

Numbers 27:1 ¶ Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these *are* the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

Numbers 27:2 And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,

Numbers 27:3 Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons.

Numbers 27:4 Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us *therefore* a possession among the brethren of our father.

When I first read through the first part of this chapter, the thought that first came to mind was: “Nothing ventured, nothing gained.” We are introduced to the five daughters of Zelophehad, descendants of Manasseh—Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. We learned in the previous chapter that they had no brothers.

Numbers 26:33 “And Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but daughters....”

These girls realized that the census had been taken in preparation for determining the land inheritance for each family as they took possession of the land of promise. They realized that, through no fault of their own, their family would not be included in the inheritance because their father had no male descendants. They rightly reasoned that this would not be fair, so they decided to present their case publicly at the door of the tabernacle before Moses, Eleazar and the recognized leaders of the people. In presenting their case, they pointed out that their father had not allied himself with Korah, but had died “in his own sin” as part of the rejected generation of unbelief—as did all those listed in the census (except the sons of Korah that did not ally themselves with their father). They noted that their father had died having no sons, but did not feel that it was right for his family to be left out of the inheritance since he did have five daughters. They respectfully requested that they be given an inheritance as well.

It stands out to me first of all, that these women did not doubt that God would fulfill His promise to give His people the land that had been promised to them; they were women of faith. Scripture is clear in declaring that it is through faith that our prayers/petitions are answered.

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Matthew 21:22 “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

Mark 9:23 “Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

Matthew 15:28 "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

I also sense that they had observed how the LORD had lovingly provided for the needs of His people throughout their years in the desert, and seemed to be confident that He would respond to their request with that same heart of love.

Numbers 27:5 And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.

Numbers 27:6 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Numbers 27:7 The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

Numbers 27:8 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

Numbers 27:9 And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren.

Numbers 27:10 And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren.

Numbers 27:11 And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Moses did not berate the girls for their request, but immediately presented their case before the LORD. This indicates to me that he recognized it to be a valid request as well. The LORD basically told Moses that the request of the daughters was right and that they should be given an inheritance among the portion assigned to their father's family.

The LORD went on to tell Moses to instruct the people of Israel regarding the application of this decision to similar cases in the future. If a man died having no sons, his inheritance was to pass to his daughters; if he had no daughters, it was to go to his brothers; if he had no brothers, it was to be given to his father's brothers; and if his father had no brothers, it was to go to the next of kin.

Ray Stedman makes an important observation regarding this new directive: "The amazing, and rather significant thing about this activity of these girls is that centuries later, this act of faith on the part of these five daughters of Zelophehad established the principle which made possible the right of Jesus Christ to the throne of David through his mother Mary. As you know, Luke tells us that Jesus was commonly supposed to be the son of Joseph, though those on the inside of the story knew that He was not the son of Joseph. As His sonship with Joseph was generally accepted, it became the basis for His legal right to the throne of David. But, had that right been challenged, He would still have had a right to the throne of David through His mother, Mary, on the basis of this law established by the daughters of Zelophehad. For all the rights and prerogatives of the house of David, including the throne, came to Mary on the basis of this principle

established in Israel.”

When we get to Numbers 36, this issue will receive even further clarification.

Numbers 27:12 ¶ **And the LORD said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel.**

Numbers 27:13 **And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.**

Numbers 27:14 **For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.**

In this last half of the chapter, the LORD directs that Joshua be appointed to succeed Moses.

The LORD spoke to Moses and told him to go up to the top of a mount in Abarim to see the land of promise. We learn in Deuteronomy that the specific mountain was Nebo, the very top of which was called Pisgah.

Deuteronomy 34:1 “And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land”

Once he had seen the land, he would die in like manner as Aaron. The LORD explained once again that because Moses had misrepresented God before the people and disobeyed God’s command when providing water for the people at Meribah in Kadehs in the wilderness of Zin, he would not be allowed to enter the promised land.

Though the LORD is instructing Moses about what is going to happen, his death was not to occur immediately; it would still be a few months before that took place.

Numbers 27:15 ¶ **And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying,**

Numbers 27:16 **Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,**

Numbers 27:17 **Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.**

Moses did not argue. He asked the LORD to appoint another leader for the people, one who would lead them as a faithful shepherd.

“God of the spirits of all flesh” – I believe this is a statement acknowledging the LORD as the giver of life—both physical and spiritual.

Numbers 27:18 **And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;**

Numbers 27:19 **And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the**

congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

Numbers 27:20 And thou shalt put *some* of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

Numbers 27:21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

The LORD told Moses to take Joshua the son of Nun and lay hands on him before Eleazar and the congregation as the LORD's chosen leader to succeed Moses. The laying on of Moses hands provided a visual for the fact that Moses was transferring his authority to Joshua. Eleazar was to confirm the LORD's choice by using the Urim (short for Urim and Thummim).

We are not told much in scripture about the Urim and Thummim; but according to Strongs, they represent light and perfections or complete truth. We know that they were kept in the breastplate of the High Priest and were used to determine the LORD's will.

Exodus 28:30 "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually."

1 Samuel 28:6 "And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets."

Joshua is described as a man possessing "the spirit," which I believe is a reference to the Holy Spirit, a special empowerment given to a chosen few in Old Testament times according to the LORD's purposes. David was one of the chosen few and he feared losing the presence of the Spirit in his life.

Psalms 51:10-11 "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me."

Numbers 27:22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: Numbers 27:23 And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

Moses presented Joshua before Eleazar and the people according to the LORD's direction publicly declaring him as his successor before the LORD. This allowed a time of transition in the eyes of the people before the death of Moses.