

The Best You Choose May Not Be God's Best Choice For You

Scripture: Numbers 32:1-15, 23

Intro: A momentous decision was made by two and one half tribes that created problems immediate and ultimately which reveals the folly of a choice that is not the best to be selected

1. The perfect will of God: Joshua. (Josh. 24:15)
2. The permitted will of God: Balaam. (Num. 22)
3. The passive will of God: Samson. (Jud. 16)
4. The people refusing will of God: Esau, Judas, Annias & Saphira, Demas

I. The Desire of God for Them. (Ex. 3:8; Deut. 27:2; 12:10-11)

- A. His direction: over Jordan. (Josh. 1:11)
 1. Descending judgment: perfect will of God. (in the land)
 2. Designing progress: possess the land of God. ("not dwell") (Hos. 9:3)
- B. His decision: cross Jordan. (Num. 34:17; 32:5; Ex. 15:13)
 1. His determinations change not. (Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17)
 2. His directions are ever best. (Pr. 3:5-6)
 - a. The battle continues: possess with opposition.
 - b. The blessings come on: provisions opened up.

Illustration: 1721 a wealthy Irishman offered to adopt Charles Wesley and make him his legal heir. The 13 year old boy refused offer to continue his way through school under difficult circumstances. The Irishman adopted Duke Wellington who later defeated Napoleon. Wesley achieved immortal fame through his hymns as "the prince of hymn writers"

II. The Decision Mapped For Themselves (Num. 32:1, 19)

- A. Decision based on their choice, not God's choice. (Num. 32:19)
 1. The motive: place for cattle. (Num. 32:1; cf. Gen. 13:10-11) (sight) (I Tim. 6:10)
 - a. What about God's perfect will? God's glory or place of grazing? (Num. 32:16)
 - b. What about God's place of worship? Distant disadvantage. (Deut. 16:16)
 2. The Locale: place of wilderness. Forty years was not enough? (site)
 - a. Become so accustomed to it they liked it more than promised land.
 - b. Became so adapted to possessions they thought only of that. (Mk. 8:36)
- B. Decision brought great concern in God's congregation. (Num. 32:15)
 1. Because they equated their need with what they possessed, not what God wanted for them. God wanted high plateau for them, they settled for a low plain.
 2. Because this divided the people by God's perfect will and God's permissive will. They split a good tribe (Mannasseh)

- a. They thought reasonably they could serve God better: But what does God want?
- b. They thought reassuringly they made the right choice: But what did God say?

III. The Destiny Recorded Of Them. (Num. 32:23)

- A. The history of their choice: can never undo a wrong even though you get right.
 1. Selfish considerations governed them: cattle
 2. Short of God's position for them: deprived loved ones.
 3. Stone altar built creating disunity and strife. (Josh. 22:12-19)
 4. Surrendered to captivity first: their defenses were weakened by choice made. (II Kings 22:3)
 5. Shameful degeneration to hog business (occupation and demonism). (Mk. 5:1-15)
- B. The hazards of their choice: can never strengthen yourself by weakening someone else.
 1. The wilderness is no good place to grow maturingly for God. The cloud, fire manna, water rock was gone. Canaan was the only permanent hope. (Deut. 8:2-3; 15-16)
 2. Their witness gave no good compliment to God's cause: They became passive.