

## **People of the Promise: Miriam: In the Company of Leaders Various**

### **Introduction**

Not Just For Kids—shepherd's staff; good shepherd leadership

Moses is so famous a leader that it's easy to forget others God used alongside him to lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness.

We remember that Aaron his brother had a significant role as spokesman because Moses felt insecure about his speaking ability. Aaron and Moses faced Pharaoh together. Aaron caved under pressure from the Israelites when Moses was on Mount Sinai. He made the infamous golden calf with the dodgy excuse that he melted down gold jewelry and "out came this calf."

But Moses' sister Miriam plays a more prominent role of leadership than we might at first recall.

Micah 6:4

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.

Miriam made significant contributions to Moses and Israel, but also fell to one of the common pitfalls of leadership.

Miriam: In the Company of Leaders

1. Faithful Protection (Exodus 2:1-9)
2. Joyful Praise (Exodus 15:19-21)
3. Jealous Pride (Numbers 12:1-15)

### **1. Faithful Protection (Exodus 2:1-9)**

<sup>1</sup> Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. <sup>3</sup> When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. <sup>4</sup> And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. <sup>5</sup> Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. <sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." <sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" <sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> And

Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him.

So Miriam played a significant role in the very survival of Moses. Her savvy was key to Moses' own mom serving as his nurse in his early years while he was growing up in the household of Pharaoh's daughter. The plan may have been that of Moses' parents, but Miriam was the one who executed it. We see courage, faithfulness, and shrewdness in her protection of her younger brother.

### **Application**

*Good leaders protect and care for the people entrusted to them. This faithful protection calls for courage and purposeful action.*

## **2. Joyful Praise (Exodus 15:19-21)**

Exodus 15:19-21

**19** For when the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. **20** 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. **21** 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.”

These are the first line of the song of Moses recorded in verses 1-18. It's likely that Miriam and her companions sang the whole thing.

Exodus 15:1-18

<sup>1</sup> Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,

“I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. <sup>2</sup> The LORD is my

strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

<sup>3</sup> The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name. <sup>4</sup> Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea. <sup>5</sup> The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone.

<sup>6</sup> Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power, your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.

<sup>7</sup> In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries; you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble.

<sup>8</sup> At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

<sup>9</sup> The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.’

**10** You blew with your wind; the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters. **11** Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? **12** You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them. **13** You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode. **14** The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. **15** Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. **16** Terror and dread fall upon them; because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone, till your people, O LORD, pass by, till the people pass by whom you have purchased. **17** You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established. **18** The LORD will reign forever and ever.”

Miriam is called a prophetess. A prophet hears from God then passes what he or she hears to people. We tend to think of only men serving in this role, but both OT and NT talk of women serving this way, too.

Deborah, the judge (Judges 4:4)

Huldah, wife of Shallum (2 Chronicles 34:22)

Isaiah's wife (Isaiah 8:3)

Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:9)

Acts 2:16-18

**16** But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

**17** "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; **18** even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

### **Application**

*Godly leaders relay what God has said to those they lead, and they lead in zealous praise to God for His mighty acts of deliverance.*

When Joshua took Moses' place of leadership God told him to lead using God's own words that Moses had penned:

Joshua 1:8

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

### **3. Jealous Pride (Numbers 12:1-15)**

<sup>1</sup> Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. <sup>2</sup> And they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. <sup>3</sup> Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. <sup>4</sup> And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." And the three of them came out. <sup>5</sup> And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward. <sup>6</sup> And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. <sup>7</sup> Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. <sup>8</sup> With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" <sup>9</sup> And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed. <sup>10</sup> When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. <sup>11</sup> And Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned. <sup>12</sup> Let

her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother's womb." <sup>13</sup> And Moses cried to the LORD, "O God, please heal her—please." <sup>14</sup> But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again." <sup>15</sup> So Miriam was shut outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again.

One of the most common pitfalls of leadership is for pride, ambition, and a critical spirit such you into attacking other leaders God is using. There is a right way to work through disagreements, but it's all too easy to let a worldly spirit infect one's attitude and actions toward godly leaders. These kinds of attacks are hard to endure and account in part for the high casualty rate among leaders. But it's noteworthy how often God steps in to bring corrective judgment on those who arrogate to themselves such mistreatment of God's servants.

### **Application**

*Be very careful how you respond to frustrations with leaders who are trying to serve God faithfully, lest in the name of calling out what you think is wrong, you bring yourself under the judgment of God.*



## **Conclusion**

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