

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
2-2-22
Numbers 27

The Request Of Zelophehad's Daughters - Verses 1-4

¹ The daughters of Zelophehad son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, belonged to the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah. They came forward ² and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting and said, ³ “Our father died in the wilderness. He was not among Korah’s followers, who banded together against the LORD, but he died for his own sin and left no sons. ⁴ Why should our father’s name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father’s relatives.”

27:3 “Died for his own sin” means that he died a natural death. His death fell under the judgment of the entire nation for believing the faithless scouts.

27:3-4 Up to this point, the Hebrew law gave sons alone the right to inherit. The daughters of Zelophehad, having no brothers, came to Moses to ask for their father’s possessions. God told Moses that if a man died without sons, his inheritance would go to his daughters (27:8). But the daughters could keep it only if they married within their own tribe, probably so the territorial lines would remain intact (36:5-12).

The Settlement – Verses 5-11

⁵ So Moses brought their case before the LORD, ⁶ and the LORD said to him, ⁷ “What Zelophehad’s daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father’s relatives and give their father’s inheritance to them. ⁸ “Say to the Israelites, ‘If a man dies and leaves no son, give his inheritance to his daughter. ⁹ If he has no daughter, give his inheritance to his brothers. ¹⁰ If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father’s brothers. ¹¹ If his father had no brothers, give his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan, that he may possess it. This is to have the force of law for the Israelites, as the LORD commanded Moses.”

27:5-7 The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right: God seemed pleased that the daughters of Zelophehad brought this issue before Moses. God declared that if a father had no sons, the inheritance then could go to the daughters. However when they married, they would take the family land with them, thus nullifying the father's estate. To deal with this, chapter 36 brings in additional rules governing the marriage of heiresses."

27:9 If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers: However, if there were no daughters, the inheritance then went to the father's brothers. If there were no brothers, the inheritance went to the next of kin.

And it shall be to the children of Israel a statute of judgment: The remarkable thing about these laws is that they were all made in anticipation - in faith - of coming into the inheritance of land in the Canaan. This was a real issue - at this time - for the daughters of Zelophehad shows they were real women of

faith, concerned about dividing up what they did not yet have in their hands, but knew they would possess by faith.

God Tells Moses Of His Coming Death – Verses 12-14

¹² Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go up this mountain in the Abarim Range and see the land I have given the Israelites. ¹³ After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was, ¹⁴ for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes.” (These were the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.)

27:12-14 You also shall be gathered to your people: Moses was first told he would die before coming to the Promised Land in Numbers 20. It was still many months until Moses would climb to the top of the mountain, able to see the Promised Land but not able enter it, and die there (Deuteronomy 34). Yet God told him of it here, so as to prepare his heart for the right time.

Moses' Response To God's Announcement – Verses 15-17

¹⁵ Moses said to the LORD, ¹⁶ “May the LORD, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community ¹⁷ to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD’s people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

27:15-17 After hearing of his coming fate, Moses does not try to talk God out of it, or complain - his only concern seems to be for the congregation, for the people, not for himself. Moses asked God to appoint a leader who was capable of directing both external and internal affairs—one who could lead them in battle, but who would also care for their needs. The Lord responded by appointing Joshua. Many people want to be known as leaders. Some are very capable of reaching their goals, while others care deeply for the people in their charge. The best leaders are both goal-oriented and people-oriented.

Joshua Chosen And Given Authority – Verses 18-21

¹⁸ So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him. ¹⁹ Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. ²⁰ Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. ²¹ He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in.”

27:15-21 Moses did not want to leave his work without making sure a new leader was ready to replace him. First, he asked God to help him find a replacement. Then, when Joshua was selected, Moses gave him a variety of tasks to ease the transition into his new position. Moses also clearly told the people that Joshua had the authority and the ability to lead the nation. His display of confidence in Joshua was good for both Joshua and the people. To minimize leadership gaps, anyone in a leadership position should train others to carry on the duties should he or she suddenly or eventually have to leave. While you have the opportunity, follow Moses’ pattern: pray, select, develop, and commission.

Joshua Chosen And Given Authority – Verses 22-23

²² Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. ²³ Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses.

27:22 Being faithful and obedient to him in all things, though ever so contrary to his own private interest and to that of his family. “And he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation”: As his successor, whom God had named and appointed as such. This is just saying, that Moses dedicated Joshua for this calling, just as God had commanded him to do.

27:23 And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses. Moses did this cheerfully, and did more than he was commanded. For the Lord said to him, “lay thine hand”, but he laid both his hands. “And gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded Moses” (Num. 27:19).

This is a clear proof that Moses was no imposter, since he sought not to aggrandize his family, or serve the interest of that. Nor did he in the least repine or murmur that the priesthood was given to his brother Aaron and sons. The gift given to Joshua, was the power to lead the people into the Promised Land.