

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Sunday, September 24, 2023



CHURCH

הקהילה מתקדמת

10:30am Sunday 13095 Publishers Drive, Fishers

Today's Message: **God's Invitation Leads to a Crisis of Belief* or Unbelief, Obedience or Disobedience, Faith or lack of Faith**

What do you believe about God?

Matthew A. Vander Wiele, Ed.D.

Experiencing God—Reality 5

God wants us to know Him. He is a Truth to be known first and experienced second. One would argue that it is impossible to truly experience something to the fullest, without really knowing it. God invites us to experience Him in ways that require faith. Blackaby rightly discusses the mistake Christians encounter when they make their faith or even their "experiences" the goal of their salvation. Blackaby notes: "

"Your faith does not rest on a concept or an idea. Faith is centered on a Person – God Himself. Our generation promotes a dangerous concept that encourages people to "have faith". In this abstract doctrine, faith itself is the pursuit. It matters little what the faith is based on – it is the act of believing that is important – but this teaching is unbiblical. Faith is only valid if it is focused on God and what He says He is purposing to do. Before you call yourself, your family, or your church until you hear a word from God."

Does God deserve to be worshipped and trusted because of what He will do for us OR because of what he has done for us in the past? Does God deserve to be worshipped and trusted because of what he has done for us in the past OR, because He is Holy and deserves to be worshipped and trusted because of Who he is?

What one truly desires is to experience God Himself – not what he gives or blesses us with but Himself as a personal God.

What do you believe about God?

2 Perspectives on how to respond to a Crisis of Faith – God's and Man's

The book of Judges is loaded with opportunities for God's people to take Him at His Word and experience God in belief crises. The questions remain for the believer – Can God be trusted? Will a Crisis of belief draw me towards God or away from Him... Will I obey or disobey? Will my faith be strengthened or will I miss God's best – and ultimately experiencing God Himself...

There is a concern for the people of Israel that when faced with a Crisis of faith – they will fail.

Moses – Deuteronomy 7, 32:44-47.

Joshua - *Be very careful, therefore, to love the Lord your God. ¹²For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, ¹³know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the Lord your God has given you. (Joshua 23:11-13)*

Two Perspectives of Crisis:

Introduction 1: Israel's Perspective of the Crisis – Difficulties with Foreign Subjugation – (Judges 1 – 3:6) "Why can't we conquer the enemy?? We can't seem to take over the Promised Land" –

A. A Crisis of belief demands two things – A high view of God and His Word AND Immediate Obedience.

After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?"² The LORD said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand." (Judges 1: 1-2)

And Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites. And I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you." So Simeon went with him. (Judges 1:3)

Partial Obedience by Judah – God blesses Judah as a tribe – but they miss out on personal allotment – because in their crisis of belief they corporately took Simeon too. Israel's partial obedience seals their demise. Ephesians 2:10 Stage I. - Judah initial and partial success both tribal and individual (1:2-20) – WHY? We will come back to it...

Stage II. - Benjamin - drove out the Canaanites but did not drive out in the plains (1:17), Benjamin did not drive out Jebusites – Jebusites lived with Benjamites (1:21)

House of Joseph – Manasseh and Ephraim: "did not drive Canaanites out" (1:22-26) – made the Canaanites slaves

Zebulun – “Did not drive Canaanites out/ Canaanites lived among them” (1:30)

Stage III. Asher – “Did not drive the Canaanites out/ Asherites lived among the Canaan

Naphtali – “Did not drive Canaanites out/ Naphtalites live among the Canaanites

Stage IV - Dan and House of Joseph – “The Amorites confined the Danites to the hill country, *not allowing them to come down to the plain...* The boundary of the Amorites was from Scorpion Pass to Sela and beyond.” (1:34-36)

Compare to Deuteronomy 7.....

“And because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love that he swore to your fathers. ¹³He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you. ¹⁴You shall be blessed above all peoples. There shall not be male or female barren among you or among your livestock. ¹⁵And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew, will he inflict on you, but he will lay them on all who hate you. ¹⁶And you shall consume all the peoples that the LORD your God will give over to you. Your eye shall not pity them, neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you. (Deuteronomy 7: 12-16)

Is Israel Experiencing what Moses proclaimed? Conclusion:

The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave them into the hand of Midian seven years. ²And the hand of Midian overpowered Israel, and because of Midian the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. ³For whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ⁴They would encamp against them and devour the produce of the land, as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey. ⁵For they would come up with their livestock and their tents; they would come like locusts in number—both they and their camels could not be counted—so that they laid waste the land as they came in. ⁶And Israel was brought very low because of Midian. And the people of Israel cried out for help to the LORD. (Judges 6: 1- 6)

Introduction 2: God’s Perspective of the Crisis – **Difficulties with Foreign Idols– Disobedience** (Judges 2:6-3:6) “You cannot conquer the land because you are worshipping other gods and not OBEYNG”

a. A Crisis of Belief demands two things – A high view of God and His Word AND Immediate Obedience.

⁶When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land. ⁷And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the LORD had done for Israel. ⁸And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years. ⁹And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. ¹⁰And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. (Judges 2: 6-10)

Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. ¹⁷Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so. ¹⁸Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. ¹⁹But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. ²⁰So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he said, “Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, ²¹I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, ²²in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not.” ²³So the LORD left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua. (Judges 2: 3-23)

So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁶And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods. (Judges 3: 5-6)

An invitation to experience God cannot be exchanged for experiences with non-gods...

“Little el-ohims”

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ³Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in^[a] man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” ⁴The Nephilim^[b] were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. (Genesis 6: 1-4)

Anak – Giants - And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.²⁸ However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. (Numbers 13:27-28)

So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height.³³ And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." (Numbers 13: 32-33)

And when you approach the territory of the people of Ammon, do not harass them or contend with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot for a possession.²⁰ (It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim—²¹ a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before the Ammonites (Deuteronomy 2:20-21) (For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim. Behold, his bed was a bed of iron. Is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits^[b] was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.^[c]) (Deuteronomy 3:11) [OGRE – Giant]

"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars and who was as strong as the oaks, I destroyed his fruit above, and his roots beneath. (Amos 2:9-10))

for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.⁵ But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire. (Deuteronomy 7: 4-5) Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.⁸ When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders^[a] of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.^[b] ⁹ But the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage. (Deuteronomy 32 7-9 – Moses)

Baal – Master "lord", non-god – works with Ashtura, Venus, Aphrodite, - Fertility goddess – lover of Tammuz They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth.¹⁴ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. (Judges 2:13)

The people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines. And they forsook the LORD and did not serve him.⁷ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites (Judges 10:6-7)

Ashtura - Ashtoreth – a mis-transliteration of the NIV (Astarte) animal and human god who was a fertility god – and the consort of *baal*. – a goddess of the Canaanite cult. So both Baal and Astarte are considered degrading by the supporters of YHWH.*

The worst "She (Ashtura) stretched herself like a rainbow across the sky and reached thereby as far as the earth." – Sumarian Literature

Ezekiel 8... Vision of abominations in the Temple

Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD, and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. (Ezekiel 8:14)

Who will Respond to the Crisis of Faith Well? A godly family MUST

Caleb – Othniel – Achsah

Caleb - **Caleb understood his purpose – To obey God's Word Completely.**

"And Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Aksah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher." (Judges 1:12)

High view of marriage – But a high view of the success of those marriages in the future generations.

- **Othniel – Men with Purpose MULTIPLY Men with Purpose**

First Judge – Caleb's younger brother – defeats the enemy with the help of Yahweh and takes Caleb's daughter Achsah. Why Othniel? From the Tribe of Judah

And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15, ESV)

- a. Othniel understood his purpose because his father taught it to him
- b. Othniel understood his purpose was greater than just him and his desires
- c. Othniel did not experience "failure to launch" because he understood the future of his family generations were at stake.

- **Achsah** – Wives with purpose have their family's best interest at heart

First woman among many to be mentioned in the narrative of Judges.

- Spiritual qualities** – Asks Caleb for more land – land with springs along with her dowry from Caleb. (1:14-15)
- She asks twice** – her husband and then her father in law
- Land is spiritual!**- She is like an image of “ideal Yahwist womanhood”.*
- Comparisons:** Othniel/Achsah to Samson/Delilah.

Final Thought on Caleb's Family – They are the only family and tribe discussed in the entire book that demonstrated proper obedience to God, practiced a high view of marriage and the family unit, understood the importance of the past promises of God AND was able to connect the obvious physical blessings of God to their faith and obedience in him.

Othniel's Family FOILS Israel's Perspective and the rest of the Judges (especially Samson) – Difficulties with Foreign Subjugation – “Why can't we conquer the land!!!”

Then Judah went up and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand, and they defeated 10,000 of them at Bezek. (Judges 1:4)

And Caleb said, “He who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will give him Achsah my daughter for a wife.”¹³ And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, captured it. And he gave him Achsah his daughter for a wife. ¹⁴When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you want?”¹⁵ She said to him, “Give me a blessing. Since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water.” And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs. (Judges 1:12-15)

Othniel's Family FULFILLS God's Perspective –

Difficulties with Foreign Idols – Disobedience - “You can't conquer the land because you are not obeying and you are rejecting me for idols”...

Take action and obey and be blessed! Experience me!

And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth.⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.⁹ But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.¹⁰ The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.¹¹ So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died. (Judges 3: 7-11)

People forget God - They forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth

People saw God as Othniel and his family as they responded to the crisis of belief with obedience and faith. The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.¹¹ So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died

When God invites you to be involved in his activity, He wants to reveal Himself to you and to a watching world. Therefore, He will give you a God sized assignment. When you are confronted with such a task, you will face a crisis of belief. [don't overthink it] You will have to decide what you really believe about the God who called you and the way you respond to God will reveal what you really believe, regardless of what you say. Following God requires faith and action.

– Blackaby

1. A crisis of belief is God sized but is given to you and your family to allow you to experience God – The more you are obeying God in the day to day – the more the crisis will make sense when it manifests.
2. A crisis is not necessarily life and death – God wants to know you deeper and want you to know Him too. He won't scare you away
3. When God speaks to you – he is simply making his Word [that he has already spoken] personal to you!
4. Obey and don't overthink it

* The messages in this series have been adapted from the book: Henry T. Blackaby; Richard Blackaby; Claude V. King. *Experiencing God (2021 Edition)*. (B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition).



ONWARD CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

1. YOUTH GROUP TONIGHT 6-8PM—Dinner provided \$3 per student.

2. HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY (Grades 9-12) EVERY WEDNESDAY 6-8PM—We would love to have you join us at the Brock and Angi Vaughters house (15098 E 191ST Street, Noblesville, IN 46060). You can bring your high school friends!

3. MEN'S BIBLE STUDY FRIDAYS @ 7AM @ MCA—Study in the book of Romans. See Alex Abell for more info.

4. LADIES BIBLE STUDY (Two Options):

- **Wednesday Mornings @ 9:30am**—Each Wednesday morning at 9:30am at Kathy Stump's house (12928 Whitehaven Lane, Fishers, IN 46038). Studying the book of Ephesians. For more info email Kathy at kathystump77@gmail.com.
- **Thursday Evenings @ 7:00-8:30 pm**—Each Thursday evening at 7:00-8:30pm at Lynda North's house (9929 Brightwater Dr., Fishers, IN 46038). Studying the book of Ephesians. For more info email Lynda at LANorth7@gmail.com.

5. GIVING QR CODE—If you would like to give online you can use this code →

6. PAL ("PARENTS OF ADDICTED LOVED ONES") MEETING—This is for families of adult children dealing with substance addiction. Every Tuesday night, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Free weekly meetings. Dr. Nancy Smith, facilitator. For more information, contact nancy1108smith@gmail.com or 317-508-8149.

7. GIVE BIBLES IN HONOR OF OR IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE—The Gideons have provided a display on the counter in the foyer for you to give God's word in honor or in memory of a loved one.

8. ONWARD PRAYER RESPONSE CARD ONLINE—To make it easier for some to complete your Prayer Response Card... you can **scan this QR code.** →



Giving QR Code



Prayer Card QR Code