

The Daughters of Zelophehad.
Numbers 27:1-11 and Joshua 17:1-6
Sunday evening, August 15, 2010.

I. An inheritance in the Land

A. In the book of Numbers Israel is numbered twice:

1. Once before they come to the borders of the Promised Land; at the beginning of the second year after leaving Egypt. This concerned numbering and systematizing of the families that left Egypt.
Based on this registration of Israel's families the land would be divided to them, and each family would get a share in it.
2. The second time at the end of their forty years of wilderness wanderings; shortly before the death of Moses. This time it involved the registration of the children of those who left Egypt, as their parents, through unbelief and disobedience had died in the wilderness.
Again this registration was the basis for dividing the promised land, and giving each family a share in it.
3. Only the men were numbered and would get a share in the promised land; the women would get their share by virtue of marriage to the men.
4. Canaan, as the entire OT economy, served as a type and shadow of our eternal inheritance in the heavenly promised land, and for that reason it was important to the people of God that they got a share in it. It was a token and pledge pointing to their eternal inheritance.
5. When the first census was taken Zelophehad had been included, and his family would have had an inheritance in the land. Having only daughters as children, and having died in the wilderness as part of that entire generation, his family was simply passed over when the second census was taken, and his family, by way of the absence of any sons, would not have had a share in the promised land.
6. It is pointed out that Zelophehad did not die as a result rebellion against the Lord, as had Korah, and Dathan and Abiram and later Achan. These latter ones all died with their families so that their name and inheritance would be blotted out from among Israel; so they would not get any part in the land.
Zelophehad had died as a result of the common law of mortality to which all, because of sin, are subject.
7. It was because the family of Zelophehad had been passed over in the second census that his five surviving daughters appeal their case to Moses, requesting that their father's share of the promised land, in his name, might be given to them, so that their father's name and inheritance might remain in Israel.
This case became a precedent for all such and similar cases, Moses after consulting with the Lord, granting them their request.
8. In Joshua 17 the tribe of Manasseh receives their remaining inheritance. Half of it they had been given by Moses already; it was located East of the Jordan River. Now they receive the remainder of their inheritance, located West of the Jordan River. This part is divided into ten parts. Five of those parts are given to the families of male heirs of Manasseh; the other five to the five daughters of

Zelophehad.

II. The nobility of Zelophehad's daughters.

A. They acted out of a strong faith in the promises of God, that He would bring them into the promised land and give it to them. Standing in that conviction they look ahead and desire that their family name and inheritance might be preserved in Israel.

B. With their lives these five daughters show us that by acting prudently and wisely while we still live in the wilderness of this world, we too, by faith, and by appealing to our greater Moses, may secure an inheritance in the heavenly Promised Land.

C. These five daughters, by way of their godly courage, show us, that those who earnestly desire to have an inheritance in the heavenly promised land, may have it by appealing to the greater Moses. This should encourage us to earnestly pursue it.

Along these lines we should secure a place for ourselves in the earthly realm of God's kingdom, which is His church, and we should not despise church membership.

These daughters valued the earthly structures of the kingdom of God as it was manifested at that time, and so should we. We can not despise these earthly structures and yet expect to be rightly entitled to the heavenly inheritance they represent.

D. These five daughters show us that we must not be too shy or backward about our inheritance. Here the Kingdom of God "suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Matt. 11:12.

Do not say in your heart, "I will leave it to God if I shall ever have a share in His promised land; if He wills, I shall have it, and if not, I can not help it."

Go after the promise; ask for it, and in so doing secure your own eternal inheritance. Such an approach constitutes the lively exercise of faith to which we are called.

When the Lord says "Ask, Seek, and Knock," Luke 11:9, we should not reply by saying: "I'll leave it up to You; whatever You want to give me."

E. These daughters honored the memory and name of their departed father. Their actions paid respect to him, and his good name was upheld. It is pointed out that he never did anything deserving of losing his inheritance, by way of his children, in the Promised Land. The only thing that would have excluded him was that he had no sons.

F. These daughters show us that the Lord not only takes notice of the affairs of nations, but also of those of individuals and families. The Lord takes up this case; He gives guidance and judges in their favor. The Lord will still take up the cases of individual families who seek Him out, and order them according to His will.