

Numbers 12:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

Analysis

The phrase 'And the LORD spake suddenly' (Hebrew *pite'om*, פִּתְאוֹם) indicates immediate, unexpected divine intervention. God didn't wait for Moses to defend himself or for the situation to escalate further. The swiftness of divine response demonstrates both God's attentiveness to attacks on His servants and His sovereign authority to intervene in human affairs without human initiation.

The command 'Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation' summoned all parties to the place of God's presence. The tabernacle, where God met with Moses (Exodus 33:9-11), would be the location for divine judgment. By calling all three, God indicated that this was not a matter for human resolution but required direct divine arbitration. The movement toward God's presence is always the proper response to conflict—bringing disputes into the light of His holiness and truth.

The simple obedience 'and they three came out' shows that even in their rebellion, Miriam and Aaron recognized God's authority. They came immediately when God called, demonstrating that sinners still respect divine summons even while challenging human authority. This anticipates the final judgment when all humanity will stand before God's throne, and every mouth will be stopped (Romans 3:19).

Historical Context

The tabernacle of congregation (Hebrew *ohel mo'ed*, אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד) was the meeting place where God manifested His presence and spoke with Moses. The cloud descended there (verse 5), representing the divine glory. Calling Miriam and Aaron to this place emphasized the gravity of the situation—this wasn't merely interpersonal conflict but sin against God's appointed order. The public nature of this confrontation (the whole camp could observe the cloud) meant God's vindication of Moses would be visible to all.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does God's sudden intervention teach about His protective care for leaders under unjust attack and His timing in vindicating them?
2. How does the calling of all parties to the tabernacle illustrate that all conflicts should ultimately be brought into God's presence for His resolution rather than resolved merely through human negotiation?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	פְּתָאֵם	אֶל	מֹשֶׁה	וְאֶל	אַהֲרֹן
spake	And the LORD	suddenly	H413	unto Moses	H413	and unto Aaron
H559	H3068	H6597		H4872		H175
וְאֶל	מִרְיָם	וַיָּצֵא	שְׁלֹשָׁתָם:	אֶל	אֶת הָעֵל	
H413	and unto Miriam	Come out	And they three	H413	unto the tabernacle	
	H4813	H3318	H7969		H168	
מִוֶּעַד	וַיָּצֵא	שְׁלֹשָׁתָם:				
of the congregation	Come out	And they three				
H4150	H3318	H7969				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 76:9 (Parallel theme): When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.