

Dr. August Konkell, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 24, Reversals of Fortune 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 24, Reversals of Fortune, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Konkell's session explores the theme of reversals of fortune in the final kings of Judah, particularly Manasseh and Josiah, as presented in Chronicles. The discussion highlights how these kings experienced shifts from good to bad or bad to good based on their relationship with God. Manasseh's initial wickedness followed by humbling and repentance contrasts with Josiah's righteous reign that ends tragically. Konkell emphasizes that God's mercy and justice are central to understanding these reversals, rather than simple retribution. The chronicler's open ending suggests that despite exile, hope remains for the future of God's kingdom. Ultimately, faithfulness and humility are presented as key to a right relationship with God, while pride leads to failure.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Konkell, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 24 – 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_Session24.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 24, Reversals of Fortune

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. August Konkel's teaching on Chronicles, Session 24, "Reversals of Fortune."

Briefing Document: Konkel on Chronicles, Session 24 – Reversals of Fortune

Main Theme: The session focuses on the theme of "reversals of fortune" in the reigns of the kings following Hezekiah (Manasseh, Ammon, and Josiah) and how their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God, particularly as demonstrated by humility, influenced their fate and the fate of the nation of Judah. Konkel emphasizes that God's mercy and justice are at play, but that consequences for unfaithfulness are inevitable.

Key Ideas & Facts:

- **Hezekiah as the Second Solomon:** Hezekiah is presented as a figure who re-established proper worship in the temple, mirroring Solomon's reign and highlighting the importance of temple worship.
- "Hezekiah is portrayed as the second Solomon because of the way in which he establishes the worship of the temple and brings into practice all of those things that are at the heart of the kingdom of God, the way that it was portrayed under Solomon, the man of peace."
- **2 Chronicles 7:14 as a Key Verse:** This verse, where God tells Solomon about the conditions for healing the land ("If my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves, and will pray, and will seek my face, then I will hear from heaven, and will heal their land"), is central to understanding the Chronicler's perspective. The words "humble themselves," "seek God's face," and "heal" are recurring motifs.
- **Humility vs. Pride:** Humility (Hebrew word *kanah*) is presented as the mark of faithfulness, while pride is seen as the mark of unfaithfulness.
- "The one thing that Hezekiah not only did was pray and seek God's face so that God healed and they could celebrate the Passover, but when he was tested, when he was humbled himself and to the chronicler, this is the mark of faithfulness. The mark of unfaithfulness is pride."

- **Faithfulness and Failure:** Konkel notes that faithfulness doesn't preclude failure. Hezekiah, despite his flaws, is still considered faithful.
- "Faithfulness is not something that is without failure. Rather, we could see that, although Hezekiah had failed, he was still faithful. This is the chronicler's point."
- **Humiliation and Hope:** Konkel titles the final section "Humiliation and Hope," acknowledging the exile but emphasizing that the Chronicler leaves the future open, suggesting that the kingdom of God is not over.
- "One might say that it's only humiliation because the nation goes into exile. But the chronicler doesn't quite leave it there. He has an ending that leaves the future open. And it seems to me that is a very, very deliberate inclusion on his part to say the kingdom of God is not over. There is an open future and we are here to see what it is that God is going to do."
- **Manasseh: Reversal Through Humility:** Unlike the account in Kings, Chronicles highlights Manasseh's repentance and restoration after being taken captive to Babylon. His captivity led him to humble himself, and God showed him mercy.
- "This captivity, this being led into Babylon, led Manasseh to humble himself. And after his humbling, God grants him, in his mercy, a restoration. And this is the chronicler's point of view."
- **Historical Context of Manasseh's Reign:** Konkel provides historical context, mentioning the Assyrian domination under Esarhaddon and the vassal treaties imposed on the region, including likely in Jerusalem. He suggests that Manasseh's captivity may have been linked to a revolt against the Assyrians led by Shamash-Shum-Ukin in Babylon.
- **Ammon's Unfaithfulness:** Ammon's reign is contrasted with Manasseh's; the Chronicler notes that Ammon did *not* humble himself.
- "And the only thing that the chronicler can actually say about him in the summary of Ammon's reign is that he did not humble himself."
- **Josiah: Covenant Renewal and a Tragic End:** Josiah's reign is presented as a high point due to his reforms, the rediscovery of the Book of the Law, and the renewal of the covenant. The greatest Passover is celebrated during his reign. However, Josiah's ambition to regain territory previously controlled by the Assyrians led to his death in battle against the Egyptians, resulting in a swift demise for the kingdom.

- **Jeremiah as an Example:** The prophet Jeremiah's experience, from the high point of Josiah's reforms to the despair of the kingdom's collapse, mirrors the theme of reversals.
- "Jeremiah goes from the high point of the great celebration to the point of being thrown into the pit, to the point of being rejected by all the other prophets, to the point of becoming what we often refer to as the weeping prophet. Jeremiah is a pretty good example of the reign of Josiah in terms of its practical effect in relation to the kingdom of God. Faithfulness to unfaithfulness and failure."
- **Consequences and Mercy:** Konkel emphasizes that the Chronicler is not simply presenting a system of retribution, but rather a depiction of God's justice *and* mercy. Consequences for unfaithfulness are inevitable, but God's mercy is always available to those who humble themselves.
- "But I don't think that the chronicler wants us to see it that way at all. He wants us to see God's mercy. He also wants us to see God's justice. And in seeing God's justice, we need to know that there are consequences for unfaithfulness. That's just inevitable. Those consequences are going to come. But those consequences do not need to be determinative. And even if you're in such a low status, Manasseh, God's mercy is still available."

4. Study Guide: Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 24, Reversals of Fortune

Chronicles: Reversals of Fortune - A Study Guide

I. Key Concepts and Themes

- **The Chronicler's Purpose:** Understand the unique perspective of the Chronicler compared to the books of Kings. How does the Chronicler selectively present history to emphasize specific theological points?
- **2 Chronicles 7:14:** Analyze the significance of this verse within the context of Chronicles. What does it reveal about the relationship between God and his people? How is it exemplified in the lives of various kings?
- **Humility (Kahah):** Define humility as it is presented in Chronicles. How is humility connected to faithfulness and God's mercy? How does pride lead to unfaithfulness?
- **Reversals of Fortune:** Examine how the fortunes of kings and the nation fluctuate based on their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God. What factors contribute to these reversals?
- **Manasseh's Story:** Analyze the Chronicler's portrayal of Manasseh. How does it differ from the account in Kings? What is the significance of Manasseh's captivity and repentance?
- **Josiah's Reign:** Explore the highs and lows of Josiah's reign. What were his accomplishments, and what ultimately led to his downfall? How does his story illustrate the complexities of faithfulness and the consequences of disobedience?
- **The Significance of the Temple:** How does the Chronicler show the central importance of the temple in worship and obedience to God?
- **The Covenant and Passover:** What is the significance of the covenant, the renewal of the covenant oaths, and the Passover celebrations?

II. Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. How does the Chronicler portray Hezekiah, and what verse is key to understanding this portrayal?

2. What does the word "kanah" mean, and how is it significant in Chronicles?
3. How does the Chronicler's account of Manasseh differ from the account in Kings?
4. What led to Manasseh's captivity, and how did he respond to it?
5. What event triggered Josiah's reforms, and what were some of the key aspects of those reforms?
6. Who was Huldah, and why was she significant?
7. What was the significance of renewing the covenant?
8. What is Passover a celebration of?
9. What led to Josiah's downfall?
10. How does the story of Jeremiah reflect the reign of Josiah?

Answer Key

1. The Chronicler portrays Hezekiah as a second Solomon, emphasizing his establishment of temple worship. 2 Chronicles 7:14 is key because it highlights the importance of humility, prayer, and seeking God's face for healing.
2. "Kananah" means "to humble yourself." It is significant because the Chronicler highlights it as a mark of faithfulness and a prerequisite for receiving God's mercy.
3. Unlike Kings, which portrays Manasseh as universally evil, the Chronicler includes an account of Manasseh's captivity, repentance, and subsequent restoration, highlighting God's mercy.
4. Manasseh was likely taken captive to Babylon for joining a revolt against the Assyrians. In captivity, he humbled himself before God and sought forgiveness.
5. The discovery of the Book of the Law in the temple triggered Josiah's reforms. Key aspects included cleansing the temple, renewing the covenant, and celebrating the Passover.
6. Huldah was a woman prophet consulted by Josiah and his officials after the discovery of the Book of the Law. She was significant because she provided insight into God's message and the consequences of their failure.
7. Renewing the covenant established a full loyalty to God and a relationship with the life-giver. It enabled the people to represent God and to receive the life that comes from Him.

8. Passover is a celebration of redemption. It is a celebration of how God has created his people to be the ones through whom his salvation and redemption are going to come.
9. Josiah was killed when he intervened in a battle between Egypt and Assyria at Megiddo. The reason for his intervention was his plan to take control of the northern territory that had been dominated by the Assyrians.
10. Jeremiah was present during both the high point of Josiah's reign and the subsequent downfall of the kingdom. His journey from hope to despair mirrors the nation's shift from faithfulness to unfaithfulness and failure.

III. Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the Chronicler's portrayal of kings with the portrayal in the books of Kings. What are the Chronicler's main objectives in highlighting certain aspects of their reigns?
2. Analyze the significance of 2 Chronicles 7:14 in understanding the Chronicler's theology. How does this verse function as a lens through which the Chronicler interprets the history of Judah's kings?
3. Discuss the theme of "reversals of fortune" in Chronicles. How do the stories of Manasseh and Josiah exemplify this theme, and what theological lessons can be drawn from their experiences?
4. How does the Chronicler emphasize the importance of temple worship and the covenant relationship in maintaining faithfulness to God? Use specific examples from the text to support your argument.
5. Evaluate the Chronicler's overall purpose in writing Chronicles. What message was the Chronicler trying to convey to his audience, and how does he achieve this through his selective presentation of history?

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Chronicler:** The author of the books of Chronicles, who presents a specific theological interpretation of Israel's history.
- **2 Chronicles 7:14:** A key verse in Chronicles that emphasizes the importance of humility, prayer, and seeking God's face for healing.
- **Kanah (Humility):** A central concept in Chronicles, representing a necessary condition for faithfulness and receiving God's mercy.
- **Manasseh:** A king of Judah whose reign is portrayed differently in Chronicles compared to Kings.
- **Josiah:** A king of Judah known for his religious reforms and renewal of the covenant.
- **Huldah:** A woman prophet who provided insight into God's message and the consequences of disobedience.
- **Temple:** The central place of worship in Jerusalem, emphasized by the Chronicler as a symbol of God's presence and covenant with his people.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between God and his people, requiring loyalty and obedience.
- **Passover:** A Jewish festival commemorating the exodus from Egypt, celebrated as a symbol of redemption.
- **Reversals of Fortune:** The fluctuating fortunes of kings and the nation, depending on their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God.

5. FAQs on Konkel, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Session 24, Reversals of Fortune, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions About Reversals of Fortune in Chronicles

Here are some frequently asked questions about the Book of Chronicles, focusing on the theme of reversals of fortune as discussed by Dr. August Konkel.

- **What is the significance of 2 Chronicles 7:14 in understanding the Chronicler's message?**
- 2 Chronicles 7:14, where God tells Solomon that if His people humble themselves, pray, and seek His face, He will heal their land, is a key verse for the Chronicler. These elements (humility, prayer, and seeking God's face) become recurring themes used to evaluate the kings of Judah. The presence or absence of these qualities determines whether they experience blessing or judgment, directly impacting the nation's fortunes.
- **How does the Chronicler's portrayal of Hezekiah differ from that in the Book of Kings, and what is the Chronicler's purpose in this difference?**
- The Chronicler condenses the accounts of Hezekiah found in Kings, focusing primarily on Hezekiah's efforts to establish temple worship. While acknowledging events like Hezekiah's illness and the Babylonian visit, the Chronicler emphasizes Hezekiah's humility and faithfulness in restoring temple worship and celebrating the Passover. This selective focus serves to highlight Hezekiah as a second Solomon, emphasizing the importance of proper worship and covenant faithfulness. The Chronicler's point is that even though Hezekiah failed at times, he remained faithful.
- **What does the Chronicler mean by "reversals of fortune," and how does this concept relate to the kings of Judah?**
- "Reversals of fortune" refers to the shifts between periods of blessing and prosperity and periods of judgment and hardship experienced by the kings of Judah and, consequently, the nation. These reversals are directly tied to the kings' faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God, as described in 2 Chronicles 7:14. Obeying the covenant led to positive outcomes, while disobedience led to negative consequences, including exile.

- **How does the Chronicler's depiction of Manasseh contrast with the account in the Book of Kings? Why does the Chronicler include details not found in Kings?**
- In Kings, Manasseh is portrayed as an irredeemably evil king whose sins made the exile inevitable. However, the Chronicler adds the detail of Manasseh's captivity in Babylon and his subsequent humbling and repentance. This addition demonstrates God's mercy, even to those who have committed great sins. After his humbling, God grants him a restoration. The Chronicler portrays that Manasseh restored fortifications, restored temple worship, and removed cult worship, emphasizing that repentance and humility can lead to restoration, regardless of past transgressions.
- **What is the significance of Manasseh's captivity and humbling in the context of the Chronicler's message?**
- Manasseh's captivity in Babylon and subsequent humbling is a crucial example of the Chronicler's emphasis on God's mercy and the possibility of repentance. It demonstrates that even the most wicked individuals can find redemption through humility and turning back to God. This episode challenges a simple retributive view and highlights the transformative power of genuine repentance.
- **How does the Chronicler portray Josiah, and what ultimately leads to the reversal of fortune during his reign?**
- The Chronicler portrays Josiah as a righteous king who initiates significant religious reforms, including cleansing the temple, rediscovering the Book of the Law, and renewing the covenant. He is presented as leading the people in the right direction, culminating in a great Passover celebration. However, Josiah's reign takes a tragic turn when he is killed in battle against the Egyptians. This is portrayed as a result of his political ambition to regain control over territory previously dominated by the Assyrians, signaling a return to unfaithfulness and ultimately leading to the demise of the kingdom.

- **What role does the prophet Jeremiah play in understanding the "reversal of fortune" during and after Josiah's reign?**
- Jeremiah's prophetic ministry provides a parallel narrative to the political and religious events of Josiah's reign and its aftermath. He witnesses both the high point of covenant renewal under Josiah and the subsequent decline and judgment leading to exile. Jeremiah's transformation from a participant in the great celebration to a "weeping prophet" reflects the reversal of fortune experienced by the nation, emphasizing the consequences of unfaithfulness and the inevitability of God's judgment.
- **What is the Chronicler's ultimate message, even in light of the humiliation and exile of Judah?**
- Despite depicting the humiliation and exile of Judah, the Chronicler does not conclude with despair. Instead, he leaves the future open, suggesting that the kingdom of God is not over. This open ending implies that there is still hope for restoration and that God's purposes for His people will ultimately prevail. The Chronicler emphasizes that even in the darkest of times, God's mercy and faithfulness remain available to those who humble themselves and seek Him.