



A Father's Love

And the Lord said to Moses,

*“If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be
ashamed seven days?*

*Let her be sent out from the camp seven days, and
after that let her be received in again.”*

Numbers 12:14

When the prophet Moses married a Gentile, an Ethiopian, most likely a woman of color, it ignited the indignation of his sister, Miriam. Miriam apparently incited their brother Aaron against Moses as well.

God had instructed His people not to marry foreign wives, and on the surface this may be one reason why Miriam was so upset; Moses was violating God's law. This law was specifically for the purpose of keeping God's people from being led away from the one true God of Israel to embrace the false gods of those foreign wives. Apparently this Ethiopian, like the Moabite, Ruth, had received the God of the Jews, and therefore had been accepted by the Lord, unbeknownst to Miriam. But that, as we shall see, was not the whole issue.

Miriam and Aaron had justified their objections to Moses' marriage by proclaiming their status as prophets, too. – “Has not the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Has He not spoken also by us?” (Numbers 12:2).

We are told in verse three that “Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” Because of this characteristic, (which is highly favored by the Lord), Moses apparently had some difficulty in standing up to his irate brother and sister.

Then the Lord appeared to all three of them in a cloud and called out Miriam and Aaron. They were informed that, although God speaks to prophets in dreams and visions, Moses was different. He was privileged to behold the similitude of the Lord and converse with Him “mouth to mouth” (verse 8). Thus God had set Moses on a higher level than ordinary prophets, including Miriam and Aaron.

In the scriptures, Moses is used as a similitude of the coming Messiah Jesus. The Messiah would be a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15). One of the

Messiah's jobs would be to join the Gentiles to the Hebrew lineage making the two one, so there would be one fold and one shepherd (John 10:16).

God had separated the Jews from other nations because they were the only race of people at that time that recognized there is only one God. All other nations were polytheists, believers in more than one god. It was God's plan to birth the Messiah through the monotheist Hebrews so they in turn would be a blessing to those nations through the Messiah. This is why they have been referred to as the “chosen people.”

So we can see that symbolically, Moses' union with the Ethiopian represents this joining of Gentile and Jew through the similitude of the Messianic purpose illustrated for us in this instance.

Of course, at that time, Miriam didn't understand the typology God was developing in His word. Aside from the fact it was okay with God for Moses to marry the Ethiopian, He was examining and evaluating the attitudes and heart conditions of Moses' siblings, focusing on Miriam who apparently was the instigator of the rebellion.

Her pride in her spiritual status with God, was out of balance. Her lack of humility and submission was apparent. And the God who can see into the depths of the human heart, was not pleased with the prejudice and resentment Miriam was harboring against her new sister-in-law.

God's love for His daughter, Miriam, could not let her go unpunished. Suddenly and supernaturally, Miriam was stricken with leprosy.

Horrified, Aaron pleaded with Moses to intercede for their sister. It was then that God likens Himself to a father who has become displeased with His child, -“If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days?” Miriam would experience seven days of isolation outside the camp to contemplate her errors. At the same time, she would be holding the promise in her heart that after those seven days she would be healed, restored and welcomed back to her family. She was not sent away without hope.

God knew exactly what it was going to take to reach strong-willed Miriam.

God is love, and genuine love corrects and admonishes. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews reminds us of this fact. God is a loving Father, devoted to the welfare and spiritual development of His children. – For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives (Hebrews 12:6).

I am sure Miriam's time alone in the desert did much to change her attitudes and eliminate the inner sins that God had allowed to manifest outwardly in those leprous wounds. I am sure she was enabled to humbly seek forgiveness from God, and also her brother and sister-in-law, restoring unity in that family as an example to everyone.

We can also sit outside the camp to contemplate our errors, when our God seeks to correct us; and like Miriam, hold the promise of His forgiveness, mercy and our ultimate restoration in our hearts, - because we have been assured of our Father's love.

In His Image

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:... - Genesis 1:26

In the beginning, God created human beings "In His Image" (Genesis 1:26). The scriptures do not mention the color of their skin, therefore the word of God is telling us that the pigmentation God used to color His firstborn is irrelevant. We are to focus on their humanity and their relationship with God.

Later, different races began to develop from Noah's lineage after the flood. The various colorations that God ordained to decorate humanity emerged. God does not make mistakes in His designing. What He has chosen to create, should be valued in respect to the Father's preferences. He made all men equally in His image. Each is a beautiful reflection of their Creator, no matter what race they are, or what color God has chosen their skin to be.

It is obvious from observing creation that God likes variety. How boring would the world be if there was only one type of tree, insect, animal or flower? God wants us to value the diversity He has created, whether it is in nature or humankind. When we do that we are appreciating our Creator as well.

Racism in any form is an abomination. It is an indirect assault on our Creator, whether we realize it or not, especially for those who profess faith in Him.

The Apostle Peter said, "God has shown me not to call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28).

A person who looks down upon anyone because of the color of their skin or their race, is operating in direct opposition to God's will and purposes. In other words, he is sinning.

When Moses married the Ethiopian woman, whose skin was several shades darker than his own, Moses' family objected to his interracial union. God's displeasure at their lack of acceptance, caused Moses' sister, Miriam, to be punished for a time with a bout of leprosy.

As she watched her own skin change in response to her bigotry, she was brought to an understanding of how harboring animosity toward anyone of a different race can instigate God's displeasure.

We are admonished in the scriptures to "love one another." We are told by the Apostle John that anyone who harbors hatred in his heart to someone is in darkness (I John 2:9). "He that loves not knows not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8).

We are shown in God's word, that if we do not forgive, God will not forgive us and we will negate our salvation (Matthew 6:14,15). Bigotry is a form of unforgiveness. When we cannot forgive someone's color so to speak, and accept them because they are different from ourselves, we are sliding into this category and endangering our position with God.

When Jesus returns we all will face Him at His judgment (Matthew 25: 31-46). It is here our actions, thoughts and deeds will be revealed before Him. This is where He tells us that what we have done or not done to others will have eternal ramifications. Because it is here that He reveals to us that He was the black man that was lynched, the Asian that was ostracized, the poor, the widow and the orphan that were neglected; because He has told us that that "If you have done it to one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it to Me" (Matthew 25:40).

This is an important fact to implant in our hearts now before we are transported into eternity.

As we sit in contemplation under our stained glass windows, let's remember what the word of God tells us He wants His people to be. Sunday only piety won't get us a passing grade on our final exam under Jesus' righteous eyes.

All men are created equal, in His precious image.

Love one another.

