

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Pinchas:*** **Numbers 26:57 - 27:11**
 Haftarah: **I Kings 19:9-17**
 B'rit Chadasha: **John 2:18**

Then came the daughters of Tzelofechad.

[Numbers 27:1]

Today's Meditation is Proverbs 23:10-12;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition #13, *Modim Anachnu* [An Expression of Thanks]

V'eleh f'kudei ha-Levi l'mishpechotam – And this is the accounting of the Levi'im, by their families **Numbers 26:57a.**

Modern societies deify 'self', so they prioritize the individual above everything/everyone else. Most people's preferred sentences therefore start with "I/me", and end with "my/mine". Emotions run highest, in modern cultures, over individual rights, individual opportunities, individual choices (it's my life; it's my body), individual tastes, individual 'salvation', and individual destinies. But in the cross-generational Ecosystem-Cultivation Plan of the Creator it is different. In His Plan, individuals find their primary importance as links in a bloodline chain and its ever-developing set of genetic blueprints. While every individual human being conceived on this planet is uniquely loved and nurtured by the Creator, as an Ecosystem Manager what His long-term plan hinges upon, and hence what He invests His greatest blessings in, are who will let Him develop them into patriarchs, matriarchs, and kinsmen redeemers. He is not only concerned with who we are/how we interact with Him, other people, and the planet while we are alive; He is also deeply invested in, because the Grand Plan is significantly impacted by, who we mate and/or procreate with, who we sire or give birth to, who we adopt/take in, who we mentor or disciple, and who, of what bloodline, we bless or curse, encourage or offend, inspire or irritate, empower or aggravate, educate or indoctrinate, assist or oppress, inform or deceive, and help or harm. On a macro level, you see, the Grand Plan depends not just upon individuals, but on bloodlines, marriage covenants, families, homesteads, households, and pedigrees. Torah therefore makes it clear that the Holy One views humanity through the lens of *mishpachah* – i.e. *family*. That is why at what may seem like random times He interrupts the flow of Torah's narrative to remind the reader of 'critical links in the chain' of His Plan. Some call these flow-interrupters 'genealogies'. Today's example: ***The name of Amram's wife was Yocheved bat-Levi ... through her***

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Amram sired Aharon, Moshe, and their sister Miryam. Then to Aharon were born Nadav and Avihu, Eleazar and Itamar. Numbers 26:59-60. You, Dear Reader, may not think these details from the distant ‘past’ are important to the story presently being told; but the Holy One, Who wrote the Torah, could not disagree more. He knows that no story stands alone; each one builds upon all those that preceded it, and provides the foundation for everything that will follow. The key to the survival of both the species of man and the ecosystem is *cross-generational continuity*. And the secret ingredients of the sauce of cross-generational continuity are strong, vibrant, self-healing nuclear and extended *families*.

That is why the Holy One invests so deeply in *mishpachot*. He knows the potential – for benefit or harm – that lies in every family relationship. He knows what corruptions, perversions, triggers, and pathologies have entered to each bloodline/DNA blueprint – and He has a plan to expose, confront, heal and ‘fix’ each of those deficiencies.

As it Was in the Days of Noach

To the Holy One, you see, each human alive today hails from and represents a lineage that goes all the way back to the days of Noach. Each person represents a bloodline the Holy One established to engage with some geographical region of His precious earth in some season or era of earth-time. The Holy One did not just save Noach from the great Flood, you see; He also called, protected, relocated, and blessed [a] all Noach’s family, and [b] all Noach’s progeny. Since the Holy One sees all things and all people He Created from the end to the beginning [see **Isaiah 46:10** and **Ecclesiastes 3:11**], the Holy One knows each person that walks the planet’s ‘*progeny-potential*’ – i.e. his and his family’s leaning toward either a ‘good’ or an ‘evil’ impact on the Ecosystem. The Holy One therefore serves Creation as ‘social engineer’ as well as ‘system manager’. He strategically arranges for bloodlines and family ties to cross, to mix, and to intertwine. He is seeking representatives of each bloodline to co-labor with Him in the outworking of His Grand Plan for the redemption of mankind as a species, bloodline by bloodline, and for the restoration of Creation, starting with Eretz Yisrael, to its intended Edenic state of beauty, fruitfulness, and shalom. If a family line is heading in the wrong direction, introducing a steady stream of negativity [i.e. *cursing*] into the ecosystem of earth instead of positive empowerment energy [i.e. *blessing*], He stages an intervention. He rocks the boat. He dynamites the status quo. He plays matchmaker, and starts a new, improved variant of that bloodline. More often than not, He does this through what I call ‘*Avrahamic gene therapy*’. He arranges a choice meeting of an individual like an Elazar of Syria, a Tamar of Kena’an, a mixed multitude of slave populations under the thumb of a cruel Pharaoh, a Rachab of Yericho, or a Ruth of Moav into relationship with one or more of His faithful ones, confident that the

eventual result of that relationship will be at least one individual from the at-risk bloodline turning to Him and His Covenant Ways. He knows that this desired result will seldom come about instantaneously, automatically, or painlessly. He knows that it will almost never occur without some level of drama, trauma, and gnashing of teeth. He knows that there will often be a good bit of collateral damage to clean up. But because the alternative – *i.e.* catastrophic ecosystem failure – is unthinkable, He knows that *Avrahamic Gene Therapy* is well worth almost any cost in transitory-human discomfort, angst, or suffering. So He does not just sit idly by and leave things to chance. Whatever He has to do, He does; whatever He has to allow, He allows. He arranges the affairs of earth so that each bloodline and household on earth will eventually be touched and impacted by someone – more likely several someones – from the seed of Avraham and its Genesis 12:2-3 and 18:18-19 callings. He is fully confident that the ultimate result of His *Avrahamic Gene Therapy* interventions will be that each bloodline of humanity will produce at least some who will fight off distractions of flesh, of emotion, and pseudo-intellect and stay focused on the Covenant calling.

This being so, I have a question for you, Dear Reader: Are you willing to be ‘that person’ for your family, your household, your lineage, and your bloodline? Will you be one who faithfully reclaims and stewards the inheritance promised to Avraham’s seed? Will you be one of those who plants vines and fig trees, builds cities of refuge, establishes a culture of humble service, and re-introduces the sweet fragrance of Beauty-realm holiness into the world? Will you let the Holy One teach you – and then teach your progeny and anyone in your assigned spheres of influence who shows an interest – how to be a blessing to every family and household on the face of the earth? Will you volunteer to both receive and dispense Avrahamic Gene Therapy? If that calling is your passion, lift up your head! Stand up and be counted. Open your eyes and behold your destiny! This is your appointed time to arise and shine!

***As it Goes With Avraham’s Seed, So it Goes With the World;
And as it Goes With the Levi’im, So it Goes With Avraham’s Seed!***

In today’s aliyah Moshe’s “final accounting” of the souls in his charge² is going to conclude. This numbering of men will culminate, as did the one at Sinai, with the *Levi’im* – *i.e.* the last shall be first, and the humblest of the servants shall be placed in the most strategic positions of influence! After all, as it goes with the Levi’im, so it goes with all of Avraham’s seed; and as it goes with Avraham’s seed, so it

² In Hebrew this numbering is often referred to as the *mifkad ha-nachalot* [‘the accounting of apportionment’]. Unlike prior numberings its record not only includes the names and numbers of each tribe, but also identifies the *family units* within each tribe – *i.e.* *l’beit avotam* – that are to receive an allotment/parcel of the land. See **Numbers 33:50-55**.

goes with all humankind; and as it goes with humankind, so it goes with all Creation.

So, how goes it with the Levi'im? It had not gone well with the Levi'im during the era of Egyptian bondage. At the time of the first lifting of the heads of the new nation at Sinai, a mere 8,580 Levi'im between the ages of 30 and 50 were identified. 38 ½ years and multiple existential crises and plagues later, Torah tells us that 23,000 Levi'im over the age of one month were counted on the plains of Moav. Because of the discrepancy in the age criteria for the accounting, the comparison is anything but apples and oranges, but one thing is clear. The proving ground of the wilderness, and its many challenges, made the Levi'im stronger. May it be so with you, Dear One. The tests, trials, and tribulations of this season – and this world – are not intended to destroy you; they are intended to refine, mature, fine-tune, and empower you.

Just remember, as go the Levi'im – the humblest of Kingdom servants – so goes the Covenant Nation; and as goes the Covenant Nation – those called to model holiness and shalom to the nations - so goes the world.

The Secret of Cross-Generational Ebb and Flow:
Each Decrease In One Generation Is Always Subject to Being
Offset By an Increase in Another

After almost four decades of wilderness wanderings and a complete turnover of population the number of men in the Redeemed Community who stood to inherit the land of promise had dropped. At Sinai the total was 603,550. At this counting it is down over 1800 - to 601,730. We have lost a few, it appears. So ... what does that mean for the future?

In the Kingdom, an accounting is never about numbers – it is always about bloodlines. The God/Man Covenant that lies at the heart of the Holy One's *Grand Plan for the Redemption of Mankind as a Species and for the Restoration of Creation to its Intended Edenic State of Beauty, Fruitfulness, and Shalom* is living, active, and perpetual. Both its current microcosmic operations on, and its eventual macrocosm manifestations in, the earth are more certain than the sunrise. But the Covenant, like everything else in Created Order, operates according to appointed times and seasons. It blows hot on the earth for a time; then it grows cold and dormant. It glows with bright light for a season; then it seems, to the casual observer, to have been swallowed up by darkness. Summer and winter, seedtime and harvest – that is the way the Covenant, like all of Created Order, was designed to function.

What this means is that every season of growth and expansion of the numbers of the Covenant People is followed by a season of diminution of those numbers. Similarly, however, among the Covenant Community, every season of diminution of the Hebrew population is then followed, and the losses offset, by a season of rapid increase. Think of how the number of Hebrew souls multiplied supernaturally in Egypt, despite enslavement, oppression, and waves of sometimes genocidal-level persecution. Think, as well, of what happened to the Hebrew population of the world in the generation of, and then in the generation after, the Holocaust.

There are seasons ordained by the Holy One for the *Radical Expansion of His Kingdom on Earth* – and we are now in one of those seasons. What exactly does that mean for us? In seasons of *Radical Kingdom Expansion*, ‘business as usual’ ceases to be an option for us. In seasons of *Radical Kingdom Expansion* we, as Covenant Partners of the Holy One, are called to arise from our comfort zones, our pity parties, and our entitlement mindsets. In these times we lift up our heads, take up our bed, take our family’s Kingdom standard firmly in hand – or forge a new one if necessary - and take up our assigned positions in the Great Company of the Redeemed. We are to turn our ears away from the noise of the entertainment and political drama of the day, to the *Sh’ma Yisrael* lifestyle. We are to tune into the Words our Covenant Partner is singing. As we absorb the energy of His song, we are to function like tuning forks that respond the rhythm and hum along. We are then to march in step with His cadence – and keep walking wherever, and into whatever valley of the shadow, our Beloved Bridegroom-King’s Voice takes us. In such times personal and social agendas have to be brought into alignment with the Bridegroom-King’s agenda. Some, however, always balk at the notion, and stay behind. In such times tough choices have to be made; and there are always people among us who are unwilling to make those choices – and who are content, therefore, be heard from no more. In such times the focus of the Holy One’s Witness Throng has to change from celebrating the heroes and sulking over the villains of the past, and enjoying the comforts of the current *status quo*, to the next phase of the Holy One’s Grand Redemptive Plan for the future of mankind and Creation.

Many generations before the events about which we will read today, as Avram responded to the Holy One’s call to ‘go out’ from everything familiar to him, was such a time. Then there were just three souls – Avram, Sarai, and Lot. Three generations later, when Ya’akov and his family prepared to leave the land of *Kena’an* to reunite with their kinsman Yosef in Mitzrayim, was another such time.

New Generation, Same God, Same Covenant

As He did with the previous generation in Numbers 1, the Holy One employed the mechanism of lifting up the heads of, and numbering the souls in, the Camp to encourage the Redeemed Community to make their *families*, their *lineages*, and their *rights of inheritance in Israel* the focus of their lives. The Holy One called upon His Remnant to lay aside the distractions of the wilderness, with its rebellions and plagues³. He always, in such a time, calls us to *lift our heads* and *look forward* – to our *mission* and our *destiny*. He calls us to return to the state of close communion where we find our greatest delight *in Him*; where we find our significance in walking out His Covenant in real time; and where we find our greatest inspiration in actively pursuing the glorious inheritance He has promised those who walk with him as Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov did.

With the exception of two men the generation of the Exodus did not get this. Among the throngs who accompanied Moshe out of the slave camps of Egypt a few decades ago only Kalev and Y'hoshua had hearts that responded to the Holy One's beauty, majesty, goodness, and encouragement. The others could not get over their physical appetites for leeks, onions, and fish from the Nile. They could not overcome their myopia. They could not resist taking the plunge into runaway emotions, outrage, and drama. They had been able to receive a degree of freedom from the taskmasters of the world; but they had neither the will nor the passion for the King to press on toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of YHVH. The 603,548 men who wanted to die in the wilderness rather than proceed to enter and take possession of the Land of Promise were content to live out the rest of their lives as traumatized survivors of the taskmaster's whip. Y'hoshua and Kalev, however, would settle for nothing less than what the Holy One had planned for them. The 603,548 men who died never got a vision for the magnificent '*end game*' that would sustain them in times of testing, trial, and deprivation; Y'hoshua and Kalev saw beyond the veil of the visible, tangible, temporal world into the deep, majestic, much more glorious realms of the invisible, infinite, eternal Kingdom of Heaven.

But now a new generation has arisen, and this new generation is responding to the destiny calling of the Holy One's Grand Redemptive Plan with enthusiasm. This new generation has many whose hearts burn with the passion they saw modeled by Y'hoshua and Kalev. In the bosoms of these stepchildren of the desert a *holy hunger* is inspiring their spirit even as it gnaws away their flesh. It is a hunger not just to be free from external forms of bondage to foreign powers but *to actually step into their God-ordained destinies*. The destinies this generation hungers for with passion are the very same destinies their fathers proved incapable of even

³ The sages of Israel say that there were just as many plagues experienced by the Hebrews in the wilderness as there had been experienced by Pharaoh back in Egypt.

understanding, much less appropriating. For while the faces have indeed changed since the census we studied in Numbers 1-3 *the destinies and inheritance the Holy One has planned and prepared for His Redeemed have not changed one whit*. That is because the Holy One *does not change*. What one generation rejects does not disappear, but *flows in the bloodline*, waiting to be claimed and received with gladness. The gifts and callings, and the inheritance, of the Holy One are irrevocable - and pass from generation to generation *until one comes along with ears that hear beyond the sounds of the desert, and eyes that do not rest until they see that for which they were created*. This provides a perfect segue for the discussion of five prophetic young women who have over the centuries come to be known affectionately as '*the Daughters of Tzelofechad*'.

Introducing the Daughters of Tzelofechad – True Vessels of Zeal

A group of 5 sisters whom the Bible introduces to us as the *daughters of Tzelofechad* provide a wonderful case in point. Tzelofechad was a man of the tribe of Menashe. He came forth from Egypt in the Exodus. He and all his descendants were thereby “marked” with a right of inheritance in Israel - because *the Holy One did not just promise redemption from slavery but also an inheritance in the land flowing with milk and honey*.

Like Tevye the milkman in “*Fiddler on the Roof*” this man of Israel had *five daughters* - but no sons. As far as Tzelofechad himself, however, he was one of the great multitudes of his generation who chose to die in the desert rather than enter the Promised Land. Along with 603,557 others from his generation, he is now occupying a shallow grave somewhere along the way.

Moshe’s accounting only numbered males over 20 years of age. Since the division of the land of Israel was to occur based upon this numbering, it certainly appeared that all those who died in the desert without sons - like old Tzelofechad of the tribe of Menashe - would lose their inheritance. But this was not the Holy One’s plan. He wanted to teach His People that His promises are eternal and His covenants inviolate. So in today’s aliyah the Holy One stirs in the hearts of the five daughters of Tzelofechad a passionate love for the land their father rejected as a land that ‘devours its inhabitants’. This passion drove Tzelofechad’s daughters to boldly step up to “Moshe’s Seat” and plead their case for the inheritance their father eschewed. Here is how Torah records it:

Vatikravnah [Then drew near] *the daughters of Tzelofechad ... :
Machlah, Noach, and Hoglah, and Milkah, and Tirtzah.*

V'ta'amodnah [And they stood] *before Moshe,
and before El'azar the Kohen, and before ha-nesi'im* [the princes]
v'chol-ha-edah [and all the witnesses],
petach ohel-mo'ed [at the door of the tent of meeting],

saying, “Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Holy One in the company of Korach: but he died in his own sin⁴; and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be taken away from among his family because he had no son?

T’nah-lanu achuzzah - Give to us an inheritance⁵ among the brothers of our father.”
[Numbers 27:1-4]

What inheritance are they talking about, you ask? What were the daughters of Tzelofechad so bold as to ask for? What were they so determined to claim as their own? Their hearts long for just a small parcel of land in Eretz Yisrael. They hunger for a parcel of land they had never seen⁶, but which nevertheless calls out to their spirits “Come home”. They long for something *REAL* and *LASTING*. They hunger for something *worthwhile* - something *worth fighting for* – and even *dying for* if necessary. They long for something connected to the Holy One *into which to pour their heart and soul and into which to sow blood, sweat and tears*. They long for a *heritage* to pass on to their children and their children’s children forever. Their passions are aroused at the thought of the *bridal-chamber* that the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven has been prepared for them and their as yet unborn children.

Do you hunger for that as well, Dear Reader? Is the land of the patriarchs constantly calling to you? Do the trees that line the hills of Judea constantly whisper your name? Does the wind song of the Negev play the strings of your heart? Do the streets of Jerusalem constantly beckon you to come home? Perhaps

⁴ The Hebrew phrase translated as ‘but he died in his own sin’ is *ki-vechet'o met*. Torah does not tell us how or when Tzelofechad died. One Hebrew legend declares that Tzelofechad was the one stoned for cutting/gathering wood on the Shabbat. **Numbers 15:33**. Another legend proclaims that he was among the presumptuous ones who tried to invade the Holy Land's hill country after the Holy One instructed Israel to turn back into the Desert and decreed all the generation of the Exodus would die there. **Numbers 14:45**. And see **Sifri on Numbers 15:33**; and see also **Shabbat 96b, 97a; Rashi**.

⁵ The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as “inheritance” in this passage is Strong’s Hebrew word #0272, spelled *alef, chet, zayin, hey*, transliterated ‘achuzzah, and pronounced *akh-ooz-zaw*’. It’s first usage in Scripture is in Genesis 17:8, where it is the term used to describe the interest in the land of Israel The Holy One promises to Avraham and his progeny. There we read: ***I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land where you are traveling, all the land of Kana'an, for an everlasting possession*** [‘achuzzah]. It is also what Avraham purchased from the sons of Chet, in which he buried Sarah. In Genesis 23:4 Avraham tells the sons of Chet: ***I am a stranger and a foreigner living with you. Give me a possession*** [‘achuzzah] ***of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead***

The verb root of ‘achuzzah is Strong’s Hebrew word #270, *alef, chet, zayin*, transliterated as ‘achaz, and pronounced *aw-khaz*’. This word means to seize hold of, or grab, or grasp, something. It describes what Ya’akov, as a newborn, did to Esav’s heel: ***“The first came out red all over, like a hairy garment. They named him Esav. After that, his brother came out, and his hand had hold on*** [‘achaz] ***Esav's heel. He was named Ya'akov*** [grabber]” **Genesis 25:25-26**.

⁶ Hence the famous *d'rash* of the writer of the letter to the Hebrews: ***Faith*** [Hebrew *emunah*] ***is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. This is what the ancients were commended for.*** Hebrews 11:1.

you share more with the daughters of Tzelofechad than you imagined!

Give To Us An Apportioned Inheritance!

“T’nah-lanu achuzzah” [Give to us an apportioned inheritance], these five young women passionately declare. If only all the Holy One’s Redeemed had such passion!

Would that we would all stand before the Throne of Heaven with *b’not Tzelofechad* and declare – whatever the cost, “give to us an inheritance” in the land of promise. We can – and should - all learn a lesson from the daughters of Tzelofechad.

And the heart of the Holy One, I believe, bursts with paternal pride. And the light of His Countenance shines upon Tzelofechad’s daughters – upon *Machlah*, upon *Noach*, upon *Hoglah*, upon *Milkah*, and upon *Tirtzah* - illuminating their faces. And these are His Words concerning them [see Numbers 27:7]:

Ken b’not Tzelofechad dovrot

Tell the daughters of Tzelofechad “Yes”!

naton titen lahem achuzat nachalah

Give them a hereditary portion of land

betoch achei avihem

alongside their father's brothers.

V’ha'avarta et-nachalat avihen lahen

Let their father's hereditary property thus pass over to them.

Heeding the Daughters’ Cry!

To the Holy One every human being is *infinitely valuable* and has a divine purpose, destiny, and inheritance. The point of the story of the daughters of Tzelofechad is, however, much more significant than “women’s rights”. It is about the character and nature of *the Holy One*. It is about His faithfulness to His covenant. It is another confirmation that His Word is sure. It is to underscore the spiritual truth that *sin, though it can cause banishment from His Presence and postponement of the enjoyment of His covenant, can never cause Him to revoke even one of His promises*. It is to let the world know that all the holocausts the world can muster cannot render even *one* of His promises untrue. Let the Name of the Holy One be praised.

The cry of Tzelofechad’s daughters for an inheritance was the natural product of “the voice” by which the Holy One’s people are to live. It is a symphony to the Holy One’s ears. The Holy One responds to it with joy and with an outpouring of grace and love that boggles our minds.

Ken b'not Tzelofechad dovrot
Tell the daughters of Tzelofechad "Yes"!

Yes. Yes and Amen. This beautiful response of a Father to the fatherless bursting with pride and dancing for joy reminds us that, in our own families, the gifts and callings and inheritance are “without repentance” and irrevocable. After all, the Holy One is *the Father of the fatherless*. These girls are His. And heaven help the man or fallen angel who tries to stand in the way of His daughters receiving their inheritance!

What the Holy One has given, He has given. One generation – or ten – may ignore or reject the Holy One’s giftings and callings – but the Holy One will eventually raise up sons or daughters who will stand in prayer and cry “*give me an inheritance*”. And the Holy One will say ‘*Ken!*’ [Yes!]. And that which He gave generations past will burst into bloom, and brighten the world. And Creation will breathe a sweet sigh, as another son or daughter of the Holy One steps into and lays hold upon his or her destiny.

Bringing It All Home

What does the story of Tzelofechad’s daughters say to you, Dear Reader? Consider this: An individual member of *your* family, or whole generations of your family, may have rejected, or only partially received and laid hold of, the Holy One’s giftings, callings and inheritance [like, for instance, Tzelofechad].

Men and women of your lineage may, like Tzelofechad, have “died in [their] own sins. But know this: The giftings, the callings, and the inheritance - are *still there*, still *waiting to be claimed* - by someone who will cry out [as did Tzelofechad’s daughters] for that which their ancestors rejected, ignored, or forgot about amidst the distractions of the wilderness, of Babylon, of Europe, or of America.

Stand *lifnei the Holy One* [before the Face of the Holy One], Dear Reader. Cry out for an inheritance with the impassioned cry of Tzelofechad’s daughters. Let the Holy One direct and empower you to make *tikkun* [repair] of your ancestors’ failures and shortfalls. Grab hold of your inheritance with every ounce of strength. And whatever happens, *never, never, never let go!*

Focusing the Tele-Photo Lens

If the cry of *b'not Tzelofechad* is stirring in your soul it is time to set your face like flint to claim your gifts, your callings, and your inheritance. To do so however you will have to lay aside the things of the wilderness which distract you. You will have to escape the *tyranny of the immediate* – where your appetites and your pain-

avoidance mechanisms [some call it your “*flesh*”] cloud your vision.⁷ You will have to purposely focus energy, attention, and passion on what is real, what is eternal as opposed to what is fading away and temporal. You will need to practice looking at life *through your tele-photo lens*. *Destiny* will have to displace *distraction*.

Many generations of your family before you may have chosen other things - distractions of the wilderness, shall we say - over that which the Holy One had ordained for your family. Do not let that happen to you. And for Heaven’s sake do not let that happen to your children. Be who you were created to be.

Destiny awaits. It is in your grasp. And oh yes - the daughters of Tzelofechad are watching. And if you listen you can hear them cheering you on!⁸

Questions For Today’s Study

1. How many Levi’im did Moshe and Elazar count in this “final” census?
2. How many of the Levi’im men who were counted in the preceding census (Numbers 1-3) were still alive and counted in this “final” census?
3. Who was Tzelofechad?
4. What was the question raised by Tzelofechad’s daughters?
5. What response did the Holy One give to the question raised by Tzelofechad’s daughters?
6. What did the daughters of Tzelofechad “give up” in order to receive the inheritance of their father? Explain.
7. In today’s Haftarah aliyah we see Eliyahu ha-navi [Elijah the prophet] still in flight for his life, desperately fleeing the threats of Jezebel. The Holy One confronts Eliyahu [Elijah].

*... behold, the word of the Holy One came to him, and he said to him,
mah-lecha foh Eliyahu [What are you doing here, Eliyahu?]
He said, I have been very jealous for the Holy One, the God Tzva'ot;
for the children of Yisra'el have forsaken your **b'rit** [covenant],*

⁷ Hence the dramatic cry of Shaul of Tarsus: “***One thing I do - Forgetting what is behind, and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which the Holy One has called me heavenward in Messiah Yeshua.***” **Philippians 3:13-14.**

⁸ *These all, having had testimony given to them through their faith, didn't receive the promise, the Holy One having provided some better thing concerning us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore let us also, seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* **Hebrews 11:39-12:1.**

thrown down **mizbechoteicha** [your altar],
and slain **nevi'echa** [your prophets] with the sword;
ani levadi [and I, even I only, am left]

vayevakshu et-nafshi l'kachtah [and they seek my life, to take it away.]

He (i.e. the Angel) said, **Tzei v'amadeita vahar lifnei Adonai**
[Go forth, and stand on the mountain before the Holy One.]

Hineh [Behold], the Holy One passed by,
and a **ruach g'dolah v'chazak** [great and strong wind] tore the mountains,
and broke in pieces the rocks before the Holy One;
but the Holy One was not in the **ruach** [wind]:
and after the wind **ra'ash** [an earthquake];
but the Holy One was not in the **ra'ash** [earthquake]:
and after the earthquake **aish** [a fire]; but the Holy One was not in the **aish** [fire]:
and, after the fire, **kol demamah dakah** [a still small voice].

It was so, when Eliyahu **sh'ma-ed** [heard/heeded] it,
that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave.
Behold, there came a voice to him, and said,

Mah-lecha foh Eliyahu [What are you doing here, Eliyahu?]
[I Kings 19:7-13]

[A] Where did this confrontation take place?

[B] What else had happened at that location?

[C] What three things preceded the appearance of the Holy One to Eliyahu?

[D] What did Eliyahu do when the Holy One spoke?

[E] What three things did the Holy One tell Eliyahu to do?

[F] How did the Holy One respond to Eliyahu's complaint that "I am the only one left"?

[G] Write a one-page essay on today's haftarah, with 3 subtopics;

[1] Why I think Eliyahu went to Horev/Sinai.

[2] Why I think there was a windstorm, earthquake, and fire.

[3] Why I think the Holy One chose this time to give Eliyahu instructions concerning a king of Syria, a king of Israel, and a successor-prophet.

8. In today's B'rit Chadasha reading, in the aftermath of Yeshua's upturning the tables of the moneychangers and sellers of sacrificial animals and scaring their proprietors away with a braided whip, Yeshua's authority to do such things is challenged. Note that, in the account of Yochanan [John] at least this challenge does not come from the priests and Levi'im [who have responsibility, under the Torah, to deal with "offenses against the Sanctuary"]. Those who confront Yeshua are not, according to Yochanan [John], priests or Levi'im, but **men of the tribe of Y'hudah** [Judah]. Here is how Yochanan records the confrontation:

*The Y'hudim therefore answered him,
"What sign do you show us, seeing that you do these things?"
[John 2:18]*

[A] What did the leaders of the tribe of Judah ask Yeshua to do to prove His authority to drive out the moneychangers?

[B] Read Matthew 21:21-27 [Matthew's account of either the same or a similar but subsequent event in the earthly life of Yeshua].

[i] Who challenges Yeshua's authority in this account?

[ii] How does Yeshua respond to this challenge in Matthew's account?

[C] What "sign" do you think the Y'hudim were desiring to see from Yeshua, to prove, in their eyes, that He was the Messiah promised in the TaNaKh. [**Note:** this is a very important question. If one does not understand what the Y'hudim – who knew the Scripture far better than we do - expected of Messiah, one does not fully understand who Yeshua really is!]

*May you claim your inheritance, and sh'ma the voice of the Holy One;
and may the Light of His Countenance silence your desire for a "sign".*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Proverbs 23:10-12

*Do not move the ancient boundary stone.
Do not encroach on the fields of the fatherless:
for their Defender is strong. He will plead their case against you.*

*Apply your heart to instruction,
and your ears to the words of knowledge.*