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NUMBERS 27:1 Then drew near 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. These are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

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The daughters of Zelophehad claim their inheritance, Num 27:1-4. Moses brings their case before the Lord, Num 27:5. He allows their claim, Num 27:6, Num 27:7; and a law is made to regulate the inheritance of daughters, Num 27:8-11. Moses is commanded to go up to Mount Abarim, and view the promised land, Num 27:12; is apprised of his death, Num 27:13; and because he did not sanctify God at the waters of Meribah, he shall not enter into it, Num 27:14. Moses requests the Lord to appoint a person to supply his place as leader of the Israelites, Num 27:15-17. God appoints Joshua, commands Moses to lay his hands upon him, to set him before Eleazar the priest, and give him a charge in the sight of the people, Num 27:18-20. Eleazar shall ask counsel for him by Urim, and at his command shall the Israelites go out and come in, Num 27:21. Moses does as the Lord commanded him, and consecrates Joshua, Num 27:22, Num 27:23.

#### Verse 1

The daughters of Zelophehad - The singular case of these women caused an additional law to be made to the civil code of Israel, which satisfactorily ascertained and amply secured the right of succession in cases of inheritance. The law, which is as reasonable as it is just, stands thus:

1. On the demise of the father the estate goes to the sons;
2. If there be no son, the daughters succeed; 3. If there be no daughter, the brothers of the deceased inherit;
4. If there be no brethren or paternal uncles, the estate goes to the brothers of his father;
5. If there be no grand uncles or brothers of the father of the deceased, then the nearest akin succeeds to the inheritance.

Beyond the fifth degree the law does not proceed, because as the families of the Israelites were kept distinct in their respective tribes, there must always be some who could be called kinsmen, and were really such, having descended without interruption from the patriarch of the tribe.

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NUMBERS 27:2 They stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, at the door of the Tent of Meeting, saying,

NUMBERS 27:3 "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah, but he died in his own sin. He had no sons.

NUMBERS 27:4 Why should the name of our father be taken away from among his family, because he had no son? Give to us a possession among the brothers of our father."

NUMBERS 27:5 Moses brought their cause before the LORD.

NUMBERS 27:6 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

NUMBERS 27:7 "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right. You shall surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers. You shall cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them.

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Verse 7

Thou shalt surely give them - an inheritance among their father's brethren - There is a curious anomaly here in the Hebrew text which cannot be seen in our translation. In Hebrew they, them, and their, you, ye, and your, are both of the masculine and feminine genders, according as the nouns are to which they are affixed; but these words are of no gender in English. In this verse, speaking of the brethren of the father of those women, the masculine termination הם hem, Their, is used instead of the feminine, הן hen, governed by בנות benoth, daughters. So להם lahem, to Them, and אביהם abihem, Their fathers, masculine, are found in the present text, instead of להן lahen and אביהן abihem, feminine. Interpreters have sought for a hidden meaning here, and they have found several, whether hidden here or not. One says, "the masculine gender is used because these daughters are treated as if they were heirs male." Another, "that it is because of their faith and conscientious regard to the ancient customs, and to keep the memory of their father in being, which might well benefit men." Another, "that it signifies the free gift of God in Christ, where there is neither male nor female, bond or free, for all are one in Christ;" and so on, for where there is no rule there is no end to conjecture. Now the plain truth is, that the masculine is in the present printed text a mistake for the feminine. The Samaritan, which many think by far the most authentic copy of the Pentateuch, has the feminine gender in both places; so also have upwards of fourscore of the MSS. collated by Kennicott and De Rossi. Therefore all the curious reasons for this anomaly offered by interpreters are only serious trifling on the blunder of some heedless copyists.

While on the subject of mysterious reasons and meanings, some might think it unpardonable if I passed by the mystery of the fall, recovery, and full salvation of man, signified, as some will have it, by the names of Zelophehad and his daughters. "1. Zelophehad's daughters, claiming a portion in the promised land, may represent believers in Christ claiming an inheritance among the saints in light.

2. These five virgins may be considered as the five wise virgins, (Mat 25:1-10), who took oil in their vessels with their lamps, and consequently are types of those who make a wise provision for their eternal state.

3. They are examples of encouragement to weak and destitute believers, who, though they are orphans in this world, shall not be deprived of their heavenly inheritance.

4. Their names are mysterious; for Zelophehad, צלפחד Tselophchad, signifies the shadow of fear or dread. His first daughter, מחלה Machlah, infirmity; the second, נעה Noah, wandering; the third, חגלה Choglah, turning about or dancing for joy: the fourth, מלכה Milcah, a queen; the fifth, תרצה Tirtsah, well-pleasing or acceptable.

By these names we may observe our reviving by grace in Christ; for we are all born of the shadow of fear, (Tselophchad), being brought forth in sin, and through fear of death being all our life time subject to bondage, Heb 2:15. This begets (Machlah) infirmity or sickness - grief of heart for our estate. After which (Noah) wandering about for help and comfort we find it in Christ, by whom our sorrow is turned into joy (Choglah). He communicates of his royalty (Milcah) to us, making us kings and priests unto God and his Father, Rev 1:6. So we shall at last be presented unto him glorious and without blemish, being (Tirtsah) well-pleasing and acceptable in his sight." This is a specimen of

pious Ingenuity, which has been endeavoring to do the work of an Evangelist in the Church of God from the time of Origen to the present day.

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NUMBERS 27:8 You shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'If a man dies, and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter.

NUMBERS 27:9 If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers.

NUMBERS 27:10 If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers.

NUMBERS 27:11 If his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his kinsman who is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it. This shall be a statute and ordinance for the children of Israel, as the LORD commanded Moses.'"

NUMBERS 27:12 The LORD said to Moses, "Go up into this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel.

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#### Verse 12

Get thee up into this Mount Abarim - The mountain which Moses was commanded to ascend was certainly Mount Nebo, see Deu 32:49, etc., which was the same as Pisgah, see Deu 34:1. The mountains of Abarim, according to Dr. Shaw, are a long ridge of frightful, rocky, precipitous hills, which are continued all along the eastern coast of the Dead Sea, as far as the eye can reach. As in Hebrew עבר abar signifies to pass over, Abarim here probably signifies passages; and the ridge in this place had its name in all likelihood from the passage of the Israelites, as it was opposite to these that they passed the Jordan into the promised land.

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NUMBERS 27:13 When you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered;

NUMBERS 27:14 because in the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin, to honour me as holy at the waters before their eyes." (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.)

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#### Verse 14

Ye rebelled against my commandment - See the notes on Num 20:12.

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NUMBERS 27:15 Moses spoke to the LORD, saying,

NUMBERS 27:16 "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation,

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#### Verse 16

The Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh - See the notes on Num 16:22.

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NUMBERS 27:17 who may go out before them, and who may come in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD not be as sheep which have no shepherd.”

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Verse 17

That the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd - This is a beautiful expression, and shows us in what light Moses viewed himself among his people. He was their shepherd; he sought no higher place; he fed and guided the flock of God under the direction of the Divine Spirit, and was faithful in all his Master's house. To this saying of Moses our Lord alludes, Mat 9:36.

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NUMBERS 27:18 The LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.

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Verse 18

In whom is the spirit - This must certainly mean the Spirit of God; and because he was endued with this Spirit, therefore he was capable of leading the people. How miserably qualified is that man for the work of God who is not guided and influenced by the Holy Ghost! God never chooses a man to accomplish his designs but that one whom he himself has qualified for the work.

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NUMBERS 27:19 Set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and commission him in their sight.

NUMBERS 27:20 You shall give authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may obey.

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Verse 20

And thou shalt put, etc. - מְחֹדֶעָה mechodecha, of thine honor or authority upon him. Thou shalt show to the whole congregation that thou hast associated him with thyself in the government of the people.

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NUMBERS 27:21 He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgement of the Urim before the LORD. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.”

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Verse 21

Eleazar the priest - shall ask counsel for him - Here was a remarkable difference between him and Moses. God talked with Moses face to face; but to Joshua only through the medium of the high priest.

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NUMBERS 27:22 Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation.

NUMBERS 27:23 He laid his hands on him, and commissioned him, as the LORD spoke by Moses.

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#### Verse 23

He laid his hands upon him - As a proof of his being appointed to and qualified for the work. So at the word of Joshua they were to go out, and at his word to come in, Num 27:21. And thus he was a type of our blessed Lord as to his mediatorial office, and Divine appointment as man to the work of our salvation; and to this circumstance of the appointment of Joshua to this work, and his receiving of Moses's honor and glory, St. Peter seems to refer in these words, 2Pet 1:16, 2Pet 1:17 : "We were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him." See Mat 17:5. But one infinitely greater than either Moses or Joshua is here.