



This chapter from 1-11 is about the episode where 5 women, who were all the daughters of a man named Zelophehad, realised that they would have no inheritance under the existing laws, and that the name of their father would be erased from the camp, as he

had no male heirs. They took action to show the injustice of the current situation.

Their names were Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. Their names had meanings which were as follows

- Mahlah – sickness; can mean forgiven
- Noah – wandering; can mean movement
- Hoglah - feast has diminished; can mean dancing or partridge
- Milcah - queen
- Tirzah – delightful or pleasing

People were named quite often in those days after events in their parent's lives. So it can be seen that to begin with life seemed quite tough for their family.

Their father whose name means 'first breach', as in first born son, but some suggest it means protection from terror. He had a clear genealogy and was member of the tribe of Manasseh.

The sisters took their case to the tabernacle. This situation is instructive. In 1 Corinthians 4:34 it says *Let your women keep silence in the Ecclesias: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also says the law.* 1 Timothy 2:11-12 it says *Let the woman learn in silence with all*

*subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 1 Corinthians 14:35 it says: And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.*

The congregation is described as the Ecclesia in the wilderness in Acts 7:38. Yet here the five Sisters walked out from the congregation and demanded to speak to the High Priest, to Moses, and to all the princes of the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle. They called an extraordinary meeting for their plea to be heard.

This shows that women have a very important role to play in the Ecclesia, and are not to be invisible, or think that they have to whisper at the back of the hall, and keep out of the way, seen and not heard, as some interpret the teaching of the Apostle. Sisters do have the opportunity to voice their opinions, observations and point out when there is injustice, - even before the congregation. But it is how it is done. As 1 Corinthians 11: 3 shows there is hierarchy in the Ecclesia. The woman represents the ecclesia, men included, and we are all touched with sin, therefore we are all silent before God Zechariah 2:13, and need an intercessor – Jesus Christ. Brothers act as his mouthpiece, repeating his Word, and thus represent Christ in the ecclesia, and speaks on behalf of the Ecclesia. Humbly and realising that they are not worthy. Therefore, sisters being silent, are teaching the brothers and themselves a lesson. Humility, and great care should be adopted in all aspects of life, but especially in the gathering of the Ecclesia.

This the five sisters were aware of, and conducted themselves with great dignity, humility and without usurping authority, or attempting to teach others. They were not particularly concerned about themselves, but their father's house, and the subsequent division of their father's inheritance – which would have implications on the inheritance of all families, which could be lost through marriage. They could see that the integrity and cohesion of the tribes could be broken down over time. Yet had not Jacob their father made great

prophecies regarding the tribes, which related to events a great way off into the future? But how would these be fulfilled if the family and tribal inheritance could be diminished under the current system?

Thus they could see a lack in the existing laws. They went and stood in the presence of the gathered princes and high priest and Moses. It is not recorded that they requested an audience, but simply stood, as if waiting to be spoken to. It seems they chose a time when the leadership were already gathered.

They laid out their case. Their father had already died, a natural death. He was not among any of the rebels, who had died as a result of their rebellion, but died in his own sin. He did not have any sons. This meant that when all the daughters were married to other families and even into other tribes, the inheritance and the name of the family of Zelophehad would be extinguished, as the inheritance passed through the sons.

Moses took the cause and presented it to God in prayer. The Almighty responded via an angelic voice:

*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.*

The Lord God then instructed Moses whereby there would be a system in place to ensure a continuity of inheritance, to ensure it remained within the family.

If there were no sons, then the inheritance would pass to daughters, if no daughters then would pass to brothers, if no brothers, then to cousins, if no cousins, then the nearest available kinsmen.

The law was given by God, who knows all things from the beginning. The ultimate fount of all wisdom, so how was it that there was a lack in this law, which was spotted by these faithful women, and now remedied by this Divine ordinance?

No doubt, it was designed to show that the law given to Moses was impossible to cater for all eventualities, and that even complete obedience to the law of Moses would not save anyone from death.

*Hebrews 7:19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did;*

*Romans 8:3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,*

The law was given just as a guide and a pointer to a true understanding and life within the will and purpose of God – demonstrated by these righteous, intelligent and far seeing Sisters, which would be properly fulfilled in the Great Lawmaker to come, in which every jot and tittle would be fulfilled, and where there would be no lack. Jesus Christ.

As if to demonstrate the ineffective nature of the law of Moses, Moses himself was then informed of his own impending death.

The Lord God informed Moses that he would be permitted to see the land, which had been promised to the nation, but he would not be allowed to walk in there, because he had, himself also been counted amongst the rebels -

*14 For you rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes...* we recall when he hit the rock with his rod instead of speaking as commanded, and also took the glory of providing water instead of giving glory to God. He forgot he was merely a representative and took upon himself the position of God. It was not intentional, but in doing so, he breached the very law he gave to his people. How unjust if that law would not apply to him, as it did everyone else.

Moses was a wonderful man, despite this momentary failure caused by great provocation, and it can be seen in his response. Instead of crying out how unfair it all seemed, he quietly and quickly appealed to ensure a good leader would be provided to take the people into the land. Moses believed in the resurrection, and that in his flesh he

would see his redeemer and that he would inherit the land, even for ever.

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