

# **Dr. August Konkell, Chronicles, Session 10, Temple Location**

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This is Dr. August Konkell in his teaching on the books of Chronicles. This is session 10, Temple Location.

The promise to David begins with David being made king, and the significance of David being made king continues with his attention to the ark and bringing it to Jerusalem.

But of course, David did much more than build the temple, and we all do know that David was the empire builder, so the Chronicler doesn't leave out that part of the story in which David extends his territory from around Jerusalem and Judah to a large area from which he collected tribute. But the Chronicler's focus always comes back to that which is really important in David's empire. What is significant is not the fact that David has conquered Arameans all the way to Zobah in the Lebanon range, and Ammonites and Moabites and Edomites all the way to the Gulf of Aqaba, and Philistines virtually to the Mediterranean.

But the significance of David's kingdom is his making preparations for the temple because, after all, the kingdom of David is not the empire. The kingdom of David is the temple which represents the kingdom of God. So, in our outline, we have moved to another stage.

We've seen the nation of promise. We have now seen the kingdom founded so that it is a large territory over which David rules. But now the Chronicler's greatest amount of detail is going to be on his preparations for the temple.

Take note, please, that the largest part of the story of all of the books of Samuel is covered by the Chronicler in about ten chapters, from 10 to 20, in which he just makes evident the way in which David became the king of an empire. And all the details that occupy 1 and 2 Samuel can be summarized in that short space. You just need to know that there is an empire of David.

Now what you need to know, and this is going to occupy another almost ten chapters, in talking about David making preparations for the temple, which is the kingdom of God. The preparations for the temple start off in a rather inauspicious manner. They start off by describing the way in which the temple site is chosen.

Now this is not a happy story in Samuel, nor is it a happy story in Chronicles. The version that the Chronicler has is actually somewhat variant from the version in

Samuel because he has a different text than the one that has been preserved for us in Samuel. But it all starts with counting soldiers.

One of the things that is wrong and betrays a lack of faithfulness is when you start to depend on soldiers and counting your army in order to protect yourself. And in many ways this is a test. So, David decides that he should find out what number of troops he has got.

Now of course we're used to that. We do census taking all the time. I've been counted I don't know how many times in my life, mostly so that I can be taxed, but because the federal government in Canada here wants records of all sorts of things about its people and who they are and where they live and what they work.

David just wanted a little more control over this vast empire of his and his warrior job thinks this is not a good idea. There's no reason for him to do it. What however happens here is that the way the Chronicler tells the story is strikingly different from the way that you read it in Samuel.

In Samuel the test of David comes from the Lord and in a way it is because David has been too self-confident and he's trusted in his own warriors and himself too much. And so, God is testing him and judging him. The Chronicler doesn't put it that way.

The Chronicler says, and in most of your translations, you're going to read this as a name because it's capitalized that it was Satan who tempted David. Now, I want to question the translator's choice in making that a personal name of the devil. And here's why I want to challenge the translator's choice of making that a personal name of the devil.

That is the personal name of the devil by the time we get to the New Testament. He is the prince of demons, and he is the original tempter, and so forth. However, in the Hebrew Bible, the term Satan is not a personal name.

It is just a common noun. It's written like that, Satan, and it simply means an opposer. Someone who could betray you.

Someone who could lead you into doing the wrong thing. And so I mentioned earlier that when David was in Ziklag the Philistine military leader wanted to take David and his men with him as part of the troops in contesting Israel. And the other Philistine said no, he's a Satan.

Now, they didn't mean that he was a devil of any kind, whatever. They just said he's not actually on our side. He's the one over whom the Israelites said Saul has slain his thousands and David has slain his ten thousands.

And if we take David along with us when we get into the heat of battle, he may turn on us and join the sides with Saul. He's a Satan. Now, there's no linguistic evidence to suggest that the chronicler is using this term in any other way than its very common meaning.

Now, clearly, he's interpreting Samuel at this point. And he's not denying that God was the one who was bringing a test to David. But how did that test from God come to David? Well, the Chronicler suggests it was a Satan.

In other words, somewhere among David's generals or somewhere among his troops, there was somebody who said Well, you know, we got to have a count of our armies here. We got to know where we're at in terms of our defenses and military proceedings. And so, we should conduct this whole census.

And so, David sends Joab to go through all the 12 tribes of Israel, much to his chagrin, in order to count all of the soldiers. Now, I just want to point out that that, to me, is much more likely the chronicler's meaning, and it's almost impossible to think that the Chronicler's meaning is that this actually was the devil. If the chronicler's meaning is that this was the devil, then the chronicler comes to be in contradiction to the books of Samuel because God doesn't use the devil.

But God does have his human instruments in other ways that he does use which it seems to me is much more likely what the chronicler was talking about. So, the result, as we know, is that a plague breaks out because this is very displeasing to God, and David laments the fact that this plague has broken out and he's actually given an option. You know, what do you want for this plague to stop? And David says, well, the judgment should be upon me.

It shouldn't be upon these other people who are really just innocent. They are victims. So, the rest of the chapter tells about David's confession and the point at which the destroying angel, the malach, the messenger who has brought about the plague is stopped.

In the Chronicles, he is seen as bearing a sword and as an intermediary that was observed. Samuel doesn't say that, but of course, what the chronicler is doing at this point is using a version of Samuel that does say that. So, what's clear is that God was carrying out this plague by means of his messenger and that it was stopped at a particular site.

It was a threshing site. Now, in ancient times, there weren't harvesters, what we used to call combines, these big machines that can roll down the field and knock out all the grain seeds and put them in a hopper. Instead, you gathered them up, you tied them in bundles, and then you had a flattened area, generally somewhat

elevated, so you could catch a breeze, and you pounded out the seeds, and the wind would blow away the straw.

So that's what's meant by the threshing floor where the plague is stopped. So, this threshing floor then becomes the site that David dedicates, and it is affirmed in terms of signs like those that took place when the tabernacle was dedicated in the end of the book of Exodus chapter 34, where David offers the sacrifice and the fire consumes the sacrifice to Solomon. David's charge to Solomon.

This is a personal charge that David gives to Solomon, and he explains to Solomon that what he is doing is the most important thing that he has ever done. He's not talking about the building of his empire, but he's talking about the throne, the palace that shall represent the rule of God, and that happens through David's gathering of all of the materials and it happens through his charge to all of the leaders of Israel that they need to support Solomon. So, this is the start of that which is most important to the chronicler of quite a long narrative now in which he is seeking to tell us about the critical thing of David's life, which was his preparation for that temple which was going to represent the kingdom of God.

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