

Lesson Twenty-Five: *A Generation's Failure-Jealousy*
Numbers 12:1-16

Themes:

Numbers: Despite Israel's rebellion, God raises up a new generation to accomplish His ordained purposes.

Numbers 10:11-25:18: When God's people disobey, they forfeit His blessing and are subject to wrath.

Numbers 12: God's people must accept His word from His chosen messenger.

I. (1-2) **The Complaint**

- a. *Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?*
 - i. Aaron and Miriam's sin: Jealousy
 1. Jealousy is the younger twin of covetousness.
 - ii. Coveting: a *sinful* desire for things not possessed
 1. Forbidden in scripture:
 - a. *You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor* (Ex 20:17).
 2. What are the duties required in the tenth commandment? (WLC 147)
 - a. *The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.*
 - b. **Contentment:** "A willingness to accept that condition in which God's providence has placed us, without murmuring or complaining, or being envious at the blessings or prosperity of others" (Johannes Vos).
 - i. Satisfaction in the Lord: a recognition of His sovereign goodness *despite* the circumstances
 1. *O taste and see that the LORD is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!* (Ps 34:8).
 2. *Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength* (Neh 8:10b).
 - ii. Contentment and providence (Phil 4:11-13)
 - iii. Contentment and volition
 - c. **Charity:** to rejoice in another's welfare as if it were your own
 - i. The fruit of Matthew 22:37-39 and Philippians 2:1-4
 - ii. Charity and the death of self
 - iii. Charity and providence
 3. What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment? (WLC 148)
 - a. *The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are, discontentment with our own estate; envying and grieving at the good of our neighbor, together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.*
 - i. Discontentment: to doubt or disdain the Lord's provision
 - ii. Sinful affections: harboring evil thoughts, desires, or motives with regard to our neighbor

4. What other sins are birthed by covetousness?
 - a. Pride, resentment, bitterness, hatred, and murder (Gen 4:1-8)
- iii. The nature of Miriam and Aaron's sin:
 1. (1) Rationalization: jealousy teaches you to lie to yourself
 2. (2) Resentment:
 - a. A sinful estimation of themselves
 - i. *Even those that are well preferred are seldom pleased if others be better preferred. Those that excel are commonly envied* (Matthew Henry).
 - ii. Luke 9:46-48
 - b. Regarding Moses' authority and relationship with the Lord
 - c. Aaron as the elder brother
- iv. The severity of Miriam and Aaron's sin:
 1. Position:
 - a. A prophetess and high priest (Mic 6:4)
 - b. Moses' siblings (John 7:5)
 2. Influence:
 - a. Disunity among God's people
 - b. Threat to Moses' authority
 - c. An encouragement to rebellion
 3. Pride:
 - a. A rejection of God's holiness (v.8)
 - b. A rejection of God's order (v.8)

II. (3-8) The Defense

- a. *Not so, with My servant Moses, he is faithful in all My household...*
 - i. The Lord is a swift defender of the meek.
 - ii. (3) The humility of Moses:
 1. His zeal for the Lord's honor (Ex 32)
 2. His meekness regarding his own honor (Matt 5:5)
 3. His innocence
 - iii. (4-8) God's defense:
 1. (4) *Suddenly*: a swift response
 2. (5) *The LORD came down*: a significant response
 3. (6-8a) *Hear now My words*: an authoritative response
 - a. The exaltation of Moses (I Peter 5:6)
 4. (8b) *Why then were you not afraid*: a terrifying response
 - a. The fear of the Lord

III. (9-16) The Punishment

- a. *When the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous...*
 - i. (9-10) Severe:
 1. The removal of His presence
 2. Separation from the community
 - ii. (10) Public: as a warning to the community
 - iii. (11-12) Humbling: Aaron must plead to the one he disdained
 - iv. (11) Effective: a penitent heart
 - v. (14) Merciful: Miriam will be healed
 - vi. (15) Just: Miriam will be humbled
- b. *And the people did not move on...*
 - i. (15) Sin arrests the forward progress of God's people
 1. The call for confession and repentance
 - ii. (15-16) The Lord's mercy: *afterward she may be received...the people moved out*