

Latter-day Saint Women Podcast Transcript

Camille Fronk Olson | Learning from Women in the Old Testament

KARLIE.

Hello, and welcome to the *Latter-day Saint Women* podcast, where we share the legacy of women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You'll get to know the faithful women who shaped our past and hear from inspiring women of faith today. I'm your host, Karlie Guymon, and today I'm missing my cohost, Shalyn Back, who is on maternity leave after delivering a baby boy, so congratulations to Shalyn. We're excited for her. This year individuals and families Churchwide are studying the Old Testament at home and on Sundays for Come, Follow Me. And today we hope to supplement your study a little bit with some thoughts and insights from a very special guest, Camille Fronk Olson. Camille, welcome.

CAMILLE.

Thank you.

KARLIE.

We're really excited to have you virtually from Provo, Utah. As a quick introduction, Camille Fronk Olson is a professor emeritus of ancient scripture and a former department chair at Brigham Young University. She holds a master's degree in ancient Near Eastern studies and a PhD in the sociology of the Middle East. And one area of expertise for Camille that we were very excited about is women in scripture. And Camille has authored several books on the subject. She also pioneered courses along with another teacher, teaching about women in scripture as an institute and seminary teacher. So today we've asked her to join us to teach us more about women in the Old Testament and how as we study their lives and examples, our scripture study can be enhanced. So, Camille, thanks again for being here and for joining us.

CAMILLE.

Oh, I am excited and so thrilled to be able to talk about this subject.



KARLIE.

Yes, and I've already felt how this expanded understanding on this subject can enhance my study of the scriptures, my understanding of the Old Testament, so we're just really excited for what you have to offer our listeners today. So, to begin, I was so excited in preparing for this to learn that of the 170-plus women named in scripture—this is according to some of your writings—the majority are in the Bible, and there are a lot in the Old Testament. So, tell us why it's especially possible to identify and learn from women in the Old Testament, especially understanding their stories can strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ?

CAMILLE.

I have this personal theory that you share stories out of scripture and they have the potential and power to resonate with women and men all around the world in any time period. I have not found that to be the case with someone sharing their personal story today. I don't know what the dynamic is, but I don't always relate to a woman's personal story today. Maybe I just put myself so much in today's world and my life is so different from theirs. But there is something about scripture, let's say the Old Testament. Their lives were totally different from ours in the sense of culture, and yet I can relate to them. The more I get into that world, the more I can visualize what life would have been more like for them. They are powerful to me in sharing why I can be a stronger and better contributor in the gospel of Jesus Christ today. And for that reason alone, I think it is very helpful to go back into those—ancient world. But it does require a lot of visualizing, a lot of trying to figure out what that world was like, and that is a step that doesn't just come naturally.

KARLIE.

Yeah. Well, I can see why you would relate especially well with them, because you've spent so much time getting to know their world. And I bet anyone could say that about different parts of history that they're especially connected to, that you really relate with those people or have empathy or understanding for them.

CAMILLE.

Yes. For example, look at people who get into their own family history and learn about great-great-grandparents and beyond and that they feel a particular connection and can't wait to meet them in the next life.



KARLIE.

Yeah. They're very real to them.

CAMILLE.

I remember something that Elder Maxwell said, that someday the faithful will get to know these women and find out a lot more about them directly from them. Oh, I just—I know maybe I live more in the past than in the present.

KARLIE.

Well, no, that's exciting. I think you've demonstrated the power that can come from these stories from scripture when we have that connection and understanding. So, I want to go back to what you said about—one stumbling block to accessing insights from the lives of women in scripture is this intimidation or lack of understanding about the customs or history, languages, geography, you've mentioned. And you just said women feeling intimidated keeps them from accessing that power from scripture, and others too—men as well—with the Old Testament. And I'm personally very painfully aware of how little I know about these things, and most members of the Church just don't have understanding that you or other scholars would have. So we wanted to ask you, too, How can we gain just a little bit of background knowledge so that the stories can really shine through and that we can develop a connection to these women, even though it feels like maybe they're very distant and different from us?

CAMILLE.

I think one of our biggest stumbling blocks is the expectation and hope that we can get that all in one fell swoop.

KARLIE.

And download, right?

CAMILLE.

Yes.

KARLIE.



And download the Old Testament into my brain.

CAMILLE.

And if there's one book, a short, simple, straightforward book I could read that could just send me back to that world and I could understand all of it. But I've found the most powerful and effective way of doing that is more of a line upon line. You just need to start somewhere. And for me, a time line—I'm such a visual learner, but just getting some idea of a time line, even just thinking. I just general—big picture, I put Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant starting in about 2000 BC and King David in about 1000 and then Christ coming a thousand years later. You get those major events and then you say, OK, Moses fits somewhere between David and Abraham. And you kind of get him, make it a little bit farther down the road, so maybe around 1300, and then you'd get Judges in between that, and then the kingdom divides. And you can see that that happens just after Solomon's time, and Solomon's after David.

Anyway, you just start putting a few little marks where you say, "Oh yes, when you talk about Elijah, Elijah would be between Solomon and the time that the Northern Kingdom was captured by the Assyrians." And then you get the geography to go with that. Get out a map. And more and more people are traveling—I mean, maybe not during COVID—but have gone to some place like the Holy Land. There's been a lot, but even without going there, you start going there, send your spirit over there free of charge. It's a fabulous way of travel, and see pictures. And I think it's one of the reasons I love archaeology. I'm not an archaeologist; I've never been trained in that, but I love to see things that they have done. For example, there is a book called *Archaeology and the Old Testament* that I have loved. It's written by Alfred Hoerth, H-O-E-R-T-H. And it has pictures that—you go through Old Testament time and showing material culture that dates back to that time.

KARLIE.

That probably related a lot to women, right, lottery and things like that?

CAMILLE.

Yes, and Carol Meyers is a woman archaeologist who has done a whole lot of work that has really tried to uncover what women's lives were like in that ancient time, so anything by her I have loved. I have loved a book by Roberta Harris that I used when I taught the Near



Eastern Studies class for the Jerusalem Center at BYU in Jerusalem, and it's called *The World of the Bible*. And it is a little tiny—but I used it with my students there—that you have pictures on every page that you see there.

KARLIE.

It may be a little bit more digestible.

CAMILLE.

Yes, it's very short, but it gives you a platform to start a baseline, to start a foundation, and then everything you learn after that, you have some place to connect it. There's just a lot for history.

KARLIE.

There's some really rich resources out there.

CAMILLE.

But I love what Dana Pike and David Seely and Richard Holzapfel did in an oversized called *Jehovah and the World of the Old Testament*, which is also one which helps you visualize and get a general foundation. But whatever it is, just start-Google, just Google "What's the historical setting for 1 Samuel chapter 1?" for example. And you can get it right off your computer, something to start with.

KARLIE.

Right on your phone, right? So, what I hear you saying too is it can be overwhelming to look at all of these resources and think about all the things we don't understand, but I think what I like to keep in mind is that we're going to be studying the Old Testament and the New Testament every few years for the rest of our lives. So even if we just learn a little bit every time we study these books and we build upon and expand our understanding, you're telling us that that will enrich the stories and the people in these stories.

CAMILLE.

Yes, and thank you for saying it that way. I just get too excited about all these different things you can do. But that's right.



KARLIE.

That's awesome.

CAMILLE.

But, I think, don't get overwhelmed. Just start somewhere and just bite off a little bit. And, again, just think you are capable and this is not overwhelming. The more you get steps into that, the more you love it, and this is your dessert getting to study some of this.

KARLIE.

I love that. Thanks, Camille. So, we've talked a little bit about women in scripture, but I want to get into something that you have taught that just made a difference for me in thinking about women in scripture. And you've taught that maybe because scriptures typically only give one or a few snapshots of a woman's life—instead of, like, a prophet; we learn about them from start to finish. You've taught that we often portray scriptural women as one-dimensional and that they're one of two things. Either they were elevated to occupy pedestals or they're just demoted to what you call pitiful swamp dwellers, like really horrible people. So as we are studying the Old Testament this year, why is this not especially helpful, this kind of thinking, and how can we do better to recognize that these women, as every individual, [are] complex and multidimensional?

CAMILLE.

Yeah, I have noticed that tendency, and I just think so often what you do on a pedestal. And I've had some of these discussions with some of my male colleagues, that some would say, "What's wrong with putting women on a pedestal? I thought that was showing great deference and love for women." And I go, "What is there to do on a pedestal but just look beautiful up there or fall off?" And that is not a life that anyone really cares about. We want to be involved in the work.

KARLIE.

Engaged.

CAMILLE.



Engaged, and that is always messy. It is always fraught with uncovering our weaknesses and our need for improvement. But it's how we do improve. It's how we recognize our need for a Redeemer. We're not doing it by our skills and natural abilities alone, and we're doing it in concert with others. I think it's just one of those marvelous truths that I think come through when you study women of the Old Testament, is that the greatest accomplishments happen when men and women are working together and they appreciate the contributions from each other. That is where power is. And that doesn't happen when you've got one elevated clear up or the other one—either women don't need a redeemer; they're so beautiful; they're so wonderful; they never do anything; they are so spiritually in tune. And I go, "And what good does that do if all you do is sit up there on the pedestal?" Or so fallen—they are the root of all evil for all; you can always find some woman that's brought him down, and you can blame a woman for that, and that's not helpful for anyone. So ...

KARLIE.

No, thank you. Can you give any examples of women that maybe are put in one of those categories?

CAMILLE.

Ahhhh ...

KARLIE.

That's actually much more complex?

CAMILLE.

Well, one way that it happens: if you get two women in the same story and they don't agree with each other. They just have to disagree some and suddenly you've got to make one the heroine and one the fallen woman. And we encounter that pretty early in the Old Testament with Sarah and Hagar, don't we? I mean, these women don't get along with each other. They're on different levels in the hierarchy, in a sense, and they share a husband. And it's not the ideal, lovely story, and yet I believe as you look at Hagar, you see how much God loves her.

Remember, she names God "The God who sees me" when she's out there at the well, and the well is named after what she called it. She



gets a revelation directly from the Lord, and He cares for her son, Ishmael. And so it goes on to the next generation, where Ishmael is the bad one and Isaac is the good one. But you start reading more closely and God has the covenant and the plan for both of them. One of them is put in charge of—and put as the leader, but that doesn't mean the blessings for Hagar and Ishmael and Esau after that are not available.

KARLIE.

And that's where, like you said, understanding the context and history can enrich our understanding of these stories completely. Can I read something that you wrote, that you said on this? You said, "These women are waiting to teach us that we as ordinary individuals can also do extraordinary things to make the world a better place and bring people to Christ when we follow their examples by turning our lives over to Him."

CAMILLE.

Yeah, that's why I say you can relate to them. I have days like that; I have years like that.

KARLIE.

So, thank you. I think this is such an important principle to recognize, and if we in our study or in Sunday School, as these characters come up—if we can help encourage the conversation to be more open-minded about the complexities and the things that we can learn from these ordinary people— Like you said, we don't learn much from someone who's apparently perfect, right? We learn from characters who struggle and who fall and turn to Jesus Christ.

CAMILLE.

And then they do marvelous things. And you're knowing it's the power of God that is enabling them. It isn't because they are doing everything marvelously on their own.

KARLIE.

Yeah. Oh, I just love this so much. Thank you, thanks for enlightening us on this tendency that we have. So, you've also—in your writings and research, you've identified a few principles that we can learn as we study women in the Old Testament. And so I wanted to kind of go



through and talk with you about some of these principles and some of the women who help teach us. I wanted to start with this idea that women in scripture are often types of Christ, and we see that in the Old Testament. So tell us about some of the women who kind of illustrate this for us.

CAMILLE.

I think that is an important principle, just in and of itself. We see men as types of Christ often. Even Alma chapter 13 invites us to watch for that. But the more you find about some of these women, you can see some evidences of that as well. For example, I think Abigail is by far the clear-cut, most remarkable example. She's in 1 Samuel chapter 25 and gets in the midst of the David chapters. And David has already married; he's not king of all of the tribes of Israel, but Saul is threatened by him. And he's out with his smaller army. And we're introduced to Abigail as being married to a man named Nabal; his name means "fool." And you wonder how these two got together. But Abigail is just a delight, and they're very wealthy; they have lots of property. And Nabal won't feed David and his army, which he easily could. But he shuns David, and David in retaliation is ready to kill Nabal and all his male servants, which would be hundreds. And immediately the servants go to Abigail. I think this has happened a few times, and Abigail puts herself and her life on the line. She has her people prepare this huge feast, and she takes it up to meet David and his army on their way to kill all the men in Nabal's camp. And she kneels down before him and asks forgiveness for what her husband has done.

She's right there; he could easily have the army retaliate and kill her. And she basically is saying, "Remember what God has done for you and what He's called you to. Why would you throw this away? Don't do this evil thing." And ready to sacrifice her own life to save David and the mission that God has sent him to do, and it turns David away. And then she has to go back and face Nabal, who was drunk. Anyway, the story is fabulous. She waits until the wine has gone out of him before she tells him, "Yeah, I fed David." And then he's so angry he has this stroke, it sounds like. Anyway, the Lord takes him—which is very lovely in the story; Nabal's gone—and then David ends up marrying Abigail. So Abigail becomes one of David's wives.

KARLIE.

Interesting.



CAMILLE.

Anyway, you don't hear much of Abigail after that. She just kind of is mixed in with others of his many wives. But you start getting a hint about these women. I mean, she represented a large geographical area, so you start thinking of political marriages as well, but I'm getting into other stuff now. But you see how Abigail was salvation for Nabal and all the menservants as well as for David and his army. So there's an example.

We often see Boaz as a type of Christ. But I think you can look at the story of Ruth also and see Ruth as she puts herself out there for her mother-in-law and for, in a sense, all people that are not born into the house of Israel directly but that become followers of Jehovah. And the faith that she exemplifies to save Naomi is another example; I think you can see her as a type of Christ.

KARLIE.

Thank you. So, something we can be thinking about and watching for as we read the stories and identify this principle. So, another principle that I thought was really interesting is in the Old Testament we see women as prophetesses. And I think maybe that's something that's misunderstood. It can be kind of frustrating, like, wait a minute, there used to be prophetesses and now they're not. What happened?

CAMILLE.

Yeah.

KARLIE.

So, maybe you can help us understand what that meaning is and how that can help us see that actually there are prophetesses today in the true sense of the word.

CAMILLE.

Yes. And related to that is when you encounter in the Old Testament multiple prophets at one time. Like Jezebel was wanting to kill hundreds of prophets, and Elijah helps to protect many of them from Jezebel and Ahab.

KARLIE.



So we understand there's not just one prophet at a time.

CAMILLE.

Yes, you get prophets—plural—at one time, and prophetesses. That tells you we think about prophets in the Old Testament the same way we do today, here. And that's where we run into problems. So, for the definition of prophets and prophetess, I like Revelation 19:10, that says a “testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” and the gift of prophecy. And so when we have the Spirit with us that reveals to us the truth about Jesus Christ and we profess, we bear witness of that, we are prophets; we are prophetesses. And you see the context of those named prophets and prophetesses in the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. You'll see the last of the prophetesses—Anna in the New Testament is called a prophetess. But I believe it is—they know through the Spirit that Jesus, Jehovah, is the Son of God, is the Messiah, is their Redeemer, and they bear witness of that. Remember Moses said, “Oh, that all of you would be prophets. Oh, it would be wonderful, but it's not just on my shoulders, but all of you would be prophets.” And Joel said, “Oh, that your sons and your daughters will prophesy.”

Even in our latter days, I just think it's interesting, Lucy Mack Smith was called a prophetess, and Eliza R. Snow was called a prophet. They used that terminology in similar ways. I like to say—in that same vane, I'd like to think I'm a prophetess, but I would be a little bit hesitant to say that in my fast and testimony meeting, for example, because it's not understood, typically, today. But it's a beautiful truth to understand that we learn in the Old Testament. Look in the book of Mosiah: Remember when Limhi asks Ammon if there's someone back at Zarahemla who could read these records, and he answers, “Yes, we have this seer, and a seer is greater than a prophet. A seer can see things that others don't see, and that's even greater than a prophet.” Well, we stumble over that because we're thinking, “No, they're the same thing.” We use them the same.

KARLIE.

They're the same. They're one and the same. Yeah.

CAMILLE.

So, do you want to hear some of the problems, those that are specifically named prophetess—



KARLIE.

Yes. Because I think with that understanding we can relate better with them. Right, it's not like, "Oh, they're in a different category completely. I could never become someone who bears witness of Christ," and it's like, "No, no."

CAMILLE.

No, no, no. So, the first one specifically called a prophetess is Miriam. And Miriam as a little girl helped to save her baby brother and bring that baby brother into the house of Pharaoh, where Moses is reared. But it's later—it's right after they passed through the Red Sea, she's dancing with the women, which—music and dancing and prophesying, professing truth often came through in those songs they sang in that situation. There is Miriam as a prophetess, and we get one verse of her song. In Exodus 15, they've just come through the Red Sea, and the first part of that chapter, it has Moses singing a song, several, several verses, and then just a couple of verses of Miriam and the women singing. And the only verse we get for her is the same that Moses sang, and in that context Miriam is called a prophetess. That's why a lot have wondered if the song really isn't Miriam with the women singing with her and then it later attributed to Moses. But it's in that song that we see her profess the reality that Jehovah is the one that brought them through this miracle. So, that's Miriam.

You get Deborah, oh my goodness. Deborah is just such an incredible person. She is called a prophetess in Judges chapter 4 and 5, two whole chapters. She's called a prophetess and a judge. She's the one female judge among all the judges, and she's the one woman in scripture called "mother in Israel." And every one of those is just a loaded situation, to see the roles that women had in this early era. But as a prophetess she goes to the military captain Barak and says, "We are in bondage to the Canaanites. God didn't bring us this far to be in bondage. Get your armies up; let's go against them." And Barak is going, "I can't; I mean, they have 900 chariots." And he says, "But if you'll go with me, Deborah, I'll go." And Deborah goes with him to remind him every step of the way that God is with them and He will be their power and their strength. When they're up on top of Mount Tabor and you're looking at all those chariots in the valley floor and the thousands of foot soldiers, Mount Tabor—but you can just hear them say, "We have to go down there and meet the enemy? They'll wipe us out."



And Deborah is there saying, “Up, and go down and meet them.” She’s the voice bearing witness. She’s a prophetess. And while we’re there, let’s talk about “mother in Israel.”

KARLIE.

Yes, so, you brought up this other title that we see of women in scripture, which is “mother in Israel,” and I love this. I love this so much. I’m excited for you to share with us.

CAMILLE.

Well, my patriarchal blessing calls me a “mother in Israel.” And it’s always caused me a little bit of stuff, because my patriarchal blessing doesn’t say anything about me bearing children, which in reality has happened. I never did bear children. And so, can you imagine just my thrill as I studied Deborah. She’s called a “mother in Israel,” because she mothers Israel. There’s no mention of her having children. The way it’s translated, she’s called the “wife of Lapidoth,” but *wife* in Hebrew is the same word as *woman*. And Lapidoth, we don’t know a person named Lapidoth; it could have been her husband; it could have been a place where she came from. And it means “one with light” or “a lamp lighter.” It could have been some duty she did, or it could have been another way that she brought light into Israel. It’s in the context of her delivering Israel from their enemy, the Canaanites, that she’s called a “mother in Israel,” and it expands dramatically what it means to mother as a woman in the latter-days, because you see her example.

Another prophetess — Huldah, it’s about the same time period as Lehi and Sariah, which is fascinating, in Jerusalem. And King Josiah is the king, and his men, as they’re trying to clean up the temple after a couple of generations of kings that desecrated the temple—they want to clean it up and re-dedicate it for the worship of Jehovah—and they find a scroll. And the scroll we think is at least part, if not all, of the book of Deuteronomy, that tells what will happen to Israel if they do not follow the Lord, Jehovah. And the scribes read it to Josiah, and he wants to know more. And with no other explanation—you just read it so clearly—they just go to—they don’t summon her; they go to the home of Huldah and her husband.

But she reads it, and there are five verses and four times she’s saying, “Thus saith the Lord.” She knows this comes from the Lord. She bears witness of it. And the very next incident, King Josiah brings all his



people together to this newly refurbished temple and brings them to make a covenant with the Lord, to keep His covenants. And before Josiah's death, they are brought into line and being faithful to the Lord. Then there's a couple of sons of his and then a grandson that—that fast things get out of control, and then the Babylonians come in and destroy Jerusalem. So, that's the context of where Huldah is being a prophetess and prophesying there. It is a beautiful one. I remember when I first started talking about prophetesses, I heard so often, "Oh, a prophetess is simply a woman who's married to a prophet. [Chuckles] I mean, you cannot read these stories and not see them in the power and strength the Lord has given to them in very important places.

There's one more that's not specifically called prophetess, but Don Perry, a professor of Hebrew, a good friend of mine at BYU, who was assigned in the Dead Sea Scroll project—in the book of 1 Samuel, told me, in the Dead Sea Scrolls there's a phrase where Hannah's husband, Elkanah, acknowledges that every word that comes out of her mouth—that God will establish what she says to be true, which in a sense makes Hannah a prophetess. And when you read chapter two of 1 Samuel, her great prayer after she gives her son to the Lord is just fabulous. And you see in our LDS Bible Dictionary that her prayer is a model for all of us for prayer because of what it prophesies when it bears witness of Jesus Christ.

KARLIE.

So, something you highlight there is understanding language, language of the Old Testament translations or even as we study other translations of the Bible; there's things that we can gain and learn from that. But, on Hannah, another principle or theme is the things we learn from the women who were barren in the Bible. So maybe talk to us a little bit about that.

CAMILLE.

Yeah.

KARLIE.

Hannah and these other women who faced that and what we learn from them.

CAMILLE.



You cannot study women in the Old Testament and not just go, “What’s with this? All these chosen women are barren.” Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Hannah—Elizabeth right off the bat in the New Testament. And then you get other women that are correlated with them, like Hagar and Leah, who are able to bear children but they are barren in other ways. Leah is barren in the love of her husband, that Jacob doesn’t feel towards her like he does for Rachel.

And for Hagar, that she’s on the outs which we’ve already talked about, but the Lord sees her. And she’s barren in the sense that she doesn’t have the same place in this covenant family that she sees Sarah have. But in all those cases, including Hannah, it’s during those times of barrenness that I think you see those women develop a stronger relationship with God and their prayers change. Their recognition of their worth is independent of whether they bear a child or not.

KARLIE.

Which would have been especially difficult at that time, right? Because there was really nothing else for women.

CAMILLE.

That’s right; in fact—like you see that in the case of Hannah and Sarah also.

CAMILLE.

But it’s a cross she bore, oftentimes for much of her life. So there was an opportunity there for them to draw closer to the Lord, to find God in prayer in a way they might never have done otherwise. And there’s a strength there that they have by the time those children are born that will make all the difference, I think.

KARLIE.

And you kind of highlighted that they also found that there’s more to their worth than just their ability to bear children.

CAMILLE.

Yeah, I think it is so interesting. For example, Rebecca, the Lord talks directly to her and gives her revelation before she bears those children,



and in essence saying she is of value as a nonbearing woman, every bit as much as she will be afterwards.

KARLIE.

So many stories. You've shared just in a few minutes so many stories, and I want to ask if there is a woman or a story that we haven't talked about yet that's been a special favorite of yours.

CAMILLE.

It's in Numbers chapter 27 and Numbers chapter 36. And we can't fly by Numbers fast enough, but if you do, you will miss the daughters of Zelophehad. And we even know their names, these five sisters, five daughters of a man named Zelophehad: Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Noah, and Milcah. And they are young; none of them has married yet, and I love them for a variety of reasons. Here's the setting: they're in the 40 years in the wilderness, and Moses has just been telling them how they're going to divide up the land in the promised land once they get there, that it will be by tribes. And each tribe will be divided by the sons of those whose fathers were faithful to the Lord and to Moses in the wilderness, who died in the wilderness but died faithful in hearing the word of God, not those that rebelled against God and Moses. Zelophehad was one of those who was one of the faithful ones. And so they're going to divide up the promised land and give an inheritance to each of the sons whose fathers were faithful so that those faithful fathers' names would never be forgotten.

The problem is Zelophehad had no sons. He has five daughters, and he's died. And so these five girls—I call them girls; they're young.

KARLIE.

Yeah, they're young.

CAMILLE.

They're from the tribe of Manasseh, and they go to Moses and the other elders there at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they say, "Why should the name of our father be forgotten because he has no sons? Give us an inheritance in his name so that he won't be forgotten."



I just think of the moxie of these girls. And then I love the verse that follows in chapter 27, verse 5, of Numbers: “And Moses [took] their cause before the Lord.” Moses took them seriously, and the Lord heard the prayer, and He answers, “The daughters of Zelophehad speak right.” They shall surely receive an inheritance in the name of their father. And then you go to chapter 36 of Numbers. They’re actually now ready to go in, and the men of Manasseh are starting to say, “Wait a minute, when these girls marry, what if they marry into one of the other tribes? Then that inheritance for Manasseh will be split apart and be part of those other tribal inheritances.” And Moses took that to the Lord, and the Lord responds, “The daughters of Zelophehad shall marry whomever they deem right.” I’m not saying that exactly right, but then there’s a semicolon: that into “the tribe of their father shall they marry.” So these daughters were given an added responsibility to preserve the inheritance in the name of their father. They needed to marry within the tribe of Manasseh, where other girls could marry within any of the tribes.

But they do it, and the book of Numbers ends. The last verses are saying, “All that Moses was commanded, “so did the daughters of Zelophehad,” and they married into their father’s family, and even though we know each of their names—Malah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Noah, and Milcah—they are more likely known as the daughters of Zelophehad. Their father’s name has never been forgotten. It is because of them that in Judeo-Christian societies there’s laws in force that go back to this very incident that allow women to inherit.

CAMILLE.

Oh, that every young woman in the Church would know Malah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Noah, and Milcah and then that their mothers and their grandmothers and their aunts and their sisters would know it too.

KARLIE.

So many things to learn from that story and their moxie but then also their obedience throughout their whole lives to the prophet, Moses. That gives me some inspiration to dig a little deeper and to get to know these women in scripture, so thank you. As we wrap up, Camille, is there anything more that you would like to share with women in the Church or listeners of the podcast?

CAMILLE.



Yeah, I can always say more, but I think you look at women in scripture and you see no two of these women are alike. They each have different gifts, different weaknesses, different opportunities, and are dealing with different sets of challenges, and the way they respond is unique. And sometimes those are messy responses, but the Lord can work through them to bring about remarkable things. In like manner, each of us differs from the other, and we each today have been given different mission, different responsibilities, different opportunities, and we need to appreciate each other. We need to celebrate the contributions and the opportunities that others have. We need to magnify the variety of voices that women have to share. We can't think that one woman speaks for all women, that together we are able to do more than any one of us can do individually. And so I just plead for all of us, as we become more informed and more converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ through studying women in scripture, that we will be more emboldened to lift our voice as prophetesses and bear witness of the truth as God has revealed it in our life, in our experience, that collectively we uncover and appreciate in a deeper way than we ever have before what it means to be daughters of Jesus Christ, what it means to be sons of Jesus Christ in the covenant, and what His gospel is all about.

After all, the purpose of scripture is to bring us to Jesus Christ. It is to bear witness of Him, and scriptures tell me you cannot do that without including the voices of men and women collectively, individually. They help us see our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. I know that is true.

KARLIE.

Camille, thank you so much for being here with us.

CAMILLE.

Thank you.

KARLIE.

And we're so blessed and enriched by your understanding, your years of study and experience, and I hope our listeners feel inspired to, step by step, slowly gain a greater understanding of the context of what we're reading about in the Old Testament. I know I have felt that. So thank you; thank you again.



And to our listeners, thank you for tuning in to this episode of the *Latter-day Saint Women* podcast. We hope you'll continue to tune in and share this episode with Camille Fronk Olson with your friends and family members to help them as they're studying the Old Testament this year. We love hearing from our listeners. We're so grateful to hear from so many of you. We encourage you to leave reviews on Apple Podcasts, and you can also share your thoughts and feedback with us directly at podcast@ChurchofJesusChrist.org. We also want to make sure our listeners are aware that the podcast is available just about anywhere you listen to podcasts, so in addition to being on the Church's website, it's also on the Gospel Library app, Saints Channel mobile app, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify—just about anywhere.

Finally, we want to thank our wonderful editor, Curt Dahl, our producer, Matthew Mangum, and the many others who support this podcast. And until next week, I'm Karlie Guymon.

Thanks for listening.

