

Dr. August Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 1, Introduction

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 1, Introduction, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. August Konkel's introduction to Chronicles explores the book's historical context and theological significance. Konkel highlights Chronicles' placement in the Hebrew Bible alongside Ezra-Nehemiah and examines its relationship to other texts like First Esdras and Kings, emphasizing that Chronicles served a distinct purpose. **He argues Chronicles was written around 400 BC for the people of Yehud, a Persian state centered in Jerusalem.** Konkel emphasizes the Chronicler's focus on the Davidic promise and the temple as central to understanding the identity of the people of Yehud, and the meaning of Israel. Finally, he notes that Chronicles offers a unique interpretation of Israel's history, drawing from and adapting earlier prophetic accounts of Israel, with an interpretation very relevant to the New Testament.

2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Chronicles).



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on01.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 1, Introduction

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. August Konkel's "Introduction to Chronicles," Session 1:

Briefing Document: Dr. August Konkel's "Introduction to Chronicles," Session 1

Overview:

This session serves as an introduction to the book of Chronicles, focusing on its historical context, purpose, and significance. Dr. Konkel emphasizes that Chronicles provides a unique interpretation of Israel's history, written for a specific audience in the Persian state of Yehud around 400 BC. He highlights the Chronicler's focus on the promise to David and the importance of the temple, arguing that the book is essential for understanding the concept of "Israel" within the broader biblical narrative and its relevance to the New Testament and contemporary discussions.

Main Themes and Ideas:

1. Chronicles as a History Written for a Specific Time and Place:

- Chronicles is a history written for the people of Yehud, a Persian state centered around Jerusalem after the exile. As Konkel says, "Chronicles was written with a very specific goal of addressing the worshipping community around the city of Jerusalem."
- Konkel emphasizes that "It is not Judah. It is not a restoration of Judah. It doesn't actually have any connection politically to the Judah that went into exile."
- The Chronicler aims to help this community understand their identity as heirs to a divine promise.

1. The Importance of the Promise to David:

- The promise to David is central to the Chronicler's narrative. "The whole book is built around the promise to David, which is why David and Solomon form the greatest part of the history of the chronicler."
- This promise emphasizes the "kingdom of Yahweh," a concept that resonates with Jesus' teachings in the New Testament.
- The Chronicler focuses on David's commission to Solomon regarding the temple, highlighting its significance for the people of Yehud.

1. **The Temple as a Focal Point:**

- The temple is presented as a central element of the promise and the identity of the people of Yehud. "What are they supposed to be as the people of promise? Well, it focuses around the temple."
- David's instructions and Solomon's construction of the temple are given considerable attention.
- The temple represents the continuity of God's kingdom even in the absence of a political state.

1. **Chronicles as a Reinterpretation of History:**

- The Chronicler retells the history found in Joshua through 2 Kings, but with his own interpretation and emphasis. "Chronicles is a history. In fact, unlike any of the other books of the Old Testament, Chronicles is a history. It calls itself the V'rim Hayyimim, the events of the times, a history."
- The Chronicler's version of Kings may have differed from the Masoretic text we have today, as suggested by the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- Konkel points out that the Chronicler subtly shifts words, expressions, or times of events to reflect the view that "it really is, the kingdom of Yahweh, not a political state that died with the exile of the Babylonians."
- Understanding Chronicles requires familiarity with the prophetic history.

1. **The Meaning of "Israel":**

- The Chronicler's use of the term "Israel" is crucial for understanding its significance in the Gospels and the writings of Paul.
- Konkel states that "The one that's relevant to the kingdom of God is the Israel of the chronicler."
- The Chronicler emphasizes that Israel's identity originates with the sons of Abraham and continues to evolve over time to eventually arrive at the Israel of Paul's theology.

Key Quotes:

- "Chronicles was written with a very specific goal of addressing the worshipping community around the city of Jerusalem."
- "The whole book is built around the promise to David, which is why David and Solomon form the greatest part of the history of the chronicler."
- "This is not his throne, this is the throne of the kingdom of Yahweh. And the kingdom of Yahweh is forever."
- "Unlike any of the other books of the Old Testament, Chronicles is a history. It calls itself the V'rim Hayyim, the events of the times, a history."
- "The one that's relevant to the kingdom of God is the Israel of the chronicler."
- "You don't really know your Bible until you know Chronicles."

Significance:

Dr. Konkel argues that understanding Chronicles is vital for grasping the biblical concept of "Israel" and its relevance to the kingdom of God. He positions the book as a crucial link between the Old Testament narrative and the New Testament's portrayal of Israel. He states, "Chronicles is quite relevant to us because it's telling us what we should understand by the term Israel." Furthermore, the briefing highlights the need to recognize that "Israel has multiple meanings within the Bible itself," and that the Chronicler's perspective offers a key insight into one of those meanings.

Conclusion:

Session 1 provides a foundation for understanding Chronicles by contextualizing it within its historical setting and highlighting its key themes. Konkel emphasizes that the book offers a unique perspective on Israel's history, focusing on the promise to David, the significance of the temple, and the evolving understanding of "Israel" as the people of God. This introduction sets the stage for a deeper exploration of Chronicles and its relevance to both biblical and contemporary issues.

4. Study Guide: Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 1, Introduction

Chronicles: Understanding the People of Promise

I. Key Concepts and Themes

- **Chronicles as History (Chronikon):** Understand Chronicles as a deliberate historical account, not just a repetition of Kings. Know how it functions as a "chronikon" in the tradition of Greek and other historians.
- **The State of Yehud:** Recognize the political context of Yehud as a Persian state, not a restored kingdom of Judah, and its significance for understanding the chronicler's purpose.
- **The Promise to David:** Grasp the central role of the Davidic covenant and its connection to the "kingdom of Yahweh" as a theological and historical focus of Chronicles.
- **Temple Theology:** Recognize the centrality of the temple in Chronicles, both as a physical structure and a symbol of God's presence and the continuity of the covenant.
- **Sources and Interpretation:** Understand that the Chronicler uses existing narratives (particularly Kings) and other sources but reinterprets them to emphasize specific theological and historical points.
- **Relevance to the New Testament:** Appreciate the Chronicler's contribution to the concept of "Israel" and its ongoing significance in the New Testament (e.g., in Paul's writings).
- **Canonical History:** Understand the placement of Chronicles with Ezra-Nehemiah, the Septuagint's First Esdras, and the eventual separation of these books based on purpose and composition.

II. Core Knowledge

- **Author and Date:** Know that the chronicler likely wrote around 400 BC during the Persian period.
- **Audience:** Understand that the intended audience was the community of Yehud centered in Jerusalem.

- **Purpose:** Be able to articulate the chronicler's purpose in writing Chronicles: to provide a theological and historical identity for the people of Yehud as the heirs of God's promises to David and the people of Israel, focusing on worship and the temple.
- **Relationship to Kings:** Understand the Chronicler used the book of Kings, but in a different version from the Masoretic text that we have today. He also slightly shifted the words or expressions, or even the times of events and chronology in order to emphasize the Kingdom of Yahweh and not a mere political state.
- **Structure:** Be generally familiar with the overall structure of Chronicles (genealogies, united monarchy, divided monarchy focusing on Judah, post-exilic conclusion).

III. Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. What is a "chronikon," and how does this term relate to the book of Chronicles?
2. Describe the political context of Yehud during the time Chronicles was written.
3. Why is the promise to David so central to the Chronicler's theological perspective?
4. What role does the temple play in the Chronicler's understanding of Israel's identity?
5. How does the Chronicler use and adapt the book of Kings?
6. Why was the book called First Esdras not accepted into the Hebrew canon?
7. How does the Chronicler's portrayal of Israel relate to Paul's understanding of Israel in the New Testament?
8. Why did the Reformers omit First Esdras from their Bibles?
9. What does Konkel mean when he says, "you don't really know your Bible until you know Chronicles?"
10. Explain Konkel's idea that Chronicles is relevant because it is telling us what we should understand by the term Israel.

Quiz Answer Key

1. A "chronikon" is a type of history writing, common among the Greeks, that begins with the earliest of humans and tells a story up to the time of the writer.

Chronicles fits this definition because it begins with Adam and recounts the history down to the Persian period.

2. Yehud was a small Persian state, not a restored kingdom of Judah, and Jerusalem was the center of this state. It was a military buffer to protect against invasions from Egypt.
3. The promise to David is central because it signifies the enduring covenant between God and his people, focusing on the "kingdom of Yahweh" rather than a mere political entity. It signifies that the people of Yehud are the heirs of God's promises.
4. The temple represents God's presence among his people and the continuity of the covenant, serving as the focal point for worship and national identity in Yehud.
5. The Chronicler uses Kings as a primary source but adapts it to emphasize theological themes and the Davidic covenant, also using a different version from the Masoretic text.
6. First Esdras was never included in the Hebrew canon because it was regarded as a different kind of writing. First Esdras really has quite a different kind of emphasis than Chronicles and a different kind of emphasis than Ezra-Nehemiah.
7. The Chronicler's understanding of Israel as the people of God based on covenant and promise provides a foundation for Paul's theological reflections on Israel in the New Testament, in books like Romans 9-11.
8. The Reformers tended to follow the Hebrew canon of the scriptures, which did not include First Esdras. They also did not accept First Esdras because they regarded it as a different kind of writing.
9. Konkel is asserting that to understand the full scope of the Old Testament, and particularly its historical narratives, one must grasp the Chronicler's unique perspective and interpretation. In other words, the Chronicler's unique emphasis on the kingdom of Yahweh is a critical lens for understanding the other historical books of the Old Testament.
10. The Chronicler's portrayal of Israel in a Persian state of Yehud, as heirs of the kingdom of God, is the Israel that is relevant to the kingdom of God. Konkel is asserting that it is the theological understanding of Israel found in Chronicles that is most relevant to the concept of the kingdom of God.

IV. Essay Questions

1. Discuss the Chronicler's use of history, comparing and contrasting it with the historical perspective found in the books of Kings. How does the Chronicler's historical method serve his theological aims?
2. Analyze the role of the temple in Chronicles. How does the Chronicler use the temple to shape the identity and purpose of the community of Yehud?
3. Explore the significance of the Davidic covenant in Chronicles. How does the Chronicler present David as a model for the people of Yehud, and what are the implications of this portrayal?
4. Evaluate the Chronicler's portrayal of Israel in light of its political context as a Persian state. How does the Chronicler navigate the tensions between political reality and theological ideals?
5. Trace the concept of "Israel" from the Old Testament to the New Testament, focusing on the Chronicler's contribution to this concept and its relevance to Paul's theology.

V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Chronicles:** A historical book in the Old Testament that reinterprets Israel's history, focusing on the Davidic covenant, the temple, and the kingdom of Yahweh.
- **Yehud:** The Persian province in which the Chronicler lived and wrote, centered in Jerusalem.
- **Kingdom of Yahweh:** The Chronicler's term for God's reign, emphasizing the continuity of the covenant and the spiritual significance of Israel beyond political boundaries.
- **Davidic Covenant:** God's promise to David that his lineage would endure forever, central to the Chronicler's theological perspective.
- **Temple:** The physical structure in Jerusalem that represents God's presence among his people and serves as the center of worship.
- **Chronikon:** A Greek term for a historical account that traces events from the earliest times to the present.
- **First Esdras:** A book contained in the Septuagint (the Greek Bible) that bridges the narratives of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, but is considered by some to be a different kind of writing.
- **Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, which includes books not found in the Hebrew canon.
- **Zerubbabel:** A Jewish leader present in Haggai and Zechariah, about the year 522 BC. The genealogies of Zerubbabel place the writing of Chronicles around the year 400 BC.
- **Hezekiah:** King of Judah; the mentor of Konkel's dissertation was focused on Hezekiah. There was a book of Kings written in the time of Hezekiah, but that developed later into what is now the Masoretic text.

5. FAQs on Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 1, Introduction, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Chronicles FAQ

- **What are the books of Chronicles, and why are they often overlooked?** The books of Chronicles are part of the Old Testament, typically appearing before Ezra-Nehemiah. They present a historical account from Adam to the time of the Persian Empire. They are often overlooked because they begin with extensive genealogies, which can feel daunting and disconnected to many readers. Also, because they recount events already covered in Samuel and Kings, their unique purpose and perspective can be missed.
- **How are Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah related, and how does this relate to First Esdras?** Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah are often viewed as related, especially because the ending of Chronicles echoes the beginning of Ezra-Nehemiah with the decree of Cyrus. The Septuagint (Greek Bible) included a book called First Esdras, which bridged Chronicles and Ezra, further solidifying the idea of a continuous work. However, modern scholarship increasingly recognizes Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah as distinct compositions with different purposes, and First Esdras has a different emphasis than either of those.
- **When was Chronicles likely written, and what was the historical context?** Chronicles was likely written around 400 BC, during the late Persian Empire. This timing is based on the genealogies in 1 Chronicles, specifically those of Zerubbabel. The book was written for the people of Yehud, a small Persian state centered around Jerusalem and the restored temple. Understanding Chronicles requires knowledge of the political context of Yehud, and its relationship with the Persian empire.
- **What is the significance of "Yehud" in understanding Chronicles?** Yehud was a Persian state, not a political restoration of the Davidic kingdom of Judah. The chronicler wrote to the people living in Yehud, a relatively insignificant political entity under Persian rule. The chronicler was keen to show that these people, despite their circumstances, were the heirs to a divine promise. Therefore, understanding the geopolitical context of the Persian state of Yehud is key to interpreting the messages in Chronicles.

- **What is the central theme of Chronicles, and how does it relate to the promise to David?** The central theme of Chronicles is that the people of Yehud are the heirs to a divine promise, particularly the promise made to David. David and Solomon are central figures in the history presented by the chronicler because of this promise. Although the political state of Israel and Judah had ceased to exist (prior to 1948), the chronicler emphasizes that the kingdom of Yahweh (the kingdom of God) is forever, and they are the people of that kingdom.
- **How does Chronicles function as a history, and what sources did the chronicler use?** Chronicles explicitly presents itself as a history ("events of the times"). The chronicler used earlier historical accounts, primarily from the books of Samuel and Kings, but reinterprets and adapts them to convey his message. The chronicler shifts words, expressions, and chronology to reflect his understanding of the kingdom of Yahweh. The version of Kings available to the chronicler may also have differed from the Masoretic text we have today.
- **How does the chronicler's understanding of "Israel" influence later biblical thought, particularly in the New Testament?** The chronicler's portrayal of "Israel" as the people of God, united by their faith and heritage rather than by political boundaries, profoundly influences later biblical thought. The chronicler rarely uses the term "Jacob." Instead, the chronicler contrasts Esau with Israel. This concept is particularly evident in Paul's writings in Romans 9-11, where he discusses the true meaning of Israel in the context of the kingdom of God. It also provides the backdrop for what is meant by "Israel" in the Gospels.
- **Why is studying Chronicles relevant today?** Chronicles provides a unique perspective on the meaning of "Israel," a term that is often misunderstood and subject to varied interpretations. The chronicler offers an understanding of Israel as the people of God connected to the promise, a concept relevant for understanding the kingdom of God and its implications for believers today. Therefore, in a time where the word Israel is very much in the news, and many different interpretations exist for the word, the interpretation found in Chronicles is a valuable one.