

210224-4 Nu 27, Zelophedhad's Daughters, Moses to Abarim & Joshua's Appointment—CThurman

In the previous chapter the LORD commanded Moses and Eleazar, the son of Aaron, to conduct a second census of the nation of Israel, like to the first census taken about 38 years earlier.

Why Eleazar, and not Ithamar. Eleazar was chosen of the LORD to assume the office of the High Priest at the death of his father Aaron. (cf. Nu.20.26-28). Remember that Aaron had four sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. Nadab and Abihu died for offering strange fire to the LORD. (cf. Lev.10.1, 2) Of the other two sons remaining, Eleazar and Ithamar, Eleazar appears to be the eldest. Sometimes in Scripture the names of children are cited in their birth order. This seems to be the case here. There are fifteen texts of Scripture which have the name of Eleazar preceding the name of Ithamar, and no Scripture showing them in reverse order.

What was the purpose for taking a census? For the twelve tribes which were camped afar off from the tabernacle, the purpose for the census was to determine how to equitably distribute the land among the tribes. The fewest in number receive less land than the tribes which were more in number. (cf. Nu.26.54, 55) The land was distributed according to the men that were numbered from 20 years of age and upward. But where the land is located that the tribes shall receive for their inheritance is determined by lot. Remember that the first generation of them which had come out of Egypt rejected coming into the land of promise. Therefore the LORD condemned the nation to wandering wilderness for 40 years, a year for every day that the spies searched out the land (cf. Nu.14.34), until all that were counted in that first census had died, but for the two spies that returned with a good report of that which they saw. (cf. Nu.14.29; 26.64) This all now fulfilled and the people at the brink of coming into the land, the LORD commands this second census. This census reveals a few things worth mentioning.

Over the 40-year sojourn:

1. Of the twelve tribes Simeon, under the standard of Reuben (Simeon, a tribe in the southern camp), diminished most in military strength. (-37,100)

2. Of these four major camps Reuben (the southern camp) was diminished the most in military strength. (-45,020)
3. Of the twelve tribes Manasseh, under the standard of Ephraim (Manasseh, a tribe in the western camp), increased the most in military strength. (+20,500)
4. Of these four major camps Ephraim (the western camp) gained the most in military strength. (+22,700)
5. The totals of the four camps combined show a mere decrease in military strength of -1,820 warriors at the end of the 40-yr. sojourn.
6. The Levites' census indicate an increase numbers by +1,000 or +700* souls at the end of the 40-yr. sojourn.
7. The combined figures for the whole nation, the camps afar and near shows a difference of either -820 or -1,120 souls at the end of the 40-yr. sojourn.

* Could the difference in the numbers of the census of the Levitical tribes be the result of Korah's rebellion? Particularly affected by this rebellion was the Levitical tribe of Kohath. The number, 250, only counts the princes of the Levitical company that were complicit with Korah. (cf. Nu.16.2) Notice the different wording there is of Kohath's census figures to that Gershon's and Merari's. (comp. Nu.3.22, 28, 34 & 39)

Now, the census of the Levites differed from the census of the other twelve tribes because they counted all of the males that were from a month old and upward rather than those that were 20+ years and upward able for war. Also, the purpose was different because the Levites received no inheritance of land.

Nu 18:20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

De 18:2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.

Churches are like the Levites in this respect – they have no land grant. The Lord is their inheritance.

Col 3:24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Wherever the Levites came to live they were to receive a tithe, I think, from that place of the heave offerings and firstfruits as they ministered to the nation in the name of the LORD. (cf. Nu.18.20-32; 26.62; Deu.18.1-8)

For what it's worth, if we combine the numbers of the census of the whole nation there is a diminishment of either -820 or -1,120. It is a matter of fact that -1,120 divided by the 5 major camps [Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, Dan and Levi] is 24; 24 is the number for the priesthood.

This chapter concerns a question about the inheritance; Moses is commanded to go to a certain place to view the promised-land before he dies; and Joshua is appointed successor of Moses.

A Question about a Son-less Father's Land Inheritance (vss.1-11)

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.

Counting from these daughter to Abraham is ten generations; to Noah is 20; and to Adam is 29.

Mahlah, מַחְלָה, mach-lah, mildness, mild; the verb form is חָלָה, chalah, to be weak, fall sick, be grieved, to be diseased, to pray, to beseech, to wound.

Hoglah, חֹגְלָה, chog-lah, thought to be a magpie, partridge.

Noah, נֹחַ, no-ach, rest; the verb form is נָח, nuach, to rest, to be quiet.

Milcah, מִלְכָּה, mil-kah, counsel; the verb form of this is מָלַךְ, to reign.

Tirzah, תִּרְצָה, tir-tsah, delight; the verb form of this is רָצָה, ra-tsah, to like, to please, to enjoy, to have favor, to accept, to set affection, to consent, to reconcile.

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,

That these five daughters of Zelophehad stood before the same men that were charged with taking the census. In Nu.1.4, the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron take with them *a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers* to conduct this census.

head, רֹאשׁ, rōsh, tss. the top, the principal, the chief, the ruler, the captain, the first.

These were the same that were called in Nu.1.16, *the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.*

renowned, קָרָא, qa-ra, tss. the called, the famous, the renowned.

princes, נָשִׂיא, na-see, tss. a ruler, a prince, a chief, a governor. So, 27.2, princes is tss. from this Hebrew noun.

These daughters presented their case to the right people. They didn't go about murmuring and complaining how that they thought they were getting a raw deal or the short end of the stick. So they stood before them that, in the final analysis determined how much of a land grant each of the tribes should receive. It only makes sense – if there is a question about how the land will be distributed take that to the ones that have to do with that task.

saying,

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.*

Now the implication is, *our father died in the wilderness along* with all of our father's brethren for no reason outside of that which all of our fathers died. All of these *fathers* died because of sin, but not because of committing a certain offense, and yet the sons of these fathers are counted and allotted land? So, why shouldn't we receive our father's part?

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.*

Seems to say that had Zelophehad had sons his daughters would have had a share in the land through their brothers' inheritance, though the land was not theirs but their bothers.

5 *And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.*

Moses heard what they said and presented their case before the LORD.

6 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

7 *The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren;*

In other words, they should receive a portion with the sons of their fathers though they are daughters.

We men need to be ready to hear the wisdom of the laides. Yes, absolutely agreed that women are to be silent in the meetings. They should not take the lead or speak publicly in a mixed assembly. Listen this is basic Corinthian 101 doctrine. But this doesn't mean that women don't have wisdom, and wisdom that shouldn't be heard and imparted to others. (cf. 1S.a25.14-35, Abigail's wisdom)

and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

The idea is, though Zelophehad had died, not for some transgression that might disqualify him from receiving an inheritance, such as Korah's rebellion, but as most of the other men that were numbered in the first census had died, his descendants, though daughters, should still receive his portion of land as if they were sons.

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.

9 And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. (his brothers)

This seems to mean that if a father has no sons or daughters then the inheritance should go to his brothers.

10 And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren [his uncles].

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 [the nearest family relation], ***and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.***

The point is, the land is to be preserved as a family, tribal possession. It was never to become the permanent possession of another tribe.

Le.25.23 ¶ The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.

It might be lost because of indebtedness, but there was provision in the law which restored all land to its proper owners once every fifty years. This was called the year of the jubilee.

Le 25:13 In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession.

Now, the issue of daughters receiving their father's portion creates the potential for the land inheritance to move from one tribe to another. What should be done? The Urim (meaning *lights*, signifying *discernment*). (which we will consider later in this chapter.

Nu.36.6 This is the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.

7 So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

8 And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.

9 Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

So, it is my opinion that if a daughter did marry a man of another tribe her inheritance would be forfeited to her family. It should default to her father's brethren, then to her father's uncles, etc. The land cannot not come into the possession of any tribe.

Moses Commanded to Go View the Land before Dying (vss. 12-14)

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.

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

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.

First, concerning Abarim. Evidently this refers to mountain range that looks over the Jordan River valley.

Nu 33:47 And they removed from Almondiblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo.

48 And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho.

Deu.3.23 And I besought the LORD at that time, saying,

24 O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?

25 I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.

26 But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.

27 Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

28 But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.

Deu.32.48 And the LORD spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying,

49 Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession:

50 And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:

51 Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel.

52 Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.

Concerning Meribah, or waters of strife:

There are two Meribah's or strifes. The first Meribah was where the children of Israel strove at Rephidim, in the wilderness of Sinai, against Moses. Here Moses smote the rock according to the word of the LORD and the water came forth.

Meribah Rephidim:

*Ex.17.6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt **smite the rock**, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.*

7 And he called the name of the place Massah (to try), and Meribah (to strive), because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

8 ¶ Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

The second Meribah was where the children of Israel strove with the LORD at Kadesh (Wilderness of Zin) and Moses in his anger smote the rock twice.

Meribah Kadesh:

*Nu 20:8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and **speak ye unto the rock** before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.*

...

*11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod **he smote the rock twice**: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.*

12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Ps.106.32 They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

To be smitten refers to a means of death. The rock was a type for Jesus Christ. (cf. 1Co.10.4) To be smitten twice refers to the two means of death our Lord suffered. He suffered at the hands of the people and under the justice of His heavenly Father.

Lu 20:14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

In this way, Christ being doubly smitten the sins of the elect of God were put away forever and the justice of God satisfied (Moses [the law] is put away, the sword of God's vengeance is *sheathed* forever).

Joshua Is Appointed Moses' Successor (vss. 15-23)

15 ¶ And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying,

16 Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,

spirits, הַרוּחֹת, ha-roo-choth, prefixed definite article הַ, ha the, to the noun רוּחַ, ruach, with a fem. pl. termination ת׳, -oth; , ruach, is tss. the Spirit, a spirit, in the cool (Ge.3.8), of mind, a wind, a blast, etc.; cf. v.18.

Moses looks to the wisdom of God to set a man over the nation. He acknowledges that LORD is the God over, or in other words the LORD knows what men are made of. He knows whether there is a man capable for this task. This is the implication based on verse 18 and the words *in whom is the spirit*.

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.

18 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun,

Joshua, Caleb and Moses are now the oldest living men in the camp. All of the other warriors of that first generation that came out of Egypt have died.

a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;

a man in whom is the spirit (or Spirit) –

Spirit – 1599 Geneva Bible, Young’s Literal Version, American Standard Version, Berkley Version, Amplified Bible, Living Bible, Modern King James Version, Literal Version, English Standard Version, The Septuagint (English Translation) (10)

spirit – King James Version, Revised Standard Version, New English Bible, New International Version, New Revised Standard Version, Interlinear Bible (J. P. Green) (6)

The KJV Oxford edition has ‘*spirit*’, and notes in the margin ‘Holy Spirit.’ (Like this, the KJV Cambridge edition gives two marginal references to texts having the ‘Spirit.’

Moffatt’s Translation has ‘*a capable man.*’

The Contemporary English Version has ‘the son of Nun *can do the job...*’

The Tanakh Version has ‘*an inspired man ...*’

Notice the definite article *the*. It is not that Joshua has *a spirit*. Of course he does. But he is noted as having *the spirit*, a remarkable capacity for governance, leadership. I think Moffatt’s translation communicates the idea by the words *a capable man*, though it should be pointed out that properly this is not a translation, but an interpretation of the text. By all accounts the correct translation of the Hebrew רוּחַ, *ruach* is *spirit* or *Spirit*. The interpretation of *spirit*, in my opinion is that of *principle*. There is in Joshua a notable *principle* of governance, shepherding, leading, directing the people of the LORD. This is the LORD’s analysis of the man, not Moses’.

Joshua was a minister to Moses (cf. Ex.24.13) and the first time his name is mentioned is when Moses would have him select warriors to fight against Amalek. (cf. Ex.17.9)

and lay thine hand upon him – By Moses placing his hands upon Joshua he showed to all of Israel who should be his successor.

19 And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

Cause Joshua to know the weight of his charge. All the children of Israel shall know that he is to lead them after the death of Moses.

20 And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him,

honor, מְהוֹדָה, meyh-ho-d^e-kah, a masc. sing. noun of הוֹדָה, hohd, with the prefixed preposition מִן, *from*; הוֹדָה, hohd, is tss. *honor, glory, majesty, comeliness* (Dan.10.8), *beauty, goodliness*; not plain, common or ordinary, but a fit appearance, seemly for the office he holds.

that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

obedient, שָׁמַע, sha-mey[g], a verb tss. *to hear, to obey, to discern, to perceive, to listen, to understand, to consent, etc.*

Perhaps by some gesture Moses communicates before others Joshua's prominent role in the nation. What Moses received from others of the nation he would try to communicate by his actions upon his treatment of Joshua, so that others might emulate the same.

21 And he [Joshua] shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel

for him [Joshua] בְּמִשְׁפֹּט הָאוּרִים
after the judgment of Urim before the LORD:
by

Urim, הָאוּרִים, ha-oor-reem, הַ, ha, definite article *the*, אוּרִים, oor-reem, a masc. pl. noun of the Hebrew for *light*, אוּר, oor, tss. *Urim*

(7), *fires* (5), *light* (1); the plural would be *lights*; Light is for seeing and it is the ability *to discern*.

Thummim, תִּמִּיּוֹת, ha-toom-meem, a masc. pl. noun of תֹּם, tōm, which in the plural would be *perfections*; תֹּם, tōm, is tss. *integrity* (11), *Thummim* (5), *uprightness*, *full*, *perfection*, and as an adj. *full strength*, *perfect way*; as an adv. *uprightly*.

The offices of the priesthood and civil government are distinguishable and separate from each other. The high priest, while wearing the breastplate of judgment (which has inside of it the Urim and Thummim), would take a question or a concern to the LORD in behalf of their leader to receive an answer.

Ex.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.

The LORD would return an answer or give His counsel. In this way the will of the LORD was revealed for the matter at hand. So, the mind of God was conveyed to the inquiring leader or to others of the children of Israel through the high priest. Like this Jesus Christ reveals to us the will of God.

1Co 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Christ is our *wisdom*:

*1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:
31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

Apart from Christ no man can know God, but also, apart from him the Christian cannot know the will of God for all of the issues of life.

at his [the LORD's] word shall they go out, and at his [the LORD's] word they shall come in, both he [Joshua], and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

word, פֶּה, peh, a masc. noun tss. mouth, tenor, according to, word, appointment, the edge (of the sword), commandment.

Through the judgment which Eleazar receives from the LORD both Joshua and the children of shall know when to go out [to war]and to come in [from the same]. As it was for Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, so it shall be for Joshua and Eleazar in Canaan.

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:

23 And he laid his hands upon him,

Notice the plural *hands*. (cf. v.18)

and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

So, in this chapter there was settled the matter of a father's inheritance should he have no sons. Moses is commanded to come into the mountain range of Abarim to get a view of Canaan just before he dies. And, Joshua is appointed to be his successor.

This is the study of Numbers chapter 27.