

Numbers 36

Verses 1 - 4

Now the heads of the fathers' *households* of the family of the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came forward and spoke before Moses and before the leaders, the heads of the fathers' *households* of the sons of Israel, ² and they said, "The Lord commanded my lord to give the land by lot to the sons of Israel as an inheritance, and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. ³ But *if* they marry one of the sons of the *other* tribes of the sons of Israel, their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of our fathers and will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; so it will be withdrawn from our allotted inheritance. ⁴ And when the jubilee of the sons of Israel takes place, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; so their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers."

My lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters

We read about this in Numbers 27

Zelophehad had 5 daughters but no son

The 5 daughters were concerned that their fathers name would disappear from his clan

God decided that his land and inheritance should go to the daughters

But *if* they marry one of the sons of the *other* tribes, their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; so it will be withdrawn from our allotted inheritance

The implications of the daughters getting the land created a new problem

If they married outside the tribe the land would not stay in the original tribe and according to God's law it must stay within the tribe.

Verses 5 – 9

⁵ Then Moses commanded the sons of Israel in accordance with the word of the Lord, saying, “The tribe of the sons of Joseph is right in *its* statements. ⁶ This is what the Lord has commanded regarding the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, ‘Let them marry whomever they wish; only they must marry within the family of the tribe of their father.’ ⁷ So no inheritance of the sons of Israel will be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each retain possession of the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. ⁸ And every daughter who comes into possession of an inheritance of *any* tribe of the sons of Israel shall marry one of the family of the tribe of her father, so that the sons of Israel may each possess the inheritance of his fathers. ⁹ So no inheritance will be transferred from one tribe to another tribe, for the tribes of the sons of Israel shall each retain possession of its own inheritance.”

The tribe of the sons of Joseph is right in *its* statements

It was proper for the people of Israel to be concerned about their inheritance because God had given them very specific instructions concerning the land.

Let them marry whomever they wish; only they must marry within the family of the tribe of their father.’ ⁷ So no inheritance of the sons of Israel will be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each retain possession of the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers

The answer to the problem that could arise from daughters inheriting land was simple.

They had to marry someone within their own tribe.

Verses 10 - 13

¹⁰ Just as the Lord had commanded Moses, so the daughters of Zelophehad did:
¹¹ Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad married their uncles’ sons. ¹² They married *those* from the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained with the tribe of the family of their father. ¹³ These are the commandments and the ordinances which the Lord commanded to the sons of Israel through Moses in the plains of Moab, by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho.

Just as the Lord had commanded Moses, so the daughters of Zelophehad did

This is a refreshing statement considering the last 40 years of their history.