The Bible and Bread

Context, Themes, and Word Study

2 Chronicles 7:11-22

2026 Week 13

1st and 2nd Chronicles ~ *Introduction by Eugene Peterson*

The narrative backbone of Chronicles is worship—the place of worship (the Jerusalem Temple), the ministers of worship (the priests and Levites), the musical components of worship (both vocal and instrumental), and the authoritative role of King David, the master of worship. We see that nothing takes precedence over worship in nurturing and protecting our identity as the People of God.

The People of God are not primarily a political entity or a military force or an economic power; they are a holy congregation diligent in worship. To lose touch with the Davidic (and Moses-based) life of worship would be to disintegrate as a holy people. To be seduced by the popular pagan worship of surrounding cultures would be to be obliterated as a holy people.

Christians have characteristically read and prayed themselves into Chronicles in order to stay alert to the irreducibly personal in all matters of faith and practice, and to maintain a critical awareness that the worship of God is the indispensable foundation for living whole and redeemed lives.

1st and 2nd Chronicles ~ *Wesley Study Bible Introduction*

John Wesley Describes the contents of 2 Chronicles (2 Chr) as follows: "This book begins with the reign of Solomon, continues the history of the kings of Judah to the captivity, and concludes with the fall of that illustrious monarchy and the destruction of the temple" (*Notes*, 2 Chr par. 1). 2 Chr continues the story from 1 Chr, which ends with David preparing properties and personnel for the operation of the temple in Jerusalem. David and the elders of Israel passed this kingdom to Solomon, who takes the rule from David (1 Chr 29:22b-23). God prohibits David from building the temple because of David's involvement in bloodshed(see 1 Chr 22:8)... For the chronicler, David, even as faithful as the chronicler paints him, does not represent the ideal: Solomon does. He is the Davidic king who rules over God's kingdom in peace, with the temple operating in worship for economic distribution to all Israel.

Wesley Study Bible *Introduction continued…*

2 Chr tells the story of the establishment of the ideal (chs. 1-9) and the falling away from this ideal, witnessed in violence through the fragmentation of Israel due to pride and idolatry (chs. 10-12). The story of the Davidic kings follows. These reigns stagger toward and away from the reestablishment of the ideal form seen in Solomon, actualized momentarily in Jehoshaphat (see 20:30) and especially Hezekiah (see 32:23). Josiah's reign witnesses to a brief final move toward the ideal but ends in violence from disobedience to a divine oracle (see 35:20-27). God disappears from the story of Israel at this point; destruction and exile quickly come upon Judah and Jerusalem. The future seems empty, God's promise to David vain, annulled by Judah's disobedience. Yet God's future still stands. The book ends when Cyrus, the King of Persia, orders the Judeans to return to the land. In the face of utter loss, 2 Chr ends with a call into God's future. The book speaks of an implicit hope for the coming of a descendant from the house of David, a family still alive at the time of the composition of the book (see 1 Chr3:1-23). The book looks to a descendant of David to reign eternally over God's kingdom in peace. In the form foreshadowed in 2 Chr, Christians see the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

1st and 2nd Chronicles ~ *The New Interpreter's Bible, Volume III Introduction 1 & 2 Chronicles*

The books of Chronicles are the Bible's best kept secret. Pastors who base their preaching on the *Revised Common Lectionary* will find Chronicles absent from its readings… the first nine chapters of genealogies are like lions guarding the gates, driving away the faint hearted from the treasures inside. S. DeVries has testified: "I regard Chronicles as one of the richest mines of spirituality in all scripture." The assessment of an earlier commentator may be added: "Chronicles is one of the most stimulating books in the Bible, courageous and practical - a splendid achievement."
~ **NIB**, Vol. III, p. 299

The second part of the Persian period of Judean history was 450 to 332 BCE. The Chronicles were written seemingly in the first half of the fourth century BCE.

Emphasis on exile and restoration as both historical fact and metaphor that providentially relates the overall success or failure of the community to its spiritual relationship to the Lord.

~ **NIB**, Vol. III, pp. 300-301

A constant issue in the teaching of Chronicles is the inclusiveness of the people of God. In this respect the work stands at a remarkable distance from Ezra and Nehemiah, who at an earlier period advocated a separatist community made up of Judeans who had returned from exile. Doubtless the chronicler judged that the time was ripe for a less rigorous policy, now that the community was more established. His insistence on the spiritual potential of a wider religious community made up of "all Israel" is integrated with his presentation of the united kingdom of David and Solomon, and that insistence is reaffirmed under the reunited kingdom of Hezekiah. In the genealogical prologue, it is under undergirded by appeals to the traditions of the twelve tribes in the wilderness period, attested by the Torah, and affirmed in the settlement of the promised land.

~ **NIB**, Vol. III, pp. 305-306

Chronicles is inspirational literature, and so an exegetical and hermeneutical commentary has the duty to convey with warmth the inspirational message. The chronicler had a pastor's heart and a teacher's mind, and his concern for his constituency surfaces throughout… [One] must also note and discuss as necessary our own distance, real or perceived, from the chronicler.

~ **NIB**, Vol. III, pp. 308

THE CHRONICLES

A STORY IN SEARCH OF AN ENDING

SAMUEL

KINGS

REPEAT CONTENT

THE CHRONICLES

WAIT... I JUST READ ALL OF THIS!

TRADITIONAL JEWISH ORDER of the BIBLE

RUTH | LAMENTATIONS | ECCLESIASTES | ESTHER | DANIEL | EZRA-NEHEMIAH | CHRONICLES

SUMMARIZES ALL OF JEWISH SCRIPTURE:

FIRST WORD: "ADAM"

LAST PARAGRAPH: THE RETURN of ISRAEL from EXILE

CHRONICLES

(CENTURIES AFTER THE RETURN FROM EXILE)

STORIES ABOUT THE PAST THAT PROVIDE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

1 THE COMING MESSIAH

2 THE FUTURE OF THE TEMPLE

ALL NATIONS

PROPHETIC HOPES

SECOND TEMPLE (see EZRA-NEHEMIAH)

JERUSALEM

1ST CHRONICLES

1-9 GENEALOGIES!

OBED, ZERUIAH, Abishai, AZARIAH, ZIMRI, PEREZ, ELIAB, HAMUL, JESHER, BOAZ, ZERAH, HEZRON, ISHI, NADAB, CALCOL, SHAAPH, CHELUBAI, JORKEAM, JERAHMEEL, JERIOTH, SEGUB, JOAB, NAHSHON, SHIMEA, EPHRATH, KIRIATH-JEARIM, EPHLAL, ZAZA, OZEM, Nethanel, SALMA

BORING! (...but really important)

SUMMARIZING the STORYLINE by NAMING KEY CHARACTERS

EMPHASIZING:

JUDAH PEREZ HEZRON etc. — DAVID — THE MESSIANIC KING

AARON ELEAZAR PHINEHAS etc. — THE PRIESTHOOD

10-29 STORIES ABOUT DAVID

LEFT OUT

NEGATIVE STORIES of DAVID

PERSECUTION BY SAUL

ADULTERY & MURDER

NEW MATERIAL

POSITIVE STORIES of DAVID

22-29 PREPARATIONS for the TEMPLE

28:11-19 DAVID COMPARED TO MOSES — PLANS FOR THE TEMPLE (SEE EXODUS 25:9)

Q: WHY THIS NEW MATERIAL?

17 GOD'S COVENANT PROMISE (COMPARE TO 2 SAMUEL 7)

DAVID SOLOMON "A NEW DAVID"

A: TO PORTRAY DAVID AS AN IMAGE OF THE FUTURE MESSIANIC KING.

2ND CHRONICLES

1-36 KINGS IN JERUSALEM

LEFT OUT

KINGS OF NORTHERN ISRAEL

CHARACTER STUDIES

SO LATER GENERATIONS WILL LEARN TO BECOME FAITHFUL TO GOD & THE TORAH

NEW MATERIAL

OBEDIENT KINGS — SUCCESS & BLESSING

UNFAITHFUL KINGS — FAILURE & HARDSHIP

THE END?

Incomplete Sentence!

CYRUS

WHOEVER THERE IS AMONG YOU OF ALL HIS PEOPLE, MAY THE LORD HIS GOD BE WITH HIM, AND LET HIM GO UP... (36:23)

2 Chronicles 7:11-22 *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house; all that Solomon had planned to do in the house of the Lord and in his own house he successfully accomplished.

12 Then the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain or command the locust to devour the land or send pestilence among my people, 14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15 Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and consecrated this house so that my name may be there forever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time. 17 As for you, if you walk before me as your father David walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, 18 then I will establish your royal throne, as I made a covenant with your father David saying, 'You shall never lack a successor to rule over Israel.'

19 "But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you and go and serve other gods and worship them, 20 then I will pluck you up from the land that I have given you, and this house, which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 21 And regarding this house, now exalted, everyone passing by will be astonished and say, 'Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this house?' 22 Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned the Lord the God of their ancestors who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they embraced other gods and worshiped them and served them; therefore he has brought all this calamity upon them.' "

2 Chronicles 7:11-22 *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

What is “the house of the Lord”? ~ v. 11

What is the “house of sacrifice”? ~ v. 12

Who are “my people”? ~ vs. 13 & 14

What is meant by “wicked ways, sin, and land”? ~ v. 14

What is the “covenant”? ~ v. 18

What are the commands, statutes, and ordinances? ~ vs. 17 & 19

What gods were embraced, worshiped, and served? ~ v. 22

How does this translate if read through a Gospel lens?

Exodus 20:2-6 *NRSVUE*

2 “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of
slavery; 3 you shall have no other gods before me.
4 “You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven
above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow
down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for
the iniquity of parents to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me 6 but
showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my
commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:6-10 *NRSVUE*

6 “ ‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of
slavery; 7 you shall have no other gods before me.
8 “ ‘You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven
above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. 9 You shall not bow
down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for
the iniquity of parents to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me 10 but showing
steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my
commandments.

Lexical Summary Strongs Hebrew 6459
https://biblehub.com/hebrew/6459.htm

pesel: Idol, graven image
Original Word: פֶּסֶל Part of Speech: Noun Masculine Transliteration: pecel

Pronunciation: PEH-sel Phonetic Spelling: (peh'-sel)
KJV: carved (graven) image NASB: graven image, idol, idols, carved image, graven images, image

Word Origin: [from H6458 (- פָּסַל cut)]
1. an idol

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
carved graven image From pacal; an idol -- carved (graven) image.see HEBREW pacal

NAS Exhaustive Concordance
Word Origin from pasal Definition an idol, image

NASB Translation
carved image (2), graven image (14), graven images (1), idol (10), idols (3), image (1).

Meaning and Scope Hebrew 6459

פֶּסֶל refers to a manufactured, carved image set up for religious veneration. Scripture never treats the word neutrally; every occurrence frames the object as a rival to the living God. Whether fashioned from wood, stone, or precious metal, a פֶּסֶל represents humanity's attempt to localize, manipulate, or replace divine presence.

Theological Themes

1. Exclusivity of Worship

פֶּסֶלviolates the first and second commandments simultaneously, dethroning God and distorting His image.

2. Creator–creature Distinction

Worship of a man-made object reverses the rightful order, placing human artifice in God's place.

3. Spiritual Adultery

Idolatry is consistently portrayed as unfaithfulness within a covenant marriage (Jeremiah 3:6–10; Hosea 2:1–13).

Ministry and Discipleship Applications Hebrew 6459

• Guard the Heart: Modern believers may not bow to wooden statues, yet anything—career, pleasure, technology—can become a functional פֶּסֶל when it receives ultimate trust or affection.
• Word-Centered Worship: God chooses to reveal Himself primarily through inspired Scripture and incarnate Word, not visible likenesses (John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 4:4–6).
• Community Accountability: As Micah's account warns, private idolatry often metastasizes into corporate sin; churches must lovingly confront visible and hidden idols.

Christological and Eschatological Outlook

Jesus Christ, "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), renders carved images obsolete. In the New Jerusalem, nothing unclean "nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood" will enter (Revelation 21:27). The age-long struggle against פֶּסֶל ends in the unmediated vision of God's glory.

2 Chronicles 7:14 Isn't About American Politics ~ *Russell Moore*, January 14, 2016, https://www.russellmoore.com/2016/01/14/2-chronicles-714-isnt-about-american-politics/

Sometime around the Fourth of July or Memorial Day, you might see a sign advertising a "God and country" rally or prayer breakfast. I can almost guarantee that, if you attend, you will hear, at least once, 2 Chronicles 7:14. For those of you who don't know it, this passage reads: "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will heal their land."

Often, the way this verse will be preached in many evangelical pulpits is as a rallying cry. In so many sermons, the "people" referred to in the passage are the American people, and the "land" is the American land. The meaning of the text is understood as an invitation to 21st century America to "return to God" and then enjoy God's blessing once again. It's no wonder one scholar said that 2 Chronicles 7:14 is "the John 3:16 of the American civil religion."

If nothing else, the question must be asked of this kind of sermon: Where should we "take America back" to? Do you mean back to the era of the Founders, or back to the 1950s, or 1980s? When, exactly, in America's blip of an existence did everything fall apart?

But the fact is 2 Chronicles 7:14 isn't talking about America or national identity or some generic sense of "revival." To apply the verse this way is, whatever one's political ideology, theological liberalism.

This verse is a word written to a specific people–the people of God–who were coming home from exile. They were coming home from a time in which they were dominated and enslaved by a foreign power. At a time when they needed to be reminded of who they were, who God was and what he had promised to do, this passage was given to them to point them back to Solomon's reign, reminding them of what Solomon did when he built the temple, the house of the Lord, the place of the gathering of the worship of God.

After all, it seemed as though the house of David was gone. It seemed as though even after a new temple was built, it wasn't the "real" temple, because it's not what it was before. The questions that God's people were asking at this point were, "Where is God? What is our future as the people of God?"

When God said to them, "If my people who are called by name," he was specifically pointing them back to the covenant that he made with their forefather Abraham. At a specific point in their history, God had told Abraham about his descendants, saying "I will be their God" and "They will be my people." That's what "My people" means. God reminded a people who had been exiled, enslaved, and defeated that a rebuilt temple or a displaced nation cannot change who they were. They were God's people, and would see the future God has for them.

If we don't understand the question of who we are, first and foremost, as the people of God, then we are going to miss this. If we take this text and bypass the people of God, applying it to America in general or the Bible Belt in particular, as though our citizenship as Americans or Australians or Albanians is the foundation of the "covenant" God has made with us, the problem is not just that we are misinterpreting the text; the problem is that we are missing Christ.

When we apply texts like this to the nation, apart from the story of Scripture, we do precisely what the prosperity gospel preachers do. The prosperity gospel teachers are drawn, after all, to passages from Deuteronomy and elsewhere promising material and physical blessing for those who are obedient, and material and physical curses for those who are disobedient. The message is that those who obey God's word will abound with money and health, while those who disobey will face poverty and illness. They misuse the word of God though, by abstracting the promises of God from Jesus Christ. He is the one who, obedient to God, receives God's blessing and he is the One who, bearing the sins of the people, receives God's curse (Gal. 3). To apply these to the people directly, bypassing Christ, is to preach a false gospel of approaching God apart from a Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). A prosperity gospel applied to a nation is no more biblical than a prosperity gospel applied to a person.

But the temptation to apply 2 Chronicles to the nation rather than to the church persists, for the same reasons that some insist on applying Genesis 12:3 ("I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will dishonor") to foreign policy rather than to where the Bible applies it: to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:7-14). This happens because the first question of culture is one of identity, who are we and where do we fit in the broader culture. We too often see America as somehow more "real" than the kingdom, and our country as more important than the church. But 2 Chronicles 7:14 itself starts with the question of identity: "If my people…called by my name…" This, or any other country, is not called by the name of God. The kingdom of God, on the other hand, is (Isa. 62:3-5).

If that is true, then let's crucify our generic civil religions and our discount-rate prosperity gospels and hear behind all of them the gentle lowing of golden calves, and let's instead define ourselves not by the generic god of American values. We do not serve that god. We serve the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God and Father of Jesus Christ. The promises that he has made will outlast Mount Rushmore. He is the one who tells us who we are and tells us where we are going, because he's promised us, in the short term, a cross on our backs, and in the long term, a crown of life.