

The THREE CHAIRS 2023

Judges 2:7-12 – NKJV - Death of Joshua

⁷ So 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 works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. ⁸ Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died *when he was* one hundred and ten years old. ⁹ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, **another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.**

Israel's Unfaithfulness

¹¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the **Baals**; ¹² and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger.

There are three different positions concerning FAITH - all of humanity is sitting on one of these areas.

The THREE C's: 1. Commitment 2. Compromise 3. Conflict

The question must be asked today, where is our church sitting concerning FAITH?

The answer to this question will be a determining factor to whether you as well as the My church will experience a Spiritual Breakthrough today!!!

Reviving the spirit of Leadership is essential for there to be a **reviving** of the church today...

There will be **NO REVIVAL, NO RENEWAL, and NO RELEASE** in our ministries or church until we answer the question correctly!!!

Joshua finds himself coming to the end of his life and he understood the importance of clarity for the future.

In Joshua 23 we see Joshua bring the leaders together for a time of reflection.

In Joshua 24 we see Joshua present the question of a lifetime to them in VS 15

Joshua 24:15 NIV - ¹⁵ But *if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you*, then ***choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve***, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But ***as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.***"

They found themselves **standing at a crossroads** and the decision was before them, **which path would they choose?**

I sense in my spirit that **we are back to that very same challenge** today.

- Who will you and I **choose** to serve this day???
- Are we aware that where we **choose** to sit today
- **WILL** have a **lasting impact** on the future generations???
- Is there **CLARITY** for the future???

Let's examine and define **The THREE C's** together:

1. The Chair of **COMMITMENT**.

- This is a **believer** who has gone beyond accepting the free gift of salvation
- **TO** willfully being under Christ's **AUTHORITY** and **DIRECTION**...
- This person **knows & has chosen** the Lord as **a personal friend and Savior**.

******They are developing a meaningful and growing relationship with him for themselves and those around them.***

Paul calls this walking or **LIVING** in a spiritual state.

***COMMITMENT:**

- **The Bible** – God's Revelation... **The Bible** – set values...
- **Scripture** – COMMANDS...
- **Dedication to God** – GROWTH – **CHOOSE What is RIGHT in God's eyes!**

Joshua – **Experienced reality of God firsthand**; saw miracles and **chose** to serve the Lord!!!!

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2. The Chair of **COMPROMISE**

- This chair represents someone who has received **NEW LIFE** in Christ but hasn't decided how little or how much they will follow him.

They claim to believe the same truths as the person sitting in the 1st chair.

- **They even follow** that of a Christian lifestyle in many outward appearances.
- But instability and inconsistency mark their course...
- They know about their faith, but it *doesn't* shape their lifestyle – they **choose only obey God when it is convenient.**

This person often ***runs short on internal strength*** because certain bedrock commitments are absent from their life...

THIS GENERATION WILL BE SAVED! (Illustration chair scraping on floor.)

Paul calls this the **CARNAL** state...

******This person has God on the tip of their tongue but self on the throne of their heart.***

***COMPROMISE:**

- ***Bible*** – Helpful guide... **Fellow Christians** – Set the Values...
- **SAINTS** - Christians...
- **Dedication to Parents** – Plateau – **CHOSE** What is ***RIGHT*** in your eyes!

THE ELDERS – ***Knew about reality*** of God **secondhand**; told stories – served God of fathers!!!

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3. The Chair of CONFLICT - *This final chair represents someone who has not PERSONALLY responded to God.*

- They may have always known they ***were not a Christian*** and may have consciously rejected him.
- They may even be **confused about who he is**...
- They may have **experienced church and religion**, but a gulf of **sin and rebellion** lies between them and their creator...

It is only when they CHOOSE to kneel at the cross that the conflict WILL end Between them and their Creator and CHOOSE HIS plan for their life...

Since this person has never CHOSEN to allow or accept Christ as Savior further attempts at spiritual breakthrough will be met with frustrating defeats...

This is what Paul calls the **NATURAL** state.

***CONFLICT:**

- **Bible** – Ancient Relic... **The World** – sets values...
- **Society** = Culture...
- **Dedication to SELF** – Go with the Flow – **CHOOSE** What is right in **MY** eyes!

ANOTHER GENERATION – Didn't know the works of God; unfamiliar with the miracles of God – served false gods!

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1. THE COMMITMENT OF THE FIRST CHAIR

Do you have a Spiritual Nature? (Not Sin Nature)

Galatians 5:16-17,19 - God's Spirit and Our Own Desires

¹⁶ ***If you are guided by the Spirit***, you won't obey your selfish desires.

¹⁷ **The Spirit and your desires are enemies** of each other. They are always fighting each other and keeping you from doing what you feel you should.

¹⁹ **People's desires** make them give in to immoral ways, filthy thoughts, and shameful deeds.

In the chair of commitment, we have **CHOSEN** to be guided by the spirit!

Galatians 5:24-25 - ²⁴ And because we belong to Christ Jesus, we have killed our selfish feelings and desires. ²⁵ God's Spirit has given us life, and so we should **CHOSE** to follow the Spirit.

In this chair we find those who are born again and walking in the spirit.

- They live a committed life and maintain a spiritual state of mind.
- They are holy in their actions, and **they seek God**.
- They build their lives on spiritual things.
- They are committed to their marriage and home. **We serve the Lord**.
- **The top priority** is for their children to fear and love God.

COMMITMENT - Submitted to the will of God, even though it ostracizes them from the world.

- Always on guard against the natural slide **from Godliness to Godlessness**
- Every new Christian sits in the First Chair just after they get saved.
- JESUS HAS RESERVED A FIRST CHAIR FOR EVERY ONE OF US!

THIS GENERATION WILL BE SAVED!

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2. THE COMPROMISE OF THE SECOND CHAIR

- *They live the lifestyle in which they were raised*, not deviating on surface from parent's teaching
- *They adopt convictions without understanding* the depth of experience in which they developed
- They know about their faith, but it doesn't shape their lifestyle - only obey God when convenient
- *They succumb to mediocrity*, and build a structure emphasizing programs, properties and products
- They go through the motions of the *First Chair*, but live the lifestyle of the Third Chair

COMPROMISE: Just like the tribes in Judges 1 who did not drive out the inhabitants of Canaan!

Those who remain in the Second Chair will inevitably raise Third Chair children

MOST CHRISTIANS LIVING TODAY SIT IN THE SECOND CHAIR!

THIS GENERATION MAY BE SAVED! (EX: Second Chair scraping across floor)

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3. THE CONFLICT OF THE THIRD CHAIR

- They have seen the hypocrites sitting in the Second Chair
- And they have unspoken questions:
 1. *You tell all the stories and use the jargon*, but where are the miracles in our lives?
 2. *If God is so important to you*, then why don't you obey His Word all of the time?

Why the questions?

Because Second-Hand faith doesn't have any First-Hand experiences!

They reject God primarily because they do not know Him!

- He is not as real as the world is to them.
- **God consequently must** turn to other people who are open and hungry, bypassing this generation.
- Greater dedication to self than God.
- They dismiss burdens, accept what their forefathers rejected.

They think they are okay because They sit in the first chair occasionally!

They are usually the last generation of truth; but the cycle is not inevitable!

Joshua 24:13-15 - ¹³ So I gave you a land on **which you did not toil and cities you did not build**; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves **that you did not plant.**'

¹⁴ **"Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness.** Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.

¹⁵ **But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."**

Sense 2000, most leadership has become Third Generation believers.

- INDIVIDUALS IN THIS GENERATION
- MAY HAVE **THEIR OWN FIRST CHAIR EXPERIENCE!**

THIS GENERATION WILL NOT BE SAVED!

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Going back to our text it appears at first glance that the leaders of Israel answered correctly.

We read in Joshua 24:31 - Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel.

However, the question is - **How committed were they in serving the Lord?**

We see Joshua sitting in a place of **COMMITMENT**.

He was fully **committed to obeying God's plan** concerning the children of Israel.

Yet after his death we see **the elders**, while still serving the Lord, **they begin to sit down in the chair of COMPROMISE**.

In Judges 1:27-30

When they began to experience **resistance from their enemies** and it proved difficult to remove them, **they called off the battle...**

Instead of taking land from their enemy, they shared the land.

- They placed the Canaanites under tribute, it seemed like a brilliant plan.
- **Money** was rolling in... **No more FIGHTING...** And **no more WAR...**
- **They were on good terms!!!**

Soon after - they were giving their children for **intermarriage** agreements.

- It all seemed to make sense, **RIGHT???**
- **Nothing wrong with** sensible **COMPROMISE**.

Until we look at **the generation known as The Children of the Elders** in Judges 2:10-12, 19.

Judges 2:10-12,19 - ¹⁰ After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, **another generation** grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.

¹¹ Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals.

¹² **They forsook the Lord**, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. **They followed and worshiped various gods** of the peoples around them.

They aroused the Lord's anger

¹⁹ But when the judge died, **the people returned to ways even more corrupt** than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them.

They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

The Children of the Elders were a **clear description of people who lived in conflict with God**.

While they may have heard stories of the wilderness journey And the conquest lead by Joshua

- ***Their understanding of God*** had been shaped By a generation of leaders/parents - - - Who lived sitting in the chair of **COMPROMISE**...

This was a group of people that lived as God's people in name only!!!!

CLOSE:

Our strategy of HOPE must be one that takes us back to the Chair of COMMITMENT....

While we remove the chair of COMPROMISE from the platforms of the American Church...

- ***How dedicated and committed are you to serving the Lord???***
- ***Which Chair will YOU CHOOSE?????????***
- ***Question: WHERE ARE YOU SITTING?????***
- ***Are you living in Conflict with God?***
- ***Have you refused to give up evil practices and stubborn ways?***

	Chair #1	Chair#2	Chair#3
Definition:	COMMITMENT	COMPROMISE	CONFLICT
Condition:	Saved, Spiritual	Saved, Carnal	Unsaved, Natural
Knows God:	A Close friend	Acquaintance	Awareness
Relates to God:	Relationship	Responsibility	Religion
Serves God:	God 1st- Self 2 nd	Self 1 st – God 2 nd	Only
Shaped by God:	Scripture	Other Christians	Society
Lives by:	Convictions	Beliefs	Opinions