

# Othniel and Achsah as Two Cameos of Faith

Joshua 15:16-19

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, January 28th 2024

## I. Introduction - Review of verses 13-15

Last week we looked at Caleb, who was the first of three cameos (or pictures) of faith that are painted in this paragraph. Caleb really is a remarkable man of faith. In dealing with the ten spies, he had experienced firsthand the horrible results of leadership that does not live by faith. The ten spies turned against him, turned others against him, refused to enter into Canaan, and would have stoned Joshua and Caleb to death if God had not intervened. So one of the lessons we looked at was that leadership skills alone are not enough. So that led Caleb to be very careful about whom he promoted to leadership. He wanted to make sure that any leaders that he raised up would also be men of faith who followed the Lord fully.

And what did that look like?

1. We saw that Caleb valued a leadership that refused to be held captive by the past. And he *did* have a difficult past to live down.
2. Second, we saw that his faith did not take flying leaps off of buildings. That is presumption, not faith. A lot of what goes for faith today is not really faith; it is stupidity. Instead, his faith was anchored in facts; infallible facts. It was anchored in the commands of God and the promises of God. And yes, God's commands are just as much a basis for faith as God's promises are.
3. Third, his faith enabled him to thrive wherever God placed him. You don't have to be in an ideal place for faith to thrive. We saw that Caleb thrived in the wilderness, among bickering people, during the conquest, during the years of mentoring new leaders, and in his uses of the parcel of land God gave to his clan.
4. Fourth, his faith enabled him to *reconquer* land that had previously been conquered. And in that, he was a good role model for us. Don't be discouraged when you have to reengage in battles that you had previously won.
5. Fifth, his faith trusted God against all odds. 6. Sixth, he was not content with claiming a *few* things that God had promised; he sought to possess *all* his possessions. 7. Seventh, he groomed his leaders to be men of faith. Like produces like. 8. Eighth, he raised his four children to be children of faith. His faith laid claim to God's promises for covenant succession. And God has given similar promises of covenant succession to us. 9. And ninth, his faith was illustrated by three things: a spirit that was different than the compromised fellow-spies, a servant-heart, and a willingness to follow God fully in all that God had said. So those were the nine ways in which Caleb was a remarkable role model of faith.

## II. Othniel, a model soldier and a model suitor (vv. 16-17)

Well, today we will pick up with Othniel, who in the book of Judges shows all nine of Caleb's characteristics. But in *this* little cameo, we are not going to look at all of those nine things.

Instead, we are going to look at some issues related to being a model soldier and a model suitor of a bride. Don't think that Othniel was being reckless in his pursuit of love or that (as some think) he only married because he was greedy for land or position. He already had a good position in Caleb's leadership team, and in good time he would get land in God's providence. It was actually Achsah's idea to ask for the upper and lower springs, not his, and we will see why and how in a bit. But your outlines give six lessons of faith that are at least hinted at in the life of Othniel. And I pray that these lessons will be a blessing to you.

### **A. He appears to be the recipient of covenant succession ("Othniel" means "God is my protection")**

The first thing I notice is that his name means, "God is my protector." That is quite a different meaning than Caleb, which means "dog." Did Caleb's father name him "dog," or was that a nickname that Caleb got from others? If it was the dad who named him, how do we explain the difference in names? As I mentioned last week, the Hebrew and the English of verse 17 is ambiguous. Verse 17 says, "So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb." The question is, "who is the brother of Caleb: Othniel or Kenaz." There are some commentators who say that Caleb and Othniel were half brothers with the same mother, but different fathers. Others say that the way the Hebrew reads, it is more natural to take it that Kenaz was Caleb's younger brother and that Othniel was the son of Caleb's brother, or in other words, he was a nephew of Caleb. I take it that he was a nephew. Either way, it was a different dad who named both, and Othniel's dad wanted Othniel to affirm every day of his life that God is my protector. To me, this speaks of the faith being passed on from father to son. And even naming him, "God is my protector" was a statement of faith.

And by the way, there is now nothing wrong with the name Caleb. We associate that with a hero of the faith. So it's a cool name with a cool meaning today. But it was not back then.

### **B. He is a man with the faith of Caleb (v. 16a with Judges 3:7-11)**

I have already mentioned the second point - that Othniel was a man with the faith of Caleb. And you can definitely see that in the book of Judges. But you can also see it in each one's conquest in this chapter. Let's quickly compare the two. Last week we saw that Caleb had asked Joshua, "Give me this mountain." He believed with God's help he could take it despite the fact that the majority of the spies thought it was untakeable. But Caleb was not boastful or arrogant in the way that he did so. He knew that in himself it was impossible. So he was humble in his statement. He was not about to put God in a box, since God was sovereign. He told Joshua in chapter 14, "It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD has said." But then he committed to the goal and paid the price needed to reach it.

John C. Maxwell speaks to this kind commitment of faith by contrasting it with three other kinds of people. He says,

There are really only four types of people:

1. Cop-outs. People who have no goals and do not commit.
2. Holdouts. People who don't know if they can reach their goals, so they're afraid

to commit.

3. Dropouts. People who start toward a goal but quit when the going gets tough.

4. All-outs. People who set goals, commit to them, and pay the price to reach them.<sup>1</sup>

Well, commentators see *that* kind of faith in Othniel - especially in the book of Judges. But it is hinted at here as well. We aren't told here *what* Othniel said, but we are told that he took Caleb's challenge in the first part of verse 16. Judges 3 tells us that Othniel was filled with the Spirit of God and that he became a judge of Israel who engaged in mighty conquests of faith. But this particular conquest would have taken faith as well since the place had once again become controlled by the giant Anakim, who we saw last week had crept back into this area while the Israelite troops were away conquering other land. I believe the reason Caleb gave the offer was as a fleece as to which of his godly leaders the Lord might lead to marry his daughter. We already saw why he was convinced that *all* the leaders were worthy of his daughter. They were all men of faith like Caleb. But this offer was in effect a fleece that would indicate God's green light. And because I explained that in detail last week, I won't say more this morning.

### C. He sacrifices for his bride to be (v. 16b-17a)

The next point is related to this - Othniel was willing to sacrifice for his bride-to-be. Verses 16-17.

And Caleb said, "He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife." 17 So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it;

The "So" clause indicates that he accepted the challenge and the required sacrifice. There were no guarantees that Othniel would come out of Kirjath Sepher alive. There were no guarantees that he would not lose a limb or in other ways become disabled. But when you are led by the Lord to take on a challenge, those kinds of dangers fade into the past. But more to *this* point, he was willing to make sacrifices for his bride-to-be. And we saw last week that it would have taken physical sacrifice.

And many a young man today is willing to make sacrifices to *get* a wife, but are you willing to *continue* to make such sacrifices throughout your marriage? I hope so. The book of Judges shows that Othniel was willing. He continued with this sacrificial servant's heart throughout his life.

And of course, that is Biblical. Christ has called men and women to be models of *His* relationship to the church and of the *church's* relationship to Christ. Men are called to sacrificially love their wives to the day that they die just as Christ sacrificially loved the church and laid down His life for it. Wives are called to submit to their husbands as to the

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<sup>1</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999).

Lord. When husbands lovingly sacrifice and wives lovingly submit, the marriage begins to more and more take on the perfume of heaven. It begins to be a wonderful model of the relationship of Christ and the church. It's a testimony of grace.

And there is a book that I think portrays this so well. Once it comes into print, I highly recommend that you read Scott Brown's new book, *Getting the Picture Right in Your Marriage*. Far from guilting me into doing new things, it has motivated me by its Christ-centered and grace-filled approach that sees even the husband and wife relationship as being a relationship that requires faith to receive from heaven everything we need on a daily basis to make our marriages a beautiful and joyful picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. I highly recommend it.

#### D. He is patient in waiting for a help-meet suited to him (v. 17b)

The next hint we have of Othniel's faith was that he was patient in waiting for a help-meet suitable to him. Faith often has to wait; it often requires patience. We aren't told if he had been negotiating with Caleb for his daughter before this. We aren't told if he was seriously looking for a wife before this. All we are told in verse 17 is that Caleb "gave him Achsah his daughter as wife." But notice it is the *dad* who gives. People might think that this is just old fashioned and not a Biblical paradigm, but dads are called to protect their daughters. While there are exceptions (especially if parents are not parents of faith), Jeremiah 29:6 gives the normal pattern - "give your daughters to husbands..." So this hints that Othniel was patient in waiting for this to happen, but he took whatever actions were needed for the dad to give his daughter. He jumped through the hoops.

And just as an aside, arranged marriages are frowned upon in some Christian circles, but world-wide, some of the best and longest lasting marriages have been arranged marriages. And I suspect that this is the case because the decision to get married was not purely based upon the emotions of the couple. Emotions are fickle can keep people from making rational decisions as to which partner would be the best fit. How many people get married based on emotional attraction and then want to get a divorce later? They are disappointed. They hadn't thought through all of the implications.

And let me make a point about the pictures in your outlines. I used an artificial intelligence app to create them. But what does it know about what she looked like? Not much. Achsah may have been far less fetching than that image. But if her character was right, it really wouldn't matter. In any case, we can at least say that parents should be very involved in helping to get their children married. God set the pattern by arranging the marriage for Adam and Eve, and we see humans following this pattern in later Scripture. As Jeremiah 29:6 commands, "Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished." It doesn't rule out daughters refusing the ones whom the parents choose or even marrying on their own. They can. There *are* Scriptures that seem to allow for such exceptions. For example, Moses tells the daughters of Zelophehad, "Let them marry whom they think best." Obviously for marriage to be a covenant, both parties must freely choose. All I'm saying is that we should not frown on arranged marriages as if it is weird. But let's move on to the next point.

### E. He was instantly ready to lead Achsah (v. 18)

We will look at verse 18 again when we look at Achsah, but this verse hints at the fact that Othniel was instantly ready to lead Achsah. It says, “Now it was so, when she came to him, that she *persuaded him* to ask her father for a field.” This speaks well of Achsah in asking Othniel’s permission before talking to her dad. But the Hebrew word that is translated as “persuaded,” which simply means, “urging someone to action,”<sup>2</sup> indicates that *he* wanted to have good reasons why she should ask her dad for this land, she gave him good reasons, and he was satisfied with her reasons, and so gave his permission. Well, this hints at maturity in Othniel. He was used to leading men, and leading a woman will be different, but he now is *ready* to lead his wife. She is not in charge; Othniel is. And a man who lovingly and sacrificially leads gives security to a wife. That is the kind of man who will enable his wife to thrive under his leadership. She isn’t forced into a box, because he *can* be persuaded by her and is *willing* to be persuaded. But neither is he a limp-wristed roll-over who does everything that his wife wants him to do. He needs to be persuaded if she desires large changes. And this *would* have been a pretty significant request.

### F. His faith rejects the wisdom of the world (he changed the name Kirjath-Sepher to Debir - v. 15)

The last evidence that I see of Othniel’s faith is that there are strong hints that he rejected the wisdom of the world and opted instead for the wisdom of God. Verse 15 says,

Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir was Kirjath Sepher)

That significant name change is repeated in connection with Othniel in Judges chapter 1. Let me explain what happened and why it happened. And I will start with some background. Francis Nichol says,

Most scholars agree that the city may be correctly identified as the present Tell Beit Mirsim, excavated by Dr. W. F. Albright. The ruins revealed no library, although the city was not completely excavated. The archeological evidence

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<sup>2</sup> While it can have a negative connotation of to provoke, only the context would dictate that kind of persuasion. Here are some sample dictionary definitions: “...urging someone to action may occur in a morally neutral context. Othniel, the judge, is urged...” Willem VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 239. “urge, incite, i.e., speak in a way that encourages a certain behavior, implying a causation...” James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). “urge...urge on... urgency... urgent, be... urgently admonish...urgently beg.” David J. A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew: English-Hebrew Index; Word Frequency Table, vol. IX* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2016), 456.

shows an unusually devastating conflagration, followed by a settlement of Hebrew people who rebuilt the city.<sup>3</sup>

The book of Judges shows that most cities were *not* burned. In fact, in most cases God *wanted* them to *inherit* homes and cities they did not need to build. That was to be one of the blessings. In fact, that was God's stated purpose in Deuteronomy 6:10 - that they would inherit cities that they did not build. So why was *this* city burned to the ground after it was conquered? That seems to be contrary to God's stated purpose for what would normally happen. So the reader is expected to ask, "Why was this burned?"

Well, Kirjath sepher means "city of books," or as some translate it, "the book city." In my footnotes<sup>4</sup> I will cite several scholars who believe this shows Kirjath Sepher to be the official library repository for the pagan worldview of the Canaanites, and perhaps a teaching center for that worldview. All the best and the worst of that literature (from pornography to science to technology to astrology) would have been housed in that fortress library city. This was *the* place of learning for that Canaanite society. So it is very significant that Othniel didn't just inherit the city, like some of the cities were inherited. Instead, he *destroyed* the city, rebuilt it, and once it was rebuilt, he named it Debir.

Rod Mattoon explains the meaning of "Debir." He says,

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<sup>3</sup> Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 2* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 310.

<sup>4</sup> Courson says, "Debir means 'sanctuary.' Kirjath-sepher means 'city of books'—which means it most likely was a scholastic center." Jon Courson, *Jon Courson's Application Commentary: Volume One: Genesis–Job* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 719. Block says, "The name translates literally 'city of the letter/document,' which suggests this site may have originally housed an official library or archive..." Daniel Isaac Block, *Judges, Ruth, vol. 6, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 93. Webb says, "The previous name of Debir (Kiriath-sepher) means 'book city' or something similar, suggesting that it had been a center of learning or perhaps administration." Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, ed. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 103. Barry says, "Kiriath Sepher Means 'city of the scroll,' perhaps suggesting there was a library or scribal school in the city (see Josh 15:15)." John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Jdg 1:11. Nichol says, "The former name of Debir was Kirjath-sepher (Joshua 15:15), which means 'city of books.' Because of this meaning scholars have speculated that the city housed a famous library similar to the royal libraries that the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal built up to magnificent proportions." Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 2* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 310.

Debir means “the word.” It comes from a Hebrew word *dabar*. Deuteronomy’s original name was called “*dabar*.” ... What a reminder for us today. Christians are to be keepers of the Word.<sup>5</sup>

Many Christians would be absolutely horrified at this book-burning. They might think, “What a loss to history, anthropology, and other sciences!” But that’s not really thinking Biblically. What was God’s command concerning the information bound up with the ungodly people in Deuteronomy 32:26? He said, “I will make the memory of them to cease from among men.” That’s written right into the law of God. That was God’s goal - to make the memory of both the men and their false worldviews to cease from among men. What does classical education do? The exact opposite. It perpetuates the memory of pagan worldviews from generation to generation. In Psalm 9 David says that his goal was to completely replace pagan civilization with a civilization of the Word, so that “even their memory has perished” (v. 6). He was saying that this was a good consequence of the conquest. He says the same thing in Psalm 109:15. And there are other Scriptures that predict that earth will be without pagan learning. Will that happen in future history? Yes it will. Daniel 2:35 says that Christ’s kingdom will gradually grind the pagan kingdoms of this world to powder and cause the wind to carry the memory of these civilizations away like chaff “so that no trace of them was found.” There is coming a period of future history when there will be no trace of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, or Rome - other than *God’s* righteous views of those civilizations. If God wants no trace of those so-called classical civilizations to be found, why is it that Christians are the chief ones to resurrect the learning of Greece and Rome?

So I actually see this book burning as an evidence of faith. Othniel did not want his children being educated in the wisdom of the ancient civilizations. He wanted his children educated in the Word of God. And as a testimony to that fact, he burned the pagan books, and renamed the city after the book of Deuteronomy - “The Word.” In my view, Othniel stands as a great exemplar of faith. He wanted future generations to live by the holy Scriptures.

And by the way, the Bible *is* sufficient to give us a comprehensive world-and-life view of logic, science, math, cosmology, and other disciplines. We don’t need to go to the world for those things. So on many levels, Othniel was a man much like Achsah’s dad, Caleb. He was a model of what it means to live by faith. And the book of Judges deals with him in much more detail.

### III. Achsah, a model woman of faith (vv. 17-19)

But let’s end with Achsah herself. I believe she is a model *daughter* of faith and a model *wife* of faith.

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<sup>5</sup> Rod Mattoon, *Treasures from Joshua, Treasures from Scripture Series* (Springfield, IL: Rod Mattoon, 2002), 192.

### A. She was confident in her father's guidance (v. 17)

First of all, as has been demonstrated last week, she was confident in her father's guidance. This was not a forced marriage. She trusted her father's judgment about the man she would marry rather than trusting her emotions. Why? Because her dad was a man who fully followed the Lord, lived by faith, and was a man of character. He was trustworthy. And her dad had no doubt convinced her that *any* of the men in his inner circle of leadership would have been worthy candidates to marry her. But who knows? Maybe he already was led by the Lord that it would be Othniel. So Caleb gave his daughter to Othniel, and there is no evidence that she resented that fact.

### B. She was confident in both her position as a soon-to-be wife and her position as a daughter and knew how to express her ideas of faith in a way that would honor others (v. 18)

Second, she was confident in her position as a soon-to-be wife and in her position as a daughter, and knew how to express her ideas of faith in a way that would honor both. In a moment we will look at why her request *should* be seen as a far-sighted request of faith, but look first at the *way* she expresses it in verse 18. Verse 18 begins,

Now it was so, when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field.

And then she goes ahead and does the asking. Some people have been confused by this. Why ask *Othniel* if *she* is going to be doing the asking? But it is actually pretty straightforward. She is already relating to her husband as her new authority by asking her husband-to-be's permission rather than unilaterally asking her dad on her own. In effect she says, "Would it be OK with you if I approach dad and ask him for a field as a wedding present? If so, I'll let him know that *you* are OK with it." I think that is what is going on with the Hebrew. Susan Niditch is absolutely wrong when she portrays Achsah as a rebellious teenager who angrily demands that she get her way or else.<sup>6</sup> John Goldingay is absolutely wrong when he says, "achsah manipulates the men in her life in order to ensure she gets a

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<sup>6</sup> Niditch says, "Achsah's leaping from her donkey and offering an angry complaint to her father is reminiscent of the goddess Anat's bullying demands to her father El in the matter of building a house for her brother Baal (KTU I. 3 v 19–34). The motif as found in Judg 1:14 and in the Canaanite tradition portrays the young woman as a plucky, even rebellious, youth who stands up to her father and gets what she wants. Neal Walls (1992: 94) has described Anat as a divine adolescent; some of this quality attaches to Achsah as well." Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary*, ed. William P. Brown, Carol A. Newsom, and David L. Petersen, 1st ed., *The Old Testament Library* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 41.

better deal than the one they originally propose.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, both of those authors think that she was not a submissive daughter or a submissive wife.

But I think the evidence points in exactly the opposite direction. There is no manipulation here. Her asking Othniel shows her *submission* to him (since he will shortly be her husband), and her getting off the donkey shows her *respect and submission* to her dad (since she is not yet married - they are on their way to get married). So verse 18 goes on to say,

So she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you wish?”

She dismounts out of respect and waits for her father to acknowledge her presence. She is not the manipulative surly woman that some people portray her as. She is confident, yes; very confident. And yes, she is not the least bit insecure. That much is clear. But I think her lack of insecurity and her display of confidence both flow from the same faith that she was brought up to live by (as I demonstrated last week). She is a model of confident submission that can freely dialogue with those to whom she submits.

When Ephesians 5:22 says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord,” it is not calling for insecurity. The church should be totally secure in Christ, yet our submission to Christ should be complete. Security and submission are in no way incompatible. So Paul goes on to say, “Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” How is the church supposed to be submissive to Christ? By keeping God’s Word. And so the phrase “just as” shows that it must therefore be *God’s Word* that defines the submission of wives to husbands “in everything.” It’s not submission to sinful requests, but submission in the Lord.

But the point I am making about Achsah is that she evidences *faith* in her submission. 2 Peter 3 comments on this when it says this:

1Pet. 3:1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

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<sup>7</sup> John Goldingay, *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth for Everyone: A Theological Commentary on the Bible, Old Testament for Everyone* (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press; Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2011), 69–70.

When women approach the subject of submission in faith, it removes fear and insecurity and brings joy and confidence in the Lord. I think Barker and Kohlenberger are right when they say,

Caleb's daughter needed the permission of her husband before she could ask her father for a gift. Since Caleb had given them land in the arid Negev, she requested a field with "springs of water." Caleb agreed, and this gift may have been her dowry.<sup>8</sup>

### C. She is a woman with initiative (v. 18)

Moving on to the next point, we can see that she was a woman with initiative. Her faith did not make her passive. She came up with the idea, presented it to Othniel to make sure he was OK with it, then approached Caleb. Faith is never passive. It is driven to action; it shows initiative. If you look at all of the action verbs that describe case after case of faith in Hebrews 11 (which is sometimes called the hall of faith), you will see that faith is consistent with initiative. Hebrews 11 says, "by faith Abel offered... by faith Noah... prepared an ark... by faith Abraham obeyed... by faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed... by faith Isaac blessed Jacob... by faith Jacob, when he was dying blessed each of the sons of Joseph... by faith he [Moses] forsook Egypt... by faith he kept the Passover... [and others] who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness..." etc., etc., etc. Faith takes initiative to claim its possessions. It is never passive.

### D. Even in her request for a wedding present, she is future oriented (v. 18e-19b)

Next, even her request for a wedding present was future oriented. When Caleb asked her what she wished for, verse 19 says,

She answered, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

Commentators point out that the word translated as "South" here, is *negev*, which refers to a wilderness or other dry area that needed irrigation in order to be productive. You've heard of the negev desert, right? She instantly recognized that if her family grew in the next few generations, they would need access to water, and if her family did not have ownership of it, there could be problems. People fight for ownership of water, but by gaining title to it, her family would at least have access to the water for generations to come. This shows future-orientation. Kenneth Barker says,

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<sup>8</sup> Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III, *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Abridged Edition: Old Testament) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 330.

Land in the Negev is of little value without water, but it is very productive when irrigated. Othniel recognized the validity of her request.<sup>9</sup>

She was a blessing to her husband-to-be in thinking of this. Because of her dad's future orientation, she too was future oriented and didn't have to be told everything that needed to be done. She had initiative; she was future oriented. And secure husbands love that in their wives. Secure husbands don't want passive wives; they want wives with initiative.

### E. Her dad blessed her (v. 19c)

And her dad, recognizing the virtue in her request, blessed her just as she asked. She said "Give me a blessing" and he gave that blessing to her. And ultimately, since all blessings come from the Lord, her faith obtains a blessing from the Lord Himself. But if she had not been assertive, would her family have received this blessing? Probably not.

We need to value the strong women in our congregation and listen to their input. Husbands need to learn from their wives, who may have input that could save them a lot of headache in the future. Achsah was a woman of faith who was looking out for the welfare of not just her immediate family, but of future generations as well. I love that about her. Women: God has given you wisdom, and he expects you to share it. Yes, share it humbly, and share it with the submissive spirit and respect that Achsah did, but share your wisdom. Marriages will be stronger for it.

So I hope this little journey into the lives of these three people will inspire you to live by faith in 2024. May it be so. Amen.

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<sup>9</sup> Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III, *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Abridged Edition: Old Testament) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 314.