

Miriam

I am Miriam. You have probably heard of me because of my little brother Moses. I actually helped save his life when he was a baby. I was 10 and my brother Aaron was 3. I loved babies and when mother said that Moses would be killed by Pharaoh's soldiers, I was horrified. Mother made a basket, put him in it and set it in the Nile. I was to watch and what I saw was a miracle – the daughter of Pharaoh saw him and felt sorry for him, even though she recognized him as a Hebrew baby. She picked him up and I came out of my hiding place. I don't know how I got the boldness to do it, but I said, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" Mother got paid to care for her own child instead of having to mourn his death.

Much later, Moses became the leader of the entire nation. Aaron was high priest and I was considered a prophetess. The Lord gave me the worship gifts of music and dance. After the Red Sea crossing, I led the people in, "Sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted. The horse and rider hurled into the sea."

But being a prophetess does not guarantee wise behavior. Aaron and I questioned Moses' authority. We said, "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Hasn't he also spoken through us?" Technically, Moses had broken the Law in his marriage to Zipporah, whose father was the priest of Midian. We learned quickly that technicalities are not a good way to determine God's will. The LORD appeared to me, Aaron and Moses in all his glory and said that his relationship with Moses was beyond that of a prophet who gets messages in visions and dreams. With Moses, the LORD speaks face-to-face. Because I had spoken against Moses, the LORD caused me to be suddenly afflicted with leprosy. After 7 days of isolation outside the camp to think about it, I was completely healed.

I wish Aaron had been stricken with leprosy, not because I wanted something bad to happen to him but because I wished that he had learned the lesson about being true to the living God. He was involved in the terrible idolatry at the foot of Mt Sinai. I did not participate, but shamefully was silent when I ought to have tried to dissuade him.

I was then to see an even greater consequence of failing to trust the Lord and questioning the leadership of Moses. When coming to the border of the Promised Land, and after the 12 spies brought their report, the entire nation forgot the wonders of the Lord's provision in the Exodus and believed a bad report. They did not trust that the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob could give them the power to conquer the land He had promised to them. As a result, that whole generation wandered in the desert for 40 years, still experiencing the miracles of food and water, but missing out on the goodness prepared for them by the grace of God.

When I died, the people were still wandering, and still complaining. Some had even been swallowed up by the earth as punishment for their disobedience. It is more than just forgetting the mighty works of God in the past but a matter of the heart. We were not completely devoted to the LORD. We did not love him with all our heart, soul and might.

But do not just look down on us. How about you? Are you believing the promises of the LORD God Jehovah? Are you willing to trust him and face the challenges he has allowed you to face? Or are you focusing on technicalities, or anxieties or discomforts? He allows them to uncover the deep motivations of your heart, and to allow you to change.

Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy