

Spiritual Envy (Numbers 12)

Introduction

“The French want no one to be their superior. The English want inferiors. The Frenchman constantly raises his eyes above him with anxiety. The Englishman lowers his beneath him with satisfaction. On either side it is pride, but understood in a different way” (de Tocqueville).

1. Would that All the Lord’s People were Prophets! (11:24-30)

Prophesying was a mark of the Holy Spirit’s empowerment, as it would later be at Pentecost (Acts 2:4ff). But Joshua felt that other people prophesying would undermine Moses’ authority. “We should all rejoice that the Lord has manifested His Spirit and is moving amongst His people. It does not matter that I was not there; it only matters that the Lord would be glorified.” (Thomas Craddock).

2. The Priesthood of Every Believer Run Amok (12:1-3)

It wasn’t as though Aaron was and Miriam were not gifted and great in Israel. The real issue was Moses’ authority being superior to their own.

“Our blessed Lord, ‘when he was reviled, reviled not [in turn]; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.’ ... To all the accusations that were brought against him, our Lord made no reply, ‘insomuch that the governor marveled greatly.’ ... It is the labour of my life so to act that on my account also the governor, or spectator, may marvel greatly” (Charles Simeon).

3. God Vindicates the Authority of Moses the Meek (12:4-9)

God has not distributed to all men the same. “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me” (Matt 10:40).

4. God’s Lesson: Receive with Meekness the Lord’s Mediation (12:10-16)

Rom 12:3, “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith” (see 12:10, Phil 2:3, Matt 11:29).

NT Application: "Christ as a Son over His own house" (Heb 3:6)

While Moses was a servant in God’s house, Jesus is ever the son who is over the house. While Moses interceded for Israel so Jesus ever intercedes for his people. While Moses saw the form of God, Jesus himself was and is in the form of God. And the religious leaders eventually executed Jesus in largest part because they *envied* him (Mark 15:10). And Israel to this day is unclean, leprous, outside the camp until it’s suffered the full measure of God’s wrath for challenging the authority of the prophet like unto Moses.