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Change in Isra'el

27: 1-23



Change is seldom easy, whether on a personal or national level. In **Chapter 27** we witness two such changes. The first was a change in how **the Israelites** divided the family inheritance. **They** were counted for the purpose of conquest and for dividing the Promised Land (**to see link click [Ec - The Second Census: The New Generation of Hope](#)**). The story of **Zelophehad's daughters** is directly related to the census. Only fighting men twenty years old and older were counted. After **their father** had died, **the five daughters** knew that **they** would be passed over because **they** did not have a brother. Therefore, **they** courageously petitioned **Moses** for a share in the parceling out of the Promised Land (see **[Eu - The Daughters of Zelophehad](#)**).

The second change was a change in national leadership. **God's** reminder of his fast-approaching death prompts **Moses** to ask **ADONAI** to appoint a new leader for the wilderness generation. The new high priest is already in place, with **Aaron's** appointment of **his son, Eleazar**, just prior to **Aaron's** death on Mount Hor (**20:22-29**). **Numbers** recounts only the transfer of leadership from **Moses** to **Joshua** (see **[Ev - The Successor to Moshe](#)**), not the actual death of **Moshe**, since that will come later at the end of the book of **Deuteronomy** (see the commentary **[Deuteronomy Gj - The Death of Moses](#)**). **Joshua** had joined **Caleb** as one of the two faithful spies who brought back a favorable report of the land (see **[By - The Report of the Spies](#)**). **Joshua** had been a close assistant and advisor to **Moses** for some time (**Exodus 17:8-13, 32:17** and **Numbers 11:28**).

Joshua, however, does not simply step into the shoes of leadership as a new **Moses**. **Moshe** gives only some or a portion of **his** authority to **Joshua (27:20)**. **ADONAI** spoke to **Moses'**

face to face in a direct and unmediated way (**12:6-8**). **Joshua**, on the other hand, will rely on more indirect divine guidance through the priest and his casting of lots using the Urim and Thummim (see the commentary on [Exodus Gb](#) - **The Urim and Thummim: The Means of Making Decisions**). The era of **Moshe** and **his** revelation of **God's** words to **Isra'el** were drawing to a close and would never again be repeated in **Isra'el's** history. For a brief interim period, **Joshua** and **Moses** would share in the leadership of **Isra'el** until **Moshe's** death. **Joshua** would then take over the full responsibility of leading **Isra'el** as **they** moved into the Promised Land of Canaan, but **his** leadership would be guided by the written **Torah of Moshe**.⁶¹⁶