

Numbers 12:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses?
hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

Analysis

Miriam and Aaron's challenge 'Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses?' reveals the sin of envy toward God's appointed leadership. Their question suggests they deserved equal authority since God had also spoken through them (Miriam was a prophetess, Exodus 15:20). This illustrates how spiritual pride can corrupt even those with genuine gifting, leading to rejection of God's established order. The statement 'And the LORD heard it' shows that rebellion against God's appointed leaders is ultimately rebellion against God Himself.

Historical Context

Miriam is named first, suggesting she instigated this rebellion, which explains why she primarily bore the punishment (verse 10). As Moses' older sister who had helped preserve his life (Exodus 2:4-8), Miriam may have felt entitled to greater authority. This incident occurred during the wilderness wandering, a time of repeated rebellion against Moses' leadership. The Lord's immediate response demonstrates His commitment to defending leaders who faithfully serve Him.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does spiritual gifting become dangerous when coupled with pride and rejection of God's appointed authority?
2. What does God's defense of Moses teach about how He views attacks on faithful leaders?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמְרוּ	הֵבִי קִ	אֶן	בְּמֹשֶׁה	דִּבֶּר	יְהוָה:
And they said	H7535	H389	only by Moses	hath he not spoken	Hath the LORD
H559			H4872	H1696	H3068
אֵל	גַּם	כֹּל	דִּבֶּר	וַיִּשְׁמַע	יְהוָה:
H3808	H1571	H0	hath he not spoken	heard	Hath the LORD
			H1696	H8085	H3068

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 16:3 (References Lord): And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Micah 6:4 (References Moses): For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

Isaiah 37:4 (References Lord): It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.

2 Kings 19:4 (References Lord): It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.

Numbers 11:1 (References Lord): And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.

Romans 12:10 (Parallel theme): Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Numbers 11:29 (References Lord): And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!

1 Peter 5:5 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

2 Samuel 11:27 (References Lord): And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

Philippians 2:3 (Parallel theme): Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.