

## Hokmah

“Wisdom”

28<sup>th</sup> July 2017

The sons of Reuben and Gad, keepers of large numbers of flocks, saw the land they had conquered from Sihon, king of the Amorites, and from Og, king of Bashan, on the east of the Jordan and desired that territory for themselves. The land was good for pasturing their flocks. This is as far as Israel had advanced in the conquest of the land that flowed with milk and honey. These two tribes of Israel decided to not go any further in the battle, they wanted to stay where they were and start their new life. As far as they were concerned, the other tribes could continue and take control of their own territory across the Jordan.

Moses was all over this in a minute. He reminded these men that this was the attitude of the spies he had sent to Canaan through the valley of Eschol to view the land. They came back and a majority of them melted the hearts of Israel with fear. The result was that they refused to advance on the Promised Land. So, because of their disobedience and lack of trust, Yahweh sent them into the wilderness for forty years to be destroyed. By seeking to stay and not help their brothers gain the land across the Jordan, these tribes were about to repeat the mistake of the twelve spies, save Joshua and Caleb. They were discouraging their brothers to obey God.

I am sure the other tribes were angry with Reuben's and Gad's families. They had just finished removing the inhabitants of this land east of the Jordan and now the two tribes didn't want to help them gain their territory. So, Reuben and Gad had a change of heart. Moses had warned them that God would allow their sin of discouraging the other tribes to find them out, that is, to cause them trouble. Their sins would be called into account. They were now ready to move forward by faith until the rest of the tribes gained their inheritance.

These two tribes asked only to erect some cities so that their families had somewhere to live while they were gone. It made sense not to drag their wives and children throughout the other territories. But what were they actually promising to do? The text tells us. [Numbers 32:26-27](#) says, “Our little ones, our wives, our livestock and all our cattle shall remain there in the cities of Gilead; while your servants, everyone who is armed for war, will cross over in the presence of the LORD to battle, just as my lord says.” This is faith and obedience. These please God.

Imagine in those days what it meant to leave your children, your wives, and your possessions in a new land all alone. There would be no warriors to protect them. There would be no return of their men to help them in a crisis or invasion. The issue is that it was considered a sin to not go help conquer the territory west of the Jordan, and it was scary to leave your little children and wives without defense. But this is a matter of obedience and faith. These matters often surface in our lives too. Can I trust God enough to obey Him?

Sometimes, in order to obey God, we must put ourselves at risk. The bottom line is this, if God calls us to do something it would be sin not to do it. If God calls us to do something, we must trust that He can keep our loved ones and belongings safe while we do His work. Can I trust that God will take care of my wife and kids without my help? Ministry can never be accomplished without obedience to God's call and trust in God's sovereignty. Our excuses for not ministering must be considered the sin of discouraging others to trust our Jesus. We will answer for those.

In God We Trust,  
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