

## I. MIRIAM'S LINEAGE AND HISTORICAL PLACEMENT

- Genealogy
  - Daughter of Amram and Jochebed; sister of Aaron and Moses (Numbers 26:59).
  - A granddaughter of Levi (Exodus 6:16–20).
- Chronological Implications
  - Levi was among Jacob's sons who entered Egypt (Genesis 46:11).
  - Miriam, as Levi's **GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER**, lived only a few generations removed from the patriarchs.
  - If she was roughly 80+ years old at the time of the Exodus (being several years older than Moses, Exodus 7:7), then the total sojourn in Egypt could not span 400 literal years.
  - This aligns with Galatians 3:17, which counts 430 years from Abraham's promise to the giving of the Law, not the entire Egyptian stay.
  - Therefore, Israel's actual time **IN EGYPT** was closer to 215 years, not 400.
  - Rabbinic tradition adds that slavery began when Miriam was born, and that her name (**MIRIAM**, "bitterness") commemorates that suffering.
  - Summary: Miriam was Levi's great-granddaughter—only four generations removed from Jacob himself.
- A note concerning Genesis 15:13–16:
  - Verse 13 mentions 400 years "in a land that is not theirs." We assume this to be Egypt, but the text doesn't say this explicitly, and allows for the 400 years to simply be "in a land that is not theirs."
  - The "four hundred years" fits the time from Abraham to the Exodus, not the entire Egyptian residence.

## II. MIRIAM'S EARLY PROPHETIC GIFT

- What we know about Miriam's Prophetic title:
  - She is explicitly called a "prophetess" (Exodus 15:20), yet no explanation is given.
  - It is strongly implied that God spoke to her prophetically, though not as directly as with Moses, and we are not told what He revealed - Num 12:2, 6-8
  - The only words of Miriam are found in Exodus 15:21, which are not particularly prophetic, but rather a repetition of the words of Moses in Exodus 15:1.
  - Because we know **SOMETHING** but **NOT MUCH**, we can move forward in some careful speculation.
- Midrashic tradition (Exodus Rabbah 1:22):
  - The Midrash (ancient Jewish rabbinical commentary) picks up on the fact that in Exodus 15:20 Miriam is simply called the "sister of Aaron."
    - We already knew this, so why tell us?

- We also know her as the sister of her more famous brother, Moses, so why isn't he mentioned?
  - Midrashic speculation: As a child, Miriam prophesied that her mother would give birth to a son who would deliver Israel. When Pharaoh decreed that all male infants be drowned, Amram and Jochebed decided to avoid having more children; Miriam rebuked them, declaring by prophetic inspiration they would give birth to a son who would be the redeemer.
    - This is in line with the general expectation of a redeemer born from a woman from Genesis 3:15.
    - Since the ultimate Redeemer will be "a prophet like Moses," (reference), this supposed prophecy is then fulfilled in Moses' birth (Exodus 2:1–10).
- Hence, her title "prophetess" (Ex. 15:20) likely refers not to her song but to her earlier Spirit-given insight.

## III. THE SONG OF MIRIAM – PROPHECY IN PRAISE

- Context: After the crossing of the Red Sea, Miriam leads the women with timbrels and dancing (Exodus 15:20–21).
- The verb *'ānāh* ("answered") indicates antiphonal response—a refrain to Moses' longer song (Exodus 15:1–18).
- Prophetic Nature of the Song:
  - Early Jewish interpreters saw it as a prophetic proclamation—a preview of God's future victories and final redemption.
  - It thus serves as both a theological interpretation of present deliverance and a prophetic typology of future salvation.

## V. LATER TRADITIONS

- The Hur Tradition
  - Josephus (Ant. 3.2.4): Hur was Miriam's *husband*.
  - Rabbinic tradition: Identifies Miriam with *Ephrath* (1 Chr. 2:19–20), making her the wife of Caleb and mother of Hur, ancestor of Bezalel, the chief artisan of the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:2).
  - Either way, Miriam's legacy is connected to leadership, artistry, and covenant service.
- The Well of Miriam:
  - Numbers 20:1–2: Immediately after her death, "there was no water for the congregation."
  - Rabbinic tradition (Taanit 9a): A miraculous well followed Israel through the wilderness in Miriam's merit; it ceased at her death.
  - Symbolically, this "Well of Miriam" represents the sustaining presence and Spirit of God among His people.