

Introduction: Solomon said: not all (is) new ‘under the sun’ (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Daniel wrote: until the end many will go to and from and knowledge will increase (Daniel 2:1-4). So, Solomon says some things on earth will be new; and, Daniel says busyness of life will result in more knowledge. The question is: what should people do in unprecedented circumstances? *** As knowledge increases, textbooks need to be modified. My mother told me that in her ninth grade year that started in 1945, when they came to the sentence in their textbook that said ‘matter can neither be created nor destroyed’, their science teacher told them to cross out the sentence and write a footnote at the bottom of the page. As a result of the atom bombs dropped on Japan, scientists then believed matter could be converted to energy at the rate of the speed of light squared: $E=mc^2$. The thinking then was the system of matter and energy remained constant. When I went to the internet to find the way to word this I was shocked to find multiple articles saying, at the subatomic level, the original theory was correct. Matter is always preserved and energy is always preserved – and they are actually equal by the constant of the speed of light. The paragraph that helped me, explained that solid matter, for example a solid plank of wood, has been found to be held together by an enormous amount of ‘binding’ energy. When that energy is unleashed, the wood gets reduced to its subatomic particles. So, knowledge has advanced by ‘quantum leaps’ in the fifty years since I was at WPI! *** With this background, we can be grateful that God’s statutes of instruction given on Mt. Sinai concerning His creation: land, animals, people and more can be amended by Him when un-expected life situations happen. As an example: what do we do with atomic power? *** An example of this happened when God’s people Israel acquired land east of the Jordan River while Moses was still their leader. This extra land was allocated to two and a half tribes. When a man of the half-tribe of Manasseh died without sons to inherit his land, his daughters petitioned Moses that women could inherit their father’s land in this situation. This was a new concept in the cultures of those days. *** Then, after God gave this amendment to His inheritance statute for His people Israel, the elders were concerned the women would marry outside their tribe so that tribe would lose its land to the husband’s tribe. God gave a further amendment to His inheritance statute to address this situation. *** The truth about God in this story is that in a world that constantly ‘churns up’ new circumstances, God’s new people, His Church, must take these exceptional circumstances to God in prayer, seeking guidance from The Holy Spirit according to God’s Word. *** Let’s see what Zelophehad’s daughters can teach us about all this.

I. Zelophehad died without sons to inherit his land, his daughters petition Moses to inherit, he questions Yahweh who says the daughters are right, and amends His inheritance statute. (Numbers 27:1-11)

- A. A man of east Manasseh leaves five daughters and no sons to inherit his land, they petition Moses for possession and he asks Yahweh to judge. (*Verses 1-5*)
1. They drew near, the daughters of Zelophehad ... son of Machir (sold) of Manasseh (make to forget) of Joseph (he will add); and, they were named: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. (*Verse 1*)
Zelophehad: The first root of Zelophehad’s name only appears as the name of a wall-builder under Nehemiah (3:30) and means caper-plant. The second root means ‘sharp’. Capers are bitter, but bring healing. Both surgery and sorrow heal. He belonged to the people who received land east of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee.
Daughters: The daughters names mean, respectively: disease, motion, partridge, queen and favorable. Their father seems to have grown in his knowledge of God’s grace, and optimism, with each new daughter.
 2. They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest and leaders of the congregation at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, to say: our father died in the wilderness, he was in no way among those gathering together in Korah’s company; in his sin he died, and he had no sons. (*Verses 2-3*)
Came near: The daughters stand before Moses, Aaron’s son and leaders in front of the tent of worship.
Father died: They say he died for his lack of faith, but not in rebellion, and he left no sons as heirs.
 3. Why will be taken away the name of our father from his family because not to him son; thou must give to us land inheritance among our father’s brothers. (*Verse 4*)
Petition: After clearing their father of rebellion, they ask for his inheritance alongside the inheritance of their uncles.
 4. Then Moses brought near before Yahweh (what they asked) for judgment. (*Verse 5*)
Moses before Yahweh: Moses is a good leader because he brought this special exceptional situation before Yahweh for Him to judge.

Always take exceptions to The Lord

- B. Yahweh says the daughters are right, and to make sure to give to them land among their uncles, and to add this to His inheritance statute. (*Verses 6-10*)
1. Then Yahweh said to Moses: Right, the daughters of Zelophehad are speaking, surely thou will give them land inheritance among their uncles, and thou will have caused to pass their father’s inheritance to them. (*Verses 6-7*)
Specific provision: In this specific case, Yahweh declares that Zelophehad’s daughters are right! They must be given their father’s land inheritance.

Yahweh makes provisions for men who leave no sons

2. And to the ‘sons’ of Israel, thou will say: man that will die, and son not to him, thou have caused to pass the inheritance of him to his daughter. (*Verse 8*)
Amendment: Yahweh generalizes from this specific case to a permanent amendment to the inheritance statutes for His people for how to pass along the land inheritance of all men dying without a son.

Yahweh makes provisions for men who leave no sons

Application: We must all realize and seek God, in a rapidly changing world, as to how He wants His statutes to be amended according to His righteous Word.

3. If no daughter, give his land inheritance to his brothers; if no brothers, give his land inheritance to his uncles; and if no uncles, give his land inheritance to his nearest kinsman; and, he possessed it, and it has been to the 'sons' of Israel as a statute of judgment as commanded Yahweh to Moses. (*Verses 9-11*)

Expansion: Then Yahweh goes through a list of relatives, ending with any other close relative, who would inherit from a man. The question of who inherits land in exceptional situations seems resolved with this extensive amendment.

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Context: Leading men of Machir come near to Moses asking about Zelophehad's daughters marrying men outside the half-tribe of Manasseh, and the inheritance would be taken away by the tribe of the husband. (*Numbers 36:1-5*)

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II. If women inheriting land marry outside the tribe, the land will be lost; Yahweh commands they marry within their tribe; Zelophehad's daughters obey and are given their inheritance by Joshua. (*Numbers 36:6-12; Joshua 17:3-4*)

- A. The leaders of Manasseh are concerned the daughters will marry outside the tribe, forfeiting the land; Yahweh commands they marry within their tribe, making another amendment. (*Numbers 36:6-9*)
 1. This thing Yahweh commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad: to (man) good in their eyes they will be wives (but only in the tribe of their father they will marry; and, not will be turned over the land inheritance of the 'sons' of Israel from tribe to tribe, because each land inheritance of his father's tribe shall cling (cleave) to the 'sons' of Israel. (*Verses 6-7*)
Five daughters: These five daughters are commanded to marry any man that is good for them, as long as he is in the half-tribe of Manasseh through Machir.

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2. And each daughter possessing a land inheritance from tribe of Israel, to one of the family of her father's tribe will be wife, that will possess of the 'sons' of Israel (each) man the inheritance of his father; and, not will be turned over from tribe to another tribe, because to each its inheritance will cling (cleave) the tribes of the 'sons' of Israel. (*Verses 8-9*)

New amendment: This new amendment has to do with who the daughters inheriting land may marry.

They must stay within their tribe.

Application: As members of Jesus' Church, we must seek to willingly petition God, IN Jesus, to receive the correct amendment to His statutes in every new situation (*Hebrews 4:14-16; 12:18-24*).

- B. Zelophehad's daughters obey Yahweh and marry their cousins; thus, their inheritance was in Manasseh. (*Numbers 36:10-12*)
 1. As Yahweh commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad; then they were: Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah – daughters of Zelophehad, to sons of their uncles: wives. (*Verses 10-11*)

Obedience: These five daughters (listed in a different order) obeyed Yahweh and married their cousins.

Application: We must obey whatever new amendments consistent with His righteous Word that God gives us through The Holy Spirit.

2. From the families of sons of Manasseh, son of Joseph they were (a) wife; then the land inheritance was in the tribe of the family of their father. (*Verse 12*)

Inheritance: Their obedience to Yahweh's amendment given through Moses to marry only within their tribal family preserved the inheritance in their family.

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Application: In The Church, we must guard the inheritance of eternal, abundant and fruitful life we have IN Jesus Christ (*John 3:16; 10:10; 15:16-17*). To preserve this inheritance women must only marry 'brothers' IN Christ and men must marry only 'sisters' IN Christ (*2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 Corinthians 7:39*).

Context: Gilead and Bashan were allocated by Joshua to Zelophehad's clan. (*Joshua 17:1-2*)

Gilead and Bashan: Israel won Bashan in battle from its king Og (*Numbers 21:33-35*). It means fruitful and was located east of the Jordan River, just south of the Sea of Galilee. Gilead was just south of Bashan.

Edrei (a major city) was thirty miles southeast of Galilee.

- C. When Joshua finally allocates the land, Zelophehad's daughters come before Joshua to remind him of Yahweh's command: they are given the inheritance. (*Joshua 17:3-4*)
 1. To Zelophehad ... son of Machir son of Manasseh not were sons, only daughters: their names: [same as *Numbers 27:1*]; then they came before Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun and the leaders to say: Yahweh commanded Moses to give to us an inheritance of land among our brothers. (*Verses 3-4a*)
Request of daughters: Because he served Yahweh longer, Eleazar is named before Joshua. The daughters remind Joshua what he heard as he stood next to Moses as his successor.
 2. Then he gave to them, as the commandment of Yahweh, land inheritance among the brothers of their father. (*Verse 4b*)
Gift: Yahweh's gracious amendments to His inheritance statutes are now fulfilled ['commandment' is literally 'mouth'] by Joshua as the daughters of a man with no sons have now received their father's inheritance with his tribe.

Conclusion: Zelophehad died with no sons to inherit his land. His daughters petitioned Moses that they would inherit his land. He brought their cause to Yahweh who says the daughters are right and He amends His inheritance statute. But, if woman heirs marry outside their tribe the land is lost to the tribe. Yahweh then commands that daughter heirs marry within their tribe: another amendment to His statute. Then, Zelophehad's daughters obey and eventually are given the land by Joshua.

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