WOMEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Eve, daughters of Zelophehad, and Rahab
INTRODUCTION: SCRIPTURE

• Scripture is the account of God’s redemptive activity throughout the history of the nation of Israel

• Throughout it we find the testimonies of both men and women who experienced God in profound and transformative ways for His glory and for the good of humankind

• They knew that there is no partiality in God-ordained leadership

• God’s redemptive work is so important that He will use anyone to accomplish it
INTRODUCTION: LEADERSHIP

• All God wants is a willing heart that He can fill with hope, courage, wisdom, and discernment

• John Maxwell defines leadership as “influence – nothing more, nothing less”

• Forbes magazine defines it as “…a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal”

• Both men and women are capable of being effective leaders because in Scripture God used both to influence humankind, then and now
EVE

• Her story is found in Genesis 1-4
• Eve means “living, life giver” or “mother of all living”
• God created her as Adam’s equal in identity and function: Genesis 1:26 & 2:18 (ezer kenegdo = equal helper)
• Genesis 4:1, 25 and 3:15-16 (see also Matt 3:23-28)
• Eve was courageous and hopeful
DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

• Their story is found in Numbers 27:1-11

• Two things to note: 1) In Numbers 26, a census is taken of all males over 20 – Zelophehad is included and does not have sons 2) God instructs Moses to distribute portions of land as inheritance (no sons = no inheritance)

• Numbers 27:1-4 states: “27 Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, from the clans of Manasseh the son of Joseph. The names of his daughters were: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 And they stood before Moses and before Eleazar the priest and before the chiefs and all the congregation, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, saying, 3 “Our father died in the wilderness. He was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah, but died for his own sin. And he had no sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no son? Give to us a possession among our father’s brothers.”
DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

• These women know their law and history
• They know that the continuity of the family name depends on the land that is inherited
• They realize that the current law must take into account the unusual circumstances of a man without sons
• God, who indisputably supports the sisters’ demand, decrees a new and permanent law to secure inheritance for any other daughters in the same situation (27:6-8)
• Their courage to speak up and their hope in a just God brought change to Israel
RAHAB

• Her story is found in the book of Joshua (2:1-24, 6:17-25)

• Rahab is well known as the prostitute of Jericho who helped Israel’s spies

• As Joshua led Israel in taking possession of the land that God promised in the Abrahamic Covenant, they were to remain set apart from sin—relationally, culturally, physically, spiritually, and politically. Within this view, the spies’ association with Rahab is interesting since she is not an Israelite but instead… a Canaanite

• But she's not just any Canaanite — she is one who grasps God's merciful, redemptive work and claims it for herself and her family
RAHAB

• She is one who had a true sense of God and His power
• She knows of God’s saving action at the Red Sea, and thereafter against other nations (2:10). She also recognizes His power and sovereignty
• With that knowledge, she pleads for her family in terms of a kindness (2:12) by using the term hesed which Scripture often uses to speak of God’s mercy
• Rahab, then, is presented as a woman of wisdom and discernment
CONCLUSION

• There is no partiality in God-ordained leadership

• “9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.” (Romans 2:9-10)

• 34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. (Acts 10:34-35)