



<http://wexleriris.com/daughters-of-zelophehad-original-oil-painting-by-iris-wexler-2/>

1. Bemidbar Chapter 27

The daughters of Zelophehad, of Manassite family—son of Hopher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh son of Joseph—came forward. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the chieftains, and the whole assembly, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and they said, “Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the faction, Korah’s faction, which banded together against the LORD, but died for his own sin; and he has left no sons. Let not our father’s name be lost to his clan just because he had no son! Give us a holding among our father’s kinsmen!”

Moses brought their case before the LORD.

And the LORD said to Moses, “The plea of Zelophehad’s daughters is just: you should give them a hereditary holding among their father’s kinsmen; transfer their father’s share to them.

“Further, speak to the Israelite people as follows: ‘If a man dies without leaving a son, you shall transfer his property to his daughter. If he has no daughter, you shall assign his property to his brothers. If he has no brothers, you shall assign his property to his father’s brothers. If his father had no brothers, you shall assign his property to his nearest relative in his own clan, and he shall inherit it.’ This shall be the law of procedure for the Israelites, in accordance with the LORD’s command to Moses.”

2. Yalkut, Pinchas 773

"And they stood before Moses," (Num 27:2) Each of the five daughters presented one of the five pleas. The first said, "Our father dies in the wilderness," the second said, "He was not one of the faction of Korach.," The third said, "but he died in his own sin." The fourth: "He had no sons." The fifth: "Why should our father's name be lost to his family."

3. Bava Batra 119b

It was taught: The daughters of Zelophehad were exceedingly wise, knew well how to expound Scripture, and were perfectly virtuous. They were exceedingly wise since they chose to speak at the right time; for just then ... Moses our teacher was engaged in interpreting the section on levirate marriage. So they said, "If in levirate marriage our status is like that of sons [ie, it is only relevant if a father dies without sons or daughters], , then give us, like a son a possession in the land. If not, then our Mother should be subjected to a levirate marriage. At once, "Moses brought their cause before the Lord." The daughters also knew well how to expound Scripture [learn from the Torah] for they said, "If our father had a son, we would not have spoken, or even if that son had a daughter, we would not have spoken." They were also perfectly virtuous, since they married only men who were worthy of them."

4. Tanhuma Pinchas, 8-9

R. Simeon ben Lakish differed: Moses our teacher did know this law, but first the women came before the chiefs of tens, who said, "This being a case concerning inheritance, is not in our jurisdiction; it belongs to our superiors." Then the women came to the chiefs of fifties, who, seeing the chiefs of tens had shown them deference, said, "We too have those who are superior to us in knowledge.: A like reply was given by the chiefs of hundreds, the chiefs of thousands and the princes ... So the daughters if Zelophehad went to Eleazar, who told them, there is Moses our teacher, [go to him]. ... When Moses realized that each dignitary had shown deference to his superior he said: If I tell them the law, I shall be snatching eminence not properly mine. So he said, "I too have a superior." Hence," Moses brought their cause before the Lord."

5. Sifra Numbers 133

"Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad," When the daughters of Zelophehad heard that the Land was about to be divided among the tribes - but only for males, not for females - they gathered to take counsel. They decided that the mercies of flesh and blood are not like the mercies of Him who is everywhere. Flesh and blood is apt to be more merciful to males than to females. But He who spoke and the world came into being is different - His mercies are for males as well as females, His mercies being for all: "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works, (Ps.145:9)

6. Rabbi Yoel H. Kahn

It is a story of women appealing for equal justice and, within the cultural norms of their world, receiving satisfaction—at the explicit instruction of G-d!

7. Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, p. 866

The case of inheriting daughters puts a certain strain on the patriarchal system, but its patriarchal character remains firmly in place, as the reiteration of “fathers” and “sons” makes clear, and thus a limitation on the choice of husband (to which noninheriting daughters would not be subject) is imposed on these young women in order to preserve the integrity of the tribal configuration with its patriarchal definition.

8. R. Hayyim Angel, in the latter's *A Synagogue Companion* (p. 160):

The daughters of Zelophehad were not motivated by their own rights, nor was equality of inheritance rights for women what lay at the root of their demands. In fact, their argument is deeply rooted in a patriarchal social structure. Nonetheless, at the root of their argument, and in its acceptance by G-d, lies a basic principle connected to the inherent equality of the sexes. The daughters of Zelophehad point out an injustice, that because of the laws of inheritance whereby only males inherit, their father's name will be eliminated from within his family. They argue that the principle of preserving a man's name should take precedence over the laws of inheritance. On a basic human level, a man who has children, whether male or female understand that he has in fact achieved continuity. This continuity is a fact stronger than any social order that gives precedence to one sex or another.

9. Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 20:16:1

"And the Lord said to me: They have done well in speaking as they did" (viz. Ibid. 16). Happy are those in whose words the Lord concurs! And thus is it written (Numbers 27:7) "Rightly do the daughters of Tzelafchad speak," (Ibid. 36:5) "Rightly does the scribe of the sons of Yosef speak." Happy are those in whose words the Lord concurs! And thus is it written (Ibid. 14:20) "I have forgiven because of your (Moses') words.

10. Bamidbar 36

The family heads in the clan of the descendants of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh, one of the Josephite clans, came forward and appealed to Moses and the chieftains, family heads of the Israelites....Now, if they marry persons from another Israelite tribe, their share will be cut off from our ancestral portion and be added to the portion of the tribe into which they marry; thus our allotted portion will be diminished....So Moses, at the LORD's bidding, instructed the Israelites, saying: "The plea of the Josephite tribe is just. This is what the LORD has commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad: They may marry anyone they wish, provided they marry into a clan of their father's tribe.No inheritance of the Israelites may pass over from one tribe to another, but the Israelites must remain bound each to the ancestral portion of his tribe. Every daughter among the Israelite tribes who inherits a share must marry someone from a clan of her father's tribe, in order that every Israelite may keep his ancestral share. Thus no inheritance shall pass over from one tribe to another, but the Israelite tribes shall remain bound each to its portion." The daughters of Zelophehad did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

11. Bamidbar 9

But there were some men who were unclean by reason of a corpse and could not offer the passover sacrifice on that day. Appearing that same day before Moses and Aaron, those men said to them, "Unclean though we are by reason of a corpse, why must we be debarred from presenting the LORD's offering at its set time with the rest of the Israelites?" Moses said to them, "Stand by, and let me hear what instructions the LORD gives about you." And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people, saying: When any of you or of your posterity who are defiled by a corpse or are on a long journey would offer a passover sacrifice to the LORD, they shall offer it in the second month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs,