

MIRIAM

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The Old Testament Hebrew = Mary in New Testament and =
Mariamne, Herod's wife and victim.

Amram & Jocebed

Moses 0

Aaron 3

Miriam 12 (old enough to get married)

Exodus 2:1-10 took care of baby brother

COURAGE!

When does it take courage to do the right thing?

How can you overcome fear and have courage?

Exodus 15:1,20-21 led women in song after Red Sea

LEADER, encourage, exhort others

How can you be a good leader among your friends?

What can you do to encourage and help others?

Numbers 12 – JEALOUS of Moses' new wife

Leprosy, Moses prayed and healed

Do you ever get jealous of someone? Why?

How do you feel when someone talks about you?

Do you ever criticize others or say bad things?

What should you do about it?

Numbers 20:1-2 Miriam died in a waterless place in the
wilderness, but God subsequently caused water to appear there.

Miriam was the big sister of Moses. Her name means 'one who loves or is loved by Yahweh'. Yahweh means 'the self-existent one'. Yahweh is one of the ways the children of Israel referred to God.

Meet the family

Amram and Jochebed were the father and mother of Miriam, Aaron and Moses. Moses was the youngest of the three yet became the leader of the pack ([Exodus 2:3-4](#); [Exodus 6:20](#); [Numbers 26:59](#)). Moses was the man who led Israel out of Egypt.

As the big sister of the family Miriam knew all the secrets. Women often get to know about things that men don't.

When Pharaoh of Egypt decreed the death of all Israel baby boys in a desperate attempt to curb the growth of Israel, Amram and Jochebed put baby Moses into a waterproof basket and set it on the river in an attempt to save his life. It was Miriam who was watching the basket when the daughter of Pharaoh discovered it. It was Miriam who suggested that a woman from the Hebrew people be found to take care of Moses. You can just imagine the excitement in Miriam's eyes as she ran back to inform her mother of the good news.

Miriam's quick thinking meant Moses was brought up by his own mother. If there was anything to know about Moses Miriam knew it.

Miriam the prophetess

Miriam was with Moses throughout the nine plagues. She came out of Egypt with Moses. Miriam was a woman of God. She was indeed a prophet herself ([Exodus 15:20](#)). The fact that Miriam was a prophet is a little known fact because everyone concentrates on Moses. Miriam was called to play a less prominent role than Moses but nevertheless a vital one.

The same is very true in the body of Christ today. Many women despise the roles they are called to play because they are not prominent public ministries. The mother of Moses fulfilled her destiny. She brought up a godly child. Jochebed, Moses' mother ([Num 26:59](#), [Exodus 6:20](#)) is not well known yet she played one of the most important roles in the nation of Israel and indeed the Church.

Indeed, both the parents of Miriam received special commendation from God in [Hebrews 11:23](#)

Dear Woman, maybe God has called you to minister to a small group of people within your Church. Maybe you are an encourager or exhorter. You

might even have the gift of prophecy and have been used to minister to several wonderful people in a way that does not seem very significant. Or maybe you are presently bringing up children and like the mother of Moses, do not consider your job as being that significant. Serving God is doing what He wants you to do and not what people think as important. God rewards and blesses us for being faithful in the things He has called us to do and not in the things we want to do.

Contention

Miriam knew Moses very well. This created a problem for her. She was not able to see her little brother Moses as the anointed prophet of God.

When Moses married an Ethiopian woman Miriam and Aaron spoke up against his choice. Some Bible translations call the woman a Cushite, others Ethiopian and some even say Sudanese. What is clear is that the woman was a foreigner. Bible scholars are divided over whether she was of African descent, as names and geography have changed in meaning over the centuries. In the ancient world the whole of the southern world from Africa to India was denoted by the word Ethiopia (English travellers as late as the 17th Century still used the name in that sense). All this leaves the possibility but not confirmation that Moses wife could have been of African descent.

Miriam's name is mentioned first when it comes to the criticism of Moses ([Numbers 12:1](#)). This has been interpreted as an indication that the criticism of Moses was Miriam's idea. Aaron simply followed along (Aaron was always good at following).

Notice that although the criticism started because of the wife Moses had married it soon became an issue of who could hear from God. Is Moses the only one who can hear God? seemed to be the main issue of contention ([Numbers 12:2](#)).

Jealousy sets in when we least expect it. It is easy to see how Miriam became offended. After all, she knew Moses when he was in nappies. She was also a prophet herself. So how was it that he was being so authoritative. She could hear God too!

The truth of the matter was that Miriam, Aaron and Moses were a team sent by God to deliver Israel ([Micah 6:4](#)). Miriam, our main focus here, was instrumental in saving Moses (Exodus 2:1-10) and leading Israel in worship ([Exodus 15:20-21](#)). her ministry was not insignificant, yet she took her eyes off her privileged calling and concentrated on what Moses had that she did not.

Contentment with our calling in life is vital if we are to avoid growing envious of others.

God's judgment on Miriam was swift and severe. Moses, true to his nature, pleaded for her and she was restored again (Numbers 12).

If you have a husband (or wife) who God is using, make sure you honour and respect the gift and anointing on the person's life despite their weaknesses. Chances are Miriam knew about the weaknesses of Moses that others did not know about. Hence it was harder for her to respect him. We always need to honour people of God. Dishonouring them is dishonouring God.

Miriam loved the Lord. Indeed that is what her name means. She just got her attitude wrong and this got her into trouble. God punished her and later restored her again. Some other people who did not really love the Lord and who also stood up against Moses were not as fortunate as Miriam