed it among the reeds by the shore of the Nile River to hold it there for the daughter of Pharaoh to see and to adopt to be raised in Pharaoh's court, Exodus 2:3.
 - 4. The baby's older sister, Miriam, stood at a distance to see what would happen to her brother, Exodus 2:4.
 - 5. When Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe in the river, she spotted the basket, and opening its lid, she saw the beautiful Hebrew baby crying, and she felt a motherly compassion for him, Exodus 2:5-6.
 - 6. At that moment, Miriam came up and asked Pharaoh's daughter if she could get a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby for her, and she replied, "Go." (Exodus 2:7-8) Miriam's mother was then paid to nurse her own baby for Pharaoh's daughter, and she named him "Moses" since she had drawn him out of the water, v. 9.
- B. Later, after God used Moses and his older brother Aaron to lead Israel out of Egypt with the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, when Moses sang his song of victory for God's deliverance, Miriam was used of God as a prophetess of the Lord to lead Israel's women in antiphonal singing in praise to the Lord, Ex. 15:20-21.
- C. However, in Israel's wilderness journeys, Miriam had to learn her correct role in serving God, Num. 12:1-16:
 - 1. Due to her important role in preserving her younger brother Moses' life when he was floating in the ark on the Nile River, and due to her important role in leading Israel's women as God's prophetess in praising the Lord at the Red Sea, Miriam considered herself to be a very important servant of the Lord!
 - 2. Thus, when Moses wed a Cushite woman, Miriam and Aaron felt they had been outshone, so they spoke against Moses, Num. 12:1. They said that God had spoken through them and not only through Moses, showing that their main criticism was not against Moses' wife but against his role over them, Num. 12:2.
 - 3. Moses was a very meek man (Numbers 12:3) and could easily have had his leadership motivation crushed by his dominant siblings, so when the Lord heard their complaint, He quickly had Moses, Aaron and Miriam come out to the tent of meeting to meet with Him for a resolution to the problem, Numbers 12:3-4.
 - 4. God came down in a pillar of cloud, He stood at the tent door and told Aaron and Miriam to step forward, Numbers 12:5. He then informed them that He spoke with His servant Moses face to face unlike His more indirect communications with Aaron, Miriam and Israel's other prophets, Numbers 12:6-8.
 - 5. God's anger was kindled against them, and since Miriam was apparently the leader of this rebellion, God struck her with leprosy until Aaron and Moses had interceded for her to be healed, Numbers 12:9-13.
 - 6. God had Miriam stay outside the camp of Israel for seven days before Israel moved again, Num. 12:14-16.
- D. In Moses' final message to Israel, he reminded them of God's punishment of Miriam to warn them to heed God's commands regarding leprosy, Deuteronomy 24:8-9. Nevertheless, the Lord in Micah 6:4 later acknowledged Moses, Aaron and Miriam as the people He had used to lead Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus.

Lesson: Though God used Moses, Aaron and Miriam to lead Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus, Aaron and Miriam in particular had to learn that their role was to submit to Moses' leadership role when he became God's servant.

Application: (1) May we learn to accept the role God assigns us in life without proudly seeking a higher human status. (2) May we learn to be humble like Moses that God might use us like He used Moses (1 Peter 5:6)!