

Dr. August Konkell, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 17, Compromised Faithfulness Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Konkell, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 17, Compromised Faithfulness, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Konkell's lecture focuses on King Asa's reign as depicted in the book of Chronicles. Asa initially earns favor by fortifying Judean cities and emphasizing worship of God, removing foreign idols and influences. He experiences victory due to God's favor, prompting covenant renewal and celebration involving both northern and southern tribes. However, Asa's later reliance on alliances instead of God leads to conflict with Baasha and a negative end, marked by illness and exile of a prophet. The chronicler uses Asa's story to illustrate the consequences of pride and failure to remain humble before God. The lecture also grapples with chronological discrepancies between Chronicles and Kings regarding events in Asa's reign.

**2. 28 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Konkell, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 17 – 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).**



**Konkell_Chron_Session
17.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 17, Compromised Faithfulness

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. August Konkel's session on "Compromised Faithfulness" in the book of Chronicles, focusing on King Asa:

Briefing Document: Dr. August Konkel on Chronicles, Session 17 - Compromised Faithfulness (King Asa)

Overview: This session focuses on the Chronicler's portrayal of King Asa, contrasting it with the depiction in the book of Kings. While Kings presents Asa as a largely good king, the Chronicler highlights Asa's compromised faithfulness, particularly later in his reign, serving as a cautionary tale about the importance of continued humility and reliance on God. The Chronicler uses Asa's story to illustrate the theological principle that judgment follows failure and sin.

Main Themes and Ideas:

1. Dual Portrayal of Asa:

- The Chronicler presents Asa as a king who initially does well in purifying Judah from syncretism and fortifying the kingdom. "But the Chronicler presents him as a king who was compromised. And no doubt, both of these are true..."
- However, Asa's later reliance on alliances and military strength, rather than on God, leads to judgment. This contrasts with the Book of Kings, which presents Asa more favorably.

1. Syncretism and Purification of Worship:

- Asa initially focuses on the importance of pure worship of God at the temple, combating syncretism and the use of foreign symbols, including Baal symbols like the Asherah.
- "One of the things that constantly comes up in Kings is worship at the high places... So instead, he set up the shrines at Bethel and at Dan, and in setting up those shrines for the worship at Bethel and Dan, he introduced Baal symbols, especially the calf, and also something called the Asherah."
- The Chronicler emphasizes that even if foreign symbols are used with different intentions, their original associations remain and can compromise faithfulness. "But the problem is that you can't remove their significance and their symbolic

implications just because a different person is using them, or they're being used in a different place."

- The removal of the Queen Mother, who had connections to the north, is highlighted as a significant act in purifying worship.

1. **The Chronicler's Theology of Warfare:**

- While the Chronicler approves of a large army as a sign of God's blessing, he emphasizes that military strength alone does not guarantee victory. Wars are ultimately won based on God's favor, not on the size or expertise of the army.
- "He always regards a king with a powerful army as a sign that God is honoring the rule of this king and blessing this king. But what is always interesting is that in the chronicler's view of things, these large armies never help you win a war."
- The victory over Zerah the Nubian is presented as a clear example of God's intervention.

1. **The Importance of Humility and Reliance on God:**

- The central theme is the need for continual humility and reliance on God. Asa's failure to maintain this reliance leads to his downfall.
- "But from the chronicler's point of view, he loses that humbling of himself before God. And because his heart becomes proud, and he relies on himself, and he relies on alliances, he ends up in disastrous wars with Baasha, and he ends up dying in judgment."
- The prophet Azariah's call to revival emphasizes that even in challenging times, believers must not be discouraged and must rely on God.
- The prophet Hanani reminds Asa of the danger of alliances and relying on military power.

1. **The Role of Prophets and Levitical Sermons:**

- Prophets like Azariah and Hanani play a crucial role in delivering messages of warning and calling the people back to faithfulness. These messages are sometimes referred to as "Levitical sermons."
- "These have sometimes been called Levitical sermons, and they may well have been given by a Levite. But essentially, they are a reiteration of the way in which we have to rely on God and have to rely on his covenant."

1. Chronological Conundrums:

- Konkel acknowledges chronological discrepancies between the account in Chronicles and Kings, particularly regarding the timing of Asa's war with Baasha. The Chronicler states that the war occurs in the 35th year of Asa's reign, whereas Kings indicates that Baasha's reign ended well before that. "Here is where we have one of the conundrums in the book of Chronicles... the chronicler reports on here is a war with Baasha, which he says takes place in the 35th year... Baasha ceased to be king of Israel in about the 25th year of Asa's reign."
- The Chronicler connects this war, and Asa's negative ending, to a failure and judgement reflective of the way Asa died.

1. Participation of the Northern Tribes:

- The Chronicler emphasizes the participation of tribes from the northern kingdom in Asa's covenant renewal and celebration, highlighting the ideal of a unified Israel.

Key Quotes:

- "But the Chronicler presents him as a king who was compromised. And no doubt, both of these are true..."
- "But the problem is that you can't remove their significance and their symbolic implications just because a different person is using them, or they're being used in a different place."
- "He always regards a king with a powerful army as a sign that God is honoring the rule of this king and blessing this king. But what is always interesting is that in the chronicler's view of things, these large armies never help you win a war."
- "But from the chronicler's point of view, he loses that humbling of himself before God. And because his heart becomes proud, and he relies on himself, and he relies on alliances, he ends up in disastrous wars with Baasha, and he ends up dying in judgment."
- "These have sometimes been called Levitical sermons, and they may well have been given by a Levite. But essentially, they are a reiteration of the way in which we have to rely on God and have to rely on his covenant."
- "Here is where we have one of the conundrums in the book of Chronicles... the chronicler reports on here is a war with Baasha, which he says takes place in the

35th year... Baasha ceased to be king of Israel in about the 25th year of Asa's reign."

Conclusion:

Dr. Konkel's session highlights the Chronicler's nuanced portrayal of King Asa as an example of "Compromised Faithfulness." While Asa initially demonstrates zeal for purifying worship and strengthening the kingdom, his later reliance on worldly power leads to judgment. The Chronicler uses Asa's story to emphasize the enduring importance of humility, reliance on God, and adherence to the covenant. The complexities in the chronology also highlight the Chronicler's theological aims in shaping the narrative.

4. Study Guide: Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 17, Compromised Faithfulness

Chronicles: Compromised Faithfulness - A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. How does the Chronicler's portrayal of King Asa differ from the portrayal in the book of Kings?
2. What is syncretism, and why was Asa against it?
3. According to the source, what is the Asherah and what is its significance?
4. What is the Chronicler's view on large armies and warfare?
5. What is the main message of the prophet Azariah to King Asa?
6. Which northern tribes participate in the covenant renewal led by Asa? Why is this significant?
7. What is the significance of the Queen Mother's removal in the story of King Asa?
8. What is the chronological problem presented in Chronicles regarding Asa's war with Baasha?
9. According to the source, what is the reason for Asa's negative ending and the disease in his feet?
10. What is the significance of the "spice fire" mentioned in the context of Asa's burial?

Quiz Answer Key

1. While Kings presents Asa as a largely righteous king, the Chronicler portrays him as a king whose faithfulness was compromised, particularly later in his reign. This highlights Asa's initial good deeds but focuses on his eventual reliance on alliances instead of God.
2. Syncretism is the mixing of different religious beliefs or practices. Asa opposed it because it compromised the purity of Yahweh worship and the exclusive representation of God's holiness in the temple.

3. The Asherah is a grove of trees, or a single tree, representing life and associated with the Baal cult. In the Baal cult, it also represented a goddess as the giver of life and was considered a pagan symbol.
4. The Chronicler approves of a large army as a sign of God's blessing but emphasizes that victory ultimately depends on God's favor. Large armies do not guarantee success and can even lead to defeat if God is not on their side.
5. Azariah reminds Asa that even in times of distress, God remains faithful and will deliver his people if they remain faithful to Him. He encourages Asa not to be discouraged by challenging times.
6. The text references the participation of tribes from the north, specifically in the covenant renewal, and this is significant because Chronicles focuses on the ideal of a unified Israel. This participation symbolizes a reunion of the northern and southern kingdoms in worship of Yahweh.
7. The Queen Mother's removal is important because she had connections with the northern kingdom and promoted syncretistic worship practices. Her removal signifies Asa's commitment to purifying Judah from foreign religious influences.
8. Chronicles states that Asa's war with Baasha occurred in the 35th year of Asa's reign, while the book of Kings indicates that Baasha's reign ended before this time. This discrepancy creates a chronological problem that is difficult to resolve.
9. Asa's negative ending and the disease in his feet are interpreted as divine judgment for his pride and reliance on alliances instead of God. This highlights the Chronicler's emphasis on the consequences of unfaithfulness.
10. The "spice fire" was the burning of a large quantity of aromatic spices during Asa's burial and was an indication of an honorable and significant burial. It suggests a measure of respect and honor despite Asa's negative ending.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the portrayal of King Asa in the books of Kings and Chronicles. What theological points are emphasized in each account?
2. Discuss the Chronicler's perspective on warfare. How does the Chronicler explain victories and defeats in battle, and what role does faith play?
3. Analyze the theme of syncretism in the provided text. Why was it such a concern for the Chronicler, and how did Asa attempt to combat it?
4. Explain the significance of covenant renewal in the reign of Asa as presented by the Chronicler. What does this event reveal about the Chronicler's theological agenda?
5. Explore the concept of "Compromised Faithfulness" as exemplified by King Asa. What lessons can be drawn from his story, according to the Chronicler?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Syncretism:** The amalgamation or attempted reconciliation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought. In the context of the text, it refers to the mixing of Yahweh worship with Baal worship or other foreign religious practices.
- **Asherah:** A sacred tree or pole representing a Canaanite goddess associated with fertility and life. It was often a grove of trees that was cut down by those trying to remove Baal worship.
- **Baal:** A Canaanite deity associated with fertility, rain, and storms. The worship of Baal was often in competition with the worship of Yahweh in ancient Israel.
- **Chronicles:** A book in the Hebrew Bible that retells the history of Israel, emphasizing the reign of David and the importance of the temple in Jerusalem. The Chronicler often presents a theological interpretation of historical events.
- **Covenant Renewal:** A ceremony in which the people of Israel reaffirm their commitment to the covenant with God. This often involved purification, celebration, and recommitment to following God's law.
- **Levitical Sermon:** A sermon delivered by a Levite, who were members of the priestly tribe of Levi. These sermons often emphasized the importance of following God's law and maintaining faithfulness to the covenant.
- **Judah:** The southern kingdom of Israel, which remained after the division of the kingdom following the reign of Solomon. Jerusalem was the capital of Judah, and the temple was located there.
- **Israel (Northern Kingdom):** The northern kingdom of Israel, which separated from Judah after the reign of Solomon. It was also called Ephraim.
- **Temple:** The central place of worship for the Israelites in Jerusalem. The temple was considered the dwelling place of God and the center of religious life.
- **Queen Mother:** A position of influence and authority held by the mother of the king. They could wield considerable power and influence during their son's reign.

5. FAQs on Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 17, Compromised Faithfulness, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Asa in Chronicles

1. How does the Chronicler portray King Asa, and how does this differ from the account in the book of Kings?

The Chronicler presents Asa as a king with *compromised faithfulness*. While the book of Kings depicts Asa as a generally righteous king, the Chronicler highlights Asa's initial good deeds, such as purifying Judah from syncretism and fortifying cities, but then focuses on his later reliance on alliances instead of God, ultimately leading to judgment. This is not to say the Chronicler's account conflicts, but it provides a different emphasis of Asa's life. Both accounts share that Asa and Baasha were in conflict throughout Asa's reign.

2. What is "syncretism," and why was Asa so concerned with it?

Syncretism is the mixing of different religious beliefs and practices. Asa was concerned with it because it compromised the pure worship of Yahweh, as God desired. Asa understood the importance of the Temple as the singular legitimate place of worship representing God's holiness. He was worried about cultural infiltration and the adoption of Baal symbols and worship, even if people claimed they had different meanings, because the symbolic associations remained.

3. What was the significance of the "Asherah" that Asa removed?

The Asherah, in this context, refers to a grove of trees (or a single tree) that represented life and was associated with the Baal cult. In the Baal cult, Asherah was also a goddess. By removing the Asherah, Asa was attempting to eliminate a foreign influence of worship within Judah, a compromise of Yahweh worship.

4. How did the Chronicler view warfare, and how did this relate to Asa's victories and failures?

The Chronicler saw warfare as ultimately determined by God. While a large army was a sign of God's blessing, military strength alone did not guarantee victory. God is not necessarily on the side of the Judean King. According to the Chronicler, Asa's early victory over Zerah was attributed to God's favor, but his later reliance on alliances instead of God during the war with Baasha was seen as a failure of faith.

5. What was the purpose of the prophet Azariah's message to Asa?

Azariah's message was a call to revival and encouragement. He told Asa that even in times of distress, God was still with him and would deliver him if he remained faithful. The message emphasized that challenges do not necessarily mean God's disfavor and that Asa should not be discouraged.

6. Why was the removal of the Queen Mother significant?

The Queen Mother had connections with the northern kingdom of Israel and exerted a negative influence on worship in Judah. Removing her was a symbolic and practical step in purifying Judah from foreign religious influences and compromised worship practices. Women were of considerable influence during this time.

7. What is the conundrum surrounding the war with Baasha in the 35th year of Asa's reign?

The book of Kings indicates that Baasha ceased to be king of Israel approximately ten years before the 35th year of Asa's reign. This chronological discrepancy creates a challenge in understanding the Chronicler's narrative. Some scholars suggest the 35th year may refer to the division of the kingdom, but this raises theological issues concerning the Chronicler's tendency to link judgment with sin. The Chronicler notes that this was Asa's failure to rely on God.

8. What was the final judgment on Asa, according to the Chronicler, and what lesson can be learned from his story?

The Chronicler portrays Asa's illness and death as a judgment for his pride and reliance on alliances rather than God. The lesson from Asa's story is that true faithfulness requires continual humility and reliance on God, not on worldly power or alliances. Failure to humble oneself before God will result in judgment.