

Numbers 12:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

Analysis

Miriam's leprosy appeared instantly as judgment for her rebellion, making her 'white as snow'—the distinctive appearance of advanced leprosy. The disease's immediacy demonstrated divine origin of the punishment. Aaron's cry 'alas, my lord' shows immediate recognition of their sin's severity. That Miriam alone received leprosy (though Aaron participated in rebellion) may indicate she instigated the challenge, as she's named first in verse 1.

Historical Context

Leprosy rendered a person ceremonially unclean and required isolation outside the camp (Leviticus 13). For a prophetess and Moses' sister to suffer this public humiliation powerfully demonstrated God's defense of His servant Moses.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why might God's judgment sometimes fall more heavily on instigators of rebellion?
2. How does swift divine discipline protect the community from spreading rebellion?

Interlinear Text

וְהָעָנָן	סָר	מֵעַל	הָאֹהֶל	וְהָיָה	
And the cloud	departed		from off the tabernacle		
H6051	H5493	H5921	H168	H2009	
וּמִרְיָם	מְצֻרֶת:	כַּשֵּׁל	וַיִּבֶן	אֶהֱרֹן	
and behold Miriam	and behold she was leprous	white as snow	looked	and Aaron	
H4813	H6879	H7950	H6437	H175	
וְ	וּמִרְיָם	וְהָיָה	מְצֻרֶת:		
H413	and behold Miriam	H2009	and behold she was leprous		
	H4813		H6879		

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 24:9 (Parallel theme): Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.

2 Kings 5:27 (Parallel theme): The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

2 Kings 15:5 (Parallel theme): And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son was over the house, judging the people of the land.