

1. My simple title for this lesson is "planning for our future". This is not about retirement planning or even passing on one's material possessions to one's children. This is about caring about God's promises for our lives and how we pass those values onto others. This chapter has two distinct stories, which at first seem to not have much in common. I believe it is the title of this lesson that is the common thread. Let me explain these two stories within this chapter:
 - a) The first is about five sisters who have no brothers. They are worried when the Israelites conquer the Promised Land, they will have no inheritance there. To understand, one has to know a little about the topic of inheritance as practiced in that region back then: When parents die, their possessions were then split among their sons and not their daughters.
 - i) When their daughters got married, they were supposed to receive a wedding gift called a dowry. The idea is that if the husband ever leaves the wife, she is to live off the dowry until she can get established again.
 - b) With that concept in mind, these five sisters believed God in the sense that they believed the Israelites would conquer the Promised Land. Since it is not the practice of fathers to give any inheritance to daughters, they were worried, that their children would not have a share of land that will be distributed once it is conquered. They bring this up to Moses, in this chapter. Moses does not say, too bad for you, but instead, he sought God for the answer. In this chapter and in some verses in the final chapter of Numbers, we learn that if a man has only daughters, any family inheritance would go to them. However, those daughters must marry within their own tribe in order for that tribe to keep that land.
 - i) Let me give an illustration: My wife and I have two daughters and no sons. When we die, we will give what we own to them. If we were Jewish and lived back then, we would be part of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Then my daughters would be required to marry men from the same Jewish tribe that they were part of. That way, any land my family had would remain part of the same tribe after I die.
 - ii) Know that when the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple in 70AD that was about 1,400 years later. All the family records were destroyed and most Israelites had to scatter around the world at that time. My simple point is this practice is no longer in effect for the last 2,000 years. The bible teaches that when Jesus returns then the Israelites will somehow live again among their tribes. How that will happen is a mystery to me, and I'll wait for further information to learn how that is done.
 - c) Now let me briefly give the second story in this chapter. Then I'll talk a little about how this chapter is relevant to our lives today:
 - i) The second story is about how Moses is to pass on his leadership to Joshua. Part of what is described in this story does not take place until near the end of the book of Deuteronomy. That latter event describes how Moses is to go up to a mountain where he could physically see all of the land of Israel. Then he is going to die up on that mountain. He then says in effect, "Good for me I suppose, but what about the Israelites?" That is when God tells Moses that he is to anoint Joshua as the next leader of Israel. That anointing event is part of this chapter.
 - ii) What is unique about this anointing is that Joshua is not to have the same type of relationship with God that Moses had. The text in this chapter says that Joshua is to have some of Moses' power, but not all of it. I suspect that means Joshua was given a gift to be a good leader, but he is not going to have the same gift Moses had to communicate directly with God. Why is that? I believe it is because God wants to establish the way all people in the future communicate with Him: By us making the effort to seek Him regularly through out our lives.

2. OK, now it is time for the "why should we care" portion of this lesson.
 - a) To understand, as a Christian, one should always remember the rule: When a passage of the bible is confusing, try putting Jesus in the middle of it and see if it makes more sense. I believe that is the case here.
 - b) As I hinted at in the last lesson, the first story in this chapter is necessary for the birth of Jesus to occur. One of the promises made about Jesus is that he would be a descendant of the kings of Israel. The last of those kings (about five hundred years before Jesus) had a curse upon him for being such a wicked person. One could ask how Jesus be considered a descendant of those kings with that curse placed on that family line? The answer comes from this story of the five sisters: Jesus birthmother Mary was a descendant of David, but not a descendant of the other kings. However, the man Mary married was descendant of all of those kings of Israel, who also descended from David. Both Mary and Joseph were of the same tribe. What she owned, (she was pregnant when she married Joseph) legally became his due to this law of inheritance. That is how Jesus could be a legal son of Joseph and at the same time, Jesus could legally get around the curse on that wicked king.
 - i) By the way, when I start the text of this lesson, I'll give more details to explain this.
 - c) What about the second story in this chapter? The Hebrew names Joshua and Jesus (which is a Greek translation of the same word) are in effect the same name. Therefore, this story can be thought of as a "type of Jesus" who leads the Israelites into the Promised Land.
 - i) Think of it this way: Moses is associated with God's law. We can't spend eternity with God by being perfectly obedient to that law. By diligently obeying that law, we can get "close enough" to see the land as Moses did before his death. The idea is to understand the Old Testament law helps us to understand about God and His requirements for our lives. However, our sinful nature does not make us perfect.
 - ii) The name Joshua and Jesus both mean, "God is salvation". It is God Himself that actually leads us into a close relationship of trusting Him with every aspect of our lives. That is because we trust in His full payment for our sins and not our own ability to obey every aspect of the law. Once we have that trust established, He desires to work on our lives to make us more obedient to Him in all that we do.
3. All of this leads me back to my title of "planning for our future". This title is far more than caring about physical stuff we may give to our descendants. It is far more than knowing about biblical predictions about Jesus at either his birth or his death, although these two stories have aspects in their stories that do tie the life and purpose of Jesus coming into our world.
 - a) What this chapter teaches us is that these two stories teach us about how to plan for our future. I am referring to our eternal future in heaven. There is an old Christian saying that goes, "We can't take our stuff with us to heaven, but we can send it up ahead of time". That simply means what we do in this lifetime, does matter for all of eternity. Life is not just about how long one lives, but also about what we do with the time given to us. It is about how we use the time God gives us to make a difference for Him. That is how we plan for our own future, and a key point of this chapter.
 - b) With that long and rambling introduction completed, it is time to get into the details of this story by going through it verse by verse. I welcome you to read further as I explain how these verses are relevant to our lives today as Christian believers. Let's start.
4. Chapter 27, Verse 1: The daughters of Zelophehad son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, belonged to the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph.
 - a) In this verse, we get introduced to the five daughters. We learn that they are of the tribe of Joseph. If you recall, the tribe of Joseph is the one that had the "two for one split". The girls were of the tribe of Manasseh, which is one of the two tribes based on that split.
 - b) You may recall from the last lesson, that there were about two million Israelites that were camped out in the desert. Those five sisters were brave enough to walk up to Moses and ask in effect, "What does our family get when we get there? We won't get anything."

5. Verse 1 (cont.): The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. They approached ² the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly, and said, ³ "Our father died in the desert. He was not among Korah's followers, who banded together against the LORD, but he died for his own sin and left no sons. ⁴ Why should our father's name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives."
- a) The five daughters names are given at the end of Verse 1. A quick side note for those who are interested: The word "Noah" is not the same spelling in the original Hebrew as "the" Noah. It is spelled the same way in most English translations, but not in Hebrew.
 - i) Therefore, don't make too big a deal out of that name.
 - b) It is logical to assume that one of them is the spokeswoman, but no details are given about that aspect. One also has to remember that in that culture, women's rights are not equal to men. I don't think these are children, but grown married women. I don't know if they came alone or with their families. Either way, they came to make their case.
 - c) I believe these women understood the issue was bigger than just their own family rights. The issue had to do with any family that had only daughters and no sons. As a man who has only daughters, I can relate to this question. While I am not a Jewish person living in the time of those laws, I do desire to pass on what I know about God to my daughters and that idea of passing on what is important is a key concept of this lesson.
 - d) The text is also saying what the father of the five girls was and was not guilty of:
 - i) Earlier in the book of Numbers, there was a large rebellion against Moses lead by a man named Korah. This was back in Chapter 16. The daughters wanted to make the point that their father was not part of that rebellion. I suppose they made that point as to say in effect, "He was a good and loyal man to Moses, and was not part of any rebellion. Our family does not deserve punishment for that incident."
 - ii) The girls also mention that he was sentenced to die as part of the "big punishment" for not believing the report of the 10 spies. Back in Numbers Chapter 14, was the story of those spies giving a bad report about the land the Israelites were told to go conquer. Because that generation refused to believe and trust in God they were sentenced to die in the wilderness. The girls point is simply that their father did die along with that whole generation, but he didn't do anything more than that.
 - iii) The underlying issue of all this ancient history is simply the concept that the girls did not want to lose out on any family inheritance because they did not have any brothers. Think of it this way: The last chapter was a big census taken of all the Israelites. The land was to be distributed based on that census. These women are saying, "We will be cut off of that land just because we don't have any brothers."
 - iv) If nothing else, this story does show that God does care about women's rights and is not like the surrounding cultures where women had no rights whatsoever.
6. Verse 5: So Moses brought their case before the LORD ⁶ and the LORD said to him, ⁷ "What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and turn their father's inheritance over to them."
- a) It is interesting to consider Moses' reaction here. He didn't say, "Well that an interesting point, however, God has never given me any insight on this matter, so too bad for all of you." Instead, Moses does what anyone should do in a tough situation. Bring the matter to God in prayer and see what is the best thing to do. This principal is commonly used a lot in biblical counseling. It is when we agree to say to God, "We don't know how to solve this situation. All we can do is bring it to You in prayer and ask Your help here."
 - i) I have seen a lot of seemingly irresolvable situations get resolved, because those involved simply were willing to let go of a problem and ask in effect, "OK God, this is too tough for us to handle. You give us insight what to do here." That is the idea of surrender of a situation to God and letting Him work it out through us.

- b) Remember that this whole scene takes place long before any of the conquering of the Promised Land actually begins. My point is the girls trusted that the land would be conquered and that the Israelites would inherit that land. The related point is when we trust in God's promises to us to come true, then we can approach Him and ask, "Dear God, I want Your will for my life. Help us to discern what is Your will in this situation."
 - i) OK, John, let's assume we are not to go physically conquer any lands. The point for us is not so much the actual story, but the principals behind it. One of the great questions we have as believers is "What does God actually want me to do with my life?" As I say a lot, the answer usually involves seeking Him through prayer and through reading His word. The answer also usually involves doing things that we have a gift for, or things we enjoy doing anyway. If one does not know what is one's spiritual gift, ask others, "What do you think I am good at doing?"
 - a) The point is then to use one's talents and to do the things one does enjoy doing for God's glory.
 - ii) Let me give an example: Living in Southern California, I knew a man many years ago who loved surfing. He started a ministry for high school kids to surf together and then he had bible studies with that group. That is an example of doing what one enjoys doing for God's glory. Other examples may be just helping others do what they enjoy. The answer usually involves asking God "What do You want me to do, today for Your glory?" You may be surprised to learn the answers that one gets when one asks that question.
- c) Meanwhile, it is time to get back to ancient Israel, with these girls asking what would be their inheritance since they didn't have any brothers. God's response to this question is given over the next few verses.

7. Verse 8: "Say to the Israelites, 'If a man dies and leaves no son, turn his inheritance over to his daughter.'⁹ If he has no daughter, give his inheritance to his brothers.'¹⁰ If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers.'¹¹ If his father had no brothers, give his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan, that he may possess it. This is to be a legal requirement for the Israelites, as the LORD commanded Moses.'

- a) Notice that God's response is not just for these five sisters. It applies to any family with no sons. The answer is in effect, "If a man has no sons, then his daughters are to get his inheritance. If a man has no children, then it goes to the closest male relative." In effect the laws of male dominance continues here, but also exceptions are made.
- b) So why does the inheritance go to a man's brothers and not any sister? Remember that the Israelites were accustomed to living under the law that one's inheritance always goes to one's sons. Daughters were given a large dowry gift at their wedding. In that culture, a father is then no longer responsible for the financial well being of the daughter.
 - i) Therefore, this is God working within the norms of that culture, but at the same time showing some women's rights especially in cases where no men are around.
 - ii) Does that mean today that only male children are to inherit everything a father owns today and nothing be given to the daughters? I am pretty sure parent's wills are the same today in Israel as they are in the rest of western culture. So why was that culture so male dominant? It had nothing to do with either sex being superior to the other. It comes back to the principal that God calls men to lead. Consider a couple slow dancing: Somebody has to lead and God calls on men to lead.
 - a) When there are no men to lead in a situation like we have here in Numbers, God says in effect, inheritance can go to one's daughters.
- c) The important idea here is that one's family inheritance won't be lost just because there are no male offspring. When we get to Chapter 36, this topic is brought up again, and a key point then is that a girl must marry within her own tribe. That way the amount of land given to each tribe remains the same. This leads me perfectly to my next topic.

- d) One thing I mentioned when I started this lesson is that a promise was made to the nation of Israel that a descendant of David would be a king that would rule forever. Christians argue that king is Jesus. In 2nd Samuel, 7:13, is when that promise was stated to David. That promise is that a descendant of David would rule forever. As I have explained in the past, biblical prophecy usually has a short term and long term fulfillment.
- i) The short-term fulfillment is that David's son Solomon did build the first temple. However, that prediction in 2nd Samuel said that this son would rule forever. Even though Solomon did reign a long time in peace, he did not reign forever. That is why Jewish scholars consider this verse an unfulfilled promise to date.
 - ii) That is also why religious Jewish people accept the idea that a descendant of David is to be the Promised Messiah (a king who rules forever) from Israel.
 - iii) What I am getting at is the idea that Jesus is a legal son of David, both from his mothers' side and his father's side, as I'll explain some more in a few moments.
 - iv) Also understand that when the Romans destroyed the official temple roughly 40 years after Jesus was resurrected, all of their family records were destroyed.
 - a) My point is that no one can prove today that they are a "Son of David". So how do Jewish people today claim they will know when he comes? They say, because he will lead us to rebuild that temple that has been destroyed for the last 2,000 years. That is why they don't care about whether such a Messiah can prove whether or not he is a direct descendant of David.
 - v) Meanwhile, the bible does claim that Jesus is a direct descendant of David both from his mother and his father. Bear with me while I give a few of those details and then I'll explain how all of this ties to these verses here in Numbers.
 - vi) Let's start with Jesus birth mother Mary. In Luke's Gospel, we get a genealogy of Jesus based on His mother's side. This is in Chapter 3, Verses 23-38. This is a list of names that gives Mary's father's name (Heli, Verse 23) and works it way back all the way to Adam. It shows how Jesus was a "son of mankind". The idea is that Jesus became fully man and was still fully God. The purpose of Luke's gospel in that chapter is to show the human side of that equation.
 - a) That same genealogy in Luke shows that Jesus was a descendant of David, but not of King Solomon. He had a brother named Nathan, (Luke 3:31) and Mary was a descendant of Nathan. My only point here is that Jesus was not a descendant of the other kings of Israel but only of King David through his mother Mary.
- e) This surprisingly enough, leads me back to the book of Numbers. In Chapter 27 and 36:8 of that book, based on the daughters of Zelophehad and the principals of this story, a girl is supposed to marry a man within her own tribe as to not lose her family's inheritance. What I want to do here is to explain how that principal is required to show how Jesus was a legal son of David both based on the line of kings as well as "just" a son of David.
- i) The promise made to King David is that he would have kings as his descendants and one of those kings would rule forever. Christians have argued for 2,000 years that this king is Jesus. What I want to do here is to explain how Jesus is a legal son of all of those kings and what all of that has to do with Numbers Chapter 27.
 - a) Therefore, I need for you to bear with me a little more while I explain Jesus genealogy from Joseph's side.
 - ii) Before I do that, I want to disclose that I didn't discover this fact on my own. If you are familiar with the Scofield Bible, this was a commentary on the whole Christian bible written in 1909 and 1917 by a man named Cyrus I. Scofield.
 - a) He is the one who is credited with making this discovery about Jesus and this genealogy connection that explains how it ties back to the principals as taught here in the book of Numbers. OK, back to Jesus.

- f) The next step is to talk about the curse on the ancestry of Jesus' stepfather Joseph. The final king of Israel, a direct descendant of David, was considered so wicked, that the prophet Jeremiah (a contemporary) put a curse on that particular king, named Coniah.
 - i) Here is that curse: "Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol — a vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, and cast into a land which they do not know? O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the LORD: 'Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.'" (Jeremiah 22:28-30, NIV)
 - a) John's loose translation: No descendant of Coniah will ever be a king of Israel. The problem of course is that Jesus was the legal son of Joseph who was a direct descendant of this king.
 - ii) Some related notes about Joseph, the step father of Jesus:
 - a) Matthew's Gospel gives the genealogy from the first Jew (Abraham) to Jesus, through Joseph, the husband engaged to Jesus. Matthew 1:11 says "and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon." In other words, the genealogy of Joseph includes Jeconiah.
 - b) King Jeconiah is not part of Luke's genealogy of Mary.
 - c) Next, understand that "Coniah" and "Jeconiah" are the same person. (Compare Jeremiah 22:24 with Jeremiah 24:1 for that proof.)
 - d) Note that in the Gospel of Matthew, (1:20) Joseph, the husband of Mary was called a "Son of David" by an angel despite this family curse.
 - e) Therefore, the point is God knew He would get around this curse, by having Joseph legally marry Mary as they were in the same Jewish tribe.
- g) OK, if I have lost any of you, the short version is that Joseph, the husband of Mary, could not be the "father" of Jesus in terms of Jesus being a promised king. However, Jesus could be a promised king through Joseph because he married Mary.
 - i) This leads me back to Numbers Chapter 27. Remember that the five daughters of Zelophehad must marry a man within the same tribe that they belong in order to keep their family inheritance in the same tribe. (Also see Numbers 36:8.)
 - a) When Joseph married Mary, he inherited what belonged to her, which was the baby that was in her stomach at that time.
 - ii) The conclusion is that Jesus could legally be a descendant of the kings of Israel not based on his adopted father's genealogy, which was cursed, but because Joseph married Mary, Jesus legally became the adopted son of Joseph.
- h) In summary, a reason this law is in place about an inheritance remaining within the same tribe and going to the daughter if there are no sons, that way Jesus could legally belong to Mary. That is why Joseph could legally adopt Mary's unborn son Jesus due to these laws here in Numbers. That adoption rule worked in both Jewish law and also Roman law.
 - i) The shorter version is Mary and Joseph were both of the tribe of Judah and she did what the Old Testament law legally required by marrying within that same tribe.
- i) Therefore, if you ask why should I care that a woman in ancient Israel got to keep what belonged to her if she had no brothers, that law was needed in order to show that Jesus was the legal son of his step-father Joseph and the son of Mary.
 - i) I also speculate that Mary did not have any brothers. If she did, those brothers would be responsible for raising her baby. If she had no brothers, her baby was now Mary's legal property based on this text here in Numbers. That is also why Joseph could become the baby's father as her property became his property.
- j) Meanwhile, after two pages explaining how the baby Jesus could legally be the property of his stepfather Joseph despite his family curse, we actually left off on Verse 12 here in Chapter 27 of the book of Numbers.

8. Verse 12: Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go up this mountain in the Abarim range and see the land I have given the Israelites.¹³ After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was,¹⁴ for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes." (These were the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.)
- a) We now come to the second story in this chapter. It appears to have nothing to do with the first story in this chapter. The only connection is that in both instances, the daughters of Zelophehad and Moses are expressing their concern about the future. The girls cared about their inheritance. Moses was interested at this moment in who would be the next leader of Israel.
 - i) With that said, from Verses 12 until the end of the chapter, we are going to get the story about how Joshua is going to be the next leader of Israel and how Moses is going to end his life.
 - ii) As one reads these verses, keep in mind we are reading a preview. Part of what is described here does not occur just yet. God is explaining to Moses the events that will happen right before he dies: Moses will be able to see the Promised Land. God tells Moses to anoint Joshua as the next leader and that does occur here.
 - b) Since there is one book of the bible in between Numbers and Joshua, let me very quickly explain what happens in the book of Deuteronomy. Almost the entire book is in effect a farewell speech by Moses. That book repeats a lot of key points about the law. That book says in effect, "Here is how you will live once you are in the Promised Land."
 - i) I mention that here, because the final chapter of Deuteronomy does record the death of Moses in a fairly similar way to how it is described here in Numbers.
 - ii) People ask, how could Moses write about his own death? The easy answer is that he wrote it ahead of time as God told him here in Numbers how he would die.
 - c) All of this leads me back to these verses. Moses is told to go up to a specific mountain, and from there he would be able to see the land of Israel. I don't know if that meant he had a great view from up there or if God showed Moses a movie of the whole land. ☺
 - i) The point is Moses got to know how (not when) he was going to die and what will occur right before he dies.
 - ii) I don't know about you, but if I was told, go up on that mountain and there you will die, I might take my time to make that trip. It is a true sign of obedience that even in death, Moses agreed to do what God told him to do. Maybe if I am lucky enough to live to 120 years, I might feel the same way at that point in my life.
 - d) The next point of these verses is that God reminds Moses why he is not going to enter the Promised Land. To recall some facts from Chapter 20, the Israelites needed water. God told Moses to speak to a specific rock to bring out water. Moses was in a bad mood, and instead of obeying God by speaking to the rock he struck it twice probably with a stick. God is saying here that due to that sin, Moses could not enter the Promised Land.
 - i) First, let's remember why striking that rock was so bad. Back In Exodus Chapter 17, Moses did strike a rock to bring out water. Many experts argue that it was the same rock as in Numbers Chapter 20. In effect Moses blew the model. Jesus only had to die once for our sins, not over and over again. By hitting the rock, Moses is implying God had to suffer over and over again for our sins.
 - e) OK, so Moses was in a bad mood that day and blew the model of Jesus dying once for our sins. Why is that sin so bad that Moses was forbidden from entering the Promised Land?
 - i) I love that question. The answer gets back to the idea that we can't enter any sort of "Promised Land" by being perfectly obedient to the law. All of sin, either a little or a lot and fall short of God's glory. Yes Moses was forgiven of that sin. If you read Verse 13 again, it implies Moses is saved and going to heaven. However, that sin is preventing Moses from entering the Promised Land.

- ii) Let's come back to the verses to explain further: Notice in Verse 13 the phrase that says, "You (Moses) too will be gathered to your people". It doesn't say Moses will be taken from his people, but gathered to his people. That is God saying Moses is saved, period. Therefore, the issue here is not salvation. It is about understanding what God means by the Promised Land.
 - a) Let me give my favorite definition of the Promised Land. It is living a life where one is fully trusting God with every aspect of one's life. That's it.
 - (1) This does not mean we have to be perfect people. At the same time, God does desire we do His will. In order to discern His will, we should spend time in His word, in prayer and then doing what appears to be the right thing to do at any given moment.
 - (2) The secret of doing His will, is not to rely upon our willpower, but to trust in His power to accomplish what He desires of us.
 - b) This does not mean that everything God wants us to do comes easy. Some of the greatest efforts made in the bible required a lot of hard work as well as struggles to get things done. Most of us have had to learn the hard way that doing His will begins with surrendering our will to His. It is saying to God, "My time is now Your time. Make it obvious to me what it is that You want me to accomplish". Then we should go forward in life, make the best decisions possible and trust that He is guiding our lives.
- iii) OK, so Moses is saved. Good for him and maybe I'll introduce myself to him in heaven and say how much I enjoyed studying what he wrote. What does the fact that he didn't get to enter the Promised Land have to do with my life?
 - a) Moses sinned in that he failed to trust God in a key moment. All of us who are alive can probably name similar moments. What all of this teaches us is that we can't be good enough for God by trying harder. We can't earn His love by trying hard enough. That is the danger of studying the law. God's law is a good thing in that it teaches us His standards for right and wrong.
 - b) We fail in that we constantly try to show God, "Look how good we are at this moment by doing this". God can't love us more than He already does. We can't prove our worth to Him by obedience. He does desire obedience not to prove ourselves to Him, but only because it is the best way to live out our lives. That is what living in the "Promised Land" is all about.
 - c) Are you saying Moses wasn't good enough for the Promised Land? No. I'm just saying that because Moses is associated with the law, God is using that fact as a model to show that we can't please Him by trying harder. We are to be obedient to Him not to earn His favor, but simply because that is the best way to live our lives.
- f) Let me give more idea to consider and then we can move on. If Moses could not enter the Promised Land due to his failures, why were Joshua and Caleb, who were from the same generation as Moses allowed into that land? Yes those two were the spies who brought back the good report and did trust in God, but one cannot argue that these two were more perfect as human beings than Moses. Of course not.
 - i) Let's start with Joshua. He was an assistant to Moses for many years. Therefore, he was trained to be the next leader. God did not pick Joshua because he was an extraordinary person. God just picked him, because He did. It is an example of how God calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things through His power.
 - ii) Now a few words about Caleb. The text to this point does not say a lot about him. However, he is of the Messianic line from the tribe of Judah that leads to Jesus.
 - a) Caleb entering the land is symbolic of the Messiah Himself being part of the transition from the "Old to the New" generation that did enter.

9. Verse 15: Moses said to the LORD, ¹⁶ "May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community ¹⁷ to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."
- a) Meanwhile, we left Moses talking to God about how he was going to see the land of Israel and then he was going to die. Notice that Moses does not question God's plan for his life, but instead he is considering the future of the Israelites.
 - b) This leads me back to my lesson title of "planning for our future". This is Moses saying in effect, "OK, enough about me, what about them? Who will lead them into the Promised Land if I'm not around to lead them?"
 - i) I don't think Moses is trying to get out of his destiny, he is just showing concern about the future of saved people. Moses knew he would live forever in heaven as the text earlier says that he would be "gathered to his people". Therefore, the text is saying Moses is thinking, "I know I am saved. However, I care about the future of other people and their relationship with God. Who will lead them?"
 - ii) God in effect helps Moses answer that question with the book of Deuteronomy. As I stated, that book is in effect one big farewell speech to teach people how it is they are to live in the Promised Land. Even though Moses wasn't allowed to enter the land itself, he understood enough about God's requirements to teach that next generation and us: "Here is what God expects of us when we actually living in the mental state of living in the Promised Land".
 - iii) The other issue is that Moses was concerned about who would be the next leader. Yes Moses knew that Joshua was his assistant, but he wanted to see what God had to say about who was the next leader. So does that mean we should elect our next president by seeing who God wants? This is why God wants us to pray for those who in power that they do His will. Civil leaders are usually a reflection of what the people under that leader want. We may or may not like our leaders. We still have to accept that they are in charge and we are not. Since God has raised them up to be our leaders, He calls on us to pray for them to do His will for our lives.
 - c) Moses understood that the Israelites needed a leader to guide them. Instead of just saying I pick this guy to be the leader, he turned that issue over to God. Moses did not do this to earn points with God, but just because Moses understood the principal that living in the Promised Land is about trusting Him with our lives and the decisions that we make.
 - i) Notice Moses uses the word "shepherd". He is saying that the Israelites need a leader like a good shepherd to guide them in life. For the last forty years Moses made some tough decisions and had to lead the Israelites through some difficult situations. Moses knew life would not be easy in the actual Promised Land and once the Israelites got there, they still needed good leadership.
 - ii) Consider that Jesus compares Himself to the "good shepherd" that leads His sheep. (See John 10:14). The symbolic idea of the Promised Land is that Jesus is the one who guides those who trust in Him for their salvation. That is why I have been preaching the concept that we rely upon His power in order to live the type of life that God wants us to live for Him. It's not about earning God's love. It is about letting our Good Shepherd (Jesus) guide us to do what it His will for our lives.
 - iii) Coming back to Moses, he got the idea that God is telling him, his time is almost up. It is time for Moses to be concerned about his people and not his own life at this point. I believe God was waiting for Moses to ask about who was going to be the next leader. That way God could explain to Moses and us about His principals in how leaders should be chosen. Remember I asked how should we choose our leaders? In effect, God is going to answer that question in the next set of verses. Speaking of which, it is time for us to move on to those verses.

10. Verse 18: So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. ¹⁹ Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. ²⁰ Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. ²¹ He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in."
- a) God is saying to Moses, go do a big public ceremony to anoint Joshua as the next leader. That why the entire nation will know that he is to be the next leader of Israel.
 - b) If one reads some of the Jewish commentaries on this section of the bible, the question is asked, "Why Joshua? Why not Eleazar's son Phinehas, the guy who killed the couple that was having illicit sex in the last chapter and in effect stopped the plague?" After all, one could argue that Phinehas had a heart for God and he had leadership skills.
 - i) My answer is that God lays out a principal in the bible where the civil leaders and the religious leaders are to be separate offices. I have personally heard a number of older famous Christian pastors say the biggest mistake they have made in their lives is when they got involved in politics. God separates those two offices for a good reason. Phinehas did care about God but He is being called to be the head priest one day and not the next civil leader. That is one reason God picked Joshua.
 - c) Anyway, God picks "Joshua, son of Nun". One commentary told a cute but very bad joke that says, "We know Joshua was Roman Catholic because he was the son of Nun". Now that I've gotten that joke out of my system, I can come back to the text.
 - d) Now I come to my favorite question about this section of the text: Verse 20 says Moses is to give some of his authority to Joshua. A good question here is why did God give some of Moses' power to Joshua and not all of it. Didn't God want the next leader to be as good as Moses and be a good leader? That line of thinking misses the point. Let me explain:
 - i) I believe the principal being established here is that Moses was given a unique relationship with God that was not duplicated by any other human. I would also argue that because Jesus is "fully God and fully man", He is an exception.
 - ii) Let me try this concept another way. Moses wrote the first five books of the bible. I would argue that God somehow spoke directly to Moses that was unlike God's relationship with other people. Once the "law" was written, God did not desire to communicate the exact same way with other people. Obviously other people did contribute to the bible. The Christian bible has a total of 66 books by a total of who I believe are 40 different authors. I don't think the other authors had God literally over their shoulder saying write this exactly as I say so.
 - iii) To use my own writing as an example: Do I believe it is God inspired? Yes, in the sense that I pray over what I write and what I edit. Do I believe it should be part of the bible itself? Of course not. I trust in God to guide what I write. I believe the other writers of the bible somehow knew what they wrote there was God inspired.
 - iv) With that said, God's own relationship with Moses was somehow unique in how he communicated with God. Do I fully understand the difference? No. But if the text says that Moses is to give some but not all of his power to Joshua, then I must accept the idea at God's relationship with Joshua was different from how God did communicate with Moses. Consider that the same way His relationship with each of us has unique aspects, so was His relationship with both Moses and Joshua.
 - e) Finally, we should discuss how Joshua was to make decisions. Verse 21 says that Joshua was to ask the head priest to "inquiring of the Urim before God." Scholars have pondered for millenniums exactly what is meant by the "Urim". Most likely it was some sort of dice like object used to determine God's will. I like to think of it as consulting God's word for guiding our lives. Since Joshua did not have any bible yet, he needed to work with the High Priest in order to figure out what was God's will as Joshua was to lead the Israelites.

11. Verse 22: Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. ²³ Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses.
- a) The chapter ends with Moses actually performing this ceremony. Note that Joshua was not to be the leader just yet. Let's face it, Moses hasn't died yet, and won't do so until the end of the next book of the bible. Still, this is only a short time away, and most scholars estimate it was only about a month here before Moses died.
 - b) Still, what this ceremony does is let the public know that Joshua is about to be in charge.
 - c) If I had to speculate, I would think that Joshua had to be scared here. One of the most difficult things to do in life is to be the next leader after a great leader is gone. For some time, my own father who was successful in his life intimidated me. A big growth step for me was when my father died, I had to realize that God had a different plan for me than He did for my father.
 - i) I say that because I can relate to Joshua in that regards. I can understand how it must have been intimidating to have to follow a leader who was greatly respected.
 - ii) That is why the opening chapter of the book of Joshua is all about encouraging him to be "strong and courageous" and that is one of my favorite chapters in the bible when it comes to encouraging myself to do His will for my life.
 - iii) I recently read something about the history between the two American Presidents named George Bush. Long before the son became the President, the father had a study done of what happened historically to the children of other United States Presidents. That history was full of tragic stories. Many of those descendants did die before living out a full life as their successful fathers intimidated them.
 - iv) I'm going on and on about this, because I want to reach out to the readers of these studies who have had successful parents. The point is we can't compare what God has for our lives with what He has for our parents. That same principal applies if we didn't have significant parents. Don't assume one's destiny is determined by the life of one's parents. God's destiny for each of us is based on our trust in Him to guide our lives and not based on God's destiny for our parents.
 - d) Meanwhile, Moses laid hands on Joshua to publicly show he was to be the next leader. I hold the opinion that the actual laying of hands on people is a symbolic gesture and there is no physical exchange of power from one person to the next. Many Christians argue that there is something important about that physical exchange and it is a debated issue.
 - i) As far as this exchange between Moses and Joshua, I don't believe there was an actually exchange of power from one person to the other. I think it was just so that the Israelite nation would know that God picked Joshua to be the next leader.
12. At this point, let me wrap up the lesson by coming back to the title of "planning for our future".
- a) The first half of the chapter dealt with five sisters who were worried about losing their own share of God's inheritance for their families. They planned for the future of their families by bringing the issue to Moses. The result was a ruling that they get to have that inheritance in that land despite a lack of any brothers. The text in this section and the first part of Chapter 36 say that one must marry within one's own tribe so that no tribe's size would go up or down based on who married whom. The point as it relates to Numbers Chapter 27 is these sisters planned for their future.
 - b) In the second half of the chapter, we see Moses concerned with the future of the nation of Israel. God tells Moses that he will die soon. Instead of questioning that fact, Moses was concerned about who will lead the Israelites in the future. That is why most of the second half of this chapter focuses on a ceremony where the next leader of Israel is ordained in order to show everyone who will be the next leader.
 - c) The point for you and me is about how God not only wants us to care about our own relationship with Him, but with the future relationship with other believers.

- d) Think about the Great Commission, which Jesus calls all of us disciples to follow. He says that we are to go into all nations making disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (That is Matthew 28, Verse 19.)
 - i) First of all, notice the word "name" there is singular and not plural. That implies that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are somehow united as one, and that is a clue of why Christians call that relationship the "Trinity" even though that word is not listed in the bible.
 - ii) Next, this verse is Jesus says that our job as Christians is in effect to plan for our future as a Christian nation. Planning for our future is not just to care about our own relationship with God, but also to care about future generations relationships.
 - iii) That is why the five sisters cared about the future and that is why Moses cared about the future of the Israelites. They each took steps in order to work on the future of other's relationship with God.
 - iv) My point is to fulfill the great commission is in effect to care about the future of the Christian church. As believers, we should want more than God guiding our own lives. We should want Him to guide the lives of others. That is why Jesus gave us the Great Commission in the first place. God gives us the privilege and the honor of leading others to Him and leading others to grow in Him. That is what He calls us to do and that is why the characters in this chapter cared about the future of other believers and not just themselves.
 - v) On that positive note, it is time to end in prayer.
- 13. Let us pray: Father, Help us to use our lives to make a difference for You. Help us to do that by using our lives to make a difference for other believers and potential believers. Help us to use the most valuable thing You give us, our time, to make that difference for You. Help us to rely upon Your power and not our own strength to make that difference. Guide us, so that Your church can grow and prosper and be a witness to the world around us. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.