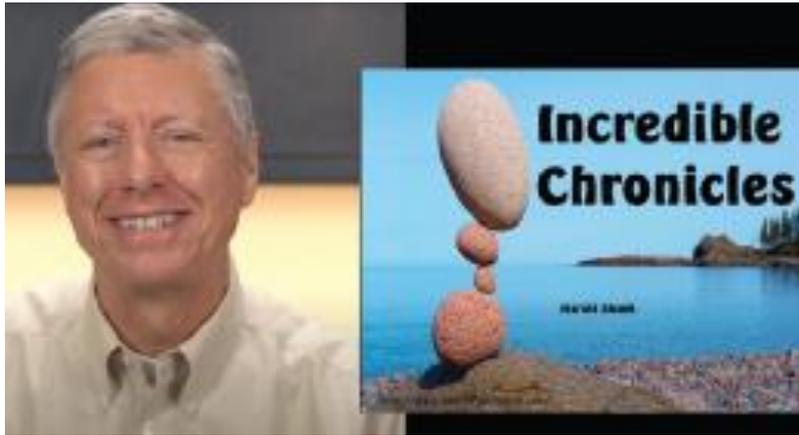


Discussion Guide

Incredible Chronicles



A series of 8 video sermons on
1 & 2 Chronicles
prepared and delivered by Harold Shank

Sermon series commissioned by and for
Belmore Road Church of Christ
Melbourne, Australia
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Contents

1.	Introduction to <i>Incredible Chronicles</i>	3
	• Overview of video sermon series	
	• Using this <i>Discussion Guide</i>	
	• Profile of Harold Shank	
2.	Brief Background to 1 & 2 Chronicles	4
3.	Sermon 1: An Incredible Man: David - 1 Chronicles 17	5
4.	Sermon 2: An Incredible Verse - 2 Chronicles 7:14	6
5.	Sermon 3: An Incredible Story of War and Worship - 2 Chronicles 20	7
6.	Sermon 4: An Incredible God - 2 Chronicles 21	8
7.	Sermon 5: Of One the Lord Has Made the Race - 1 Chronicles 1	9
8.	Sermon 6: Portraits from the Past - 1 Chronicles 1-9	10
9.	Sermon 7: Magical Moments of Mercy - 2 Chronicles 28	11
10.	Sermon 8: Everybody Needs a Micah - 2 Chronicles 29-30	12

1

Introduction to *Incredible Chronicles*

Overview of video sermon series

This series of 8 video sermons prepared and delivered by Harold Shank aims not only to deepen our knowledge of Scripture but to bring us closer to God. The sermons look at God's presence in our lives. They help us reflect on biblical principles and theological truths that demonstrate God's sovereignty among His people. Moreover, we see God's desire to restore His people back into fellowship with Him. Harold also recounts true stories and testimonies which help us draw us even closer to God in the process.

Using this *Discussion Guide*

This *Discussion Guide* can be used for personal reflection as well as by a facilitator for group discussion. The *Guide* can facilitate deeper reflection and discussion of Scripture, raise additional questions about the sermon content, and draw out application as to how we can live out our life as Christians today. The *Guide* often uses open-ended questions. It also seeks to balance doctrinal questions with personal questions. The overall goal is to help users to dig deeper and discover truths about God through His word, and what this can mean for us today.

Profile of Harold Shank



Harold graduated from Oklahoma Christian College with a BA in Bible. He received his MA and MAR from Harding University Graduate School of Religion (now Harding School of Theology). His PhD in Theology is from Marquette University.

Harold has preached the Gospel for over 50 years. He has served as president of Ohio Valley University in Vienna, West Virginia; professor at Harding School of Theology and Oklahoma Christian University; and for 32 years he was associated with the Highland Street Church of Christ in Memphis, TN. In the latter role he led in church planting and developing ministries among the poor.

Among the books Harold has authored are: *Truth for Today Commentary: Judges and Ruth* (Searcy, AR: Resource Publications, 2021); *Listen and Make Room: Joining God in Welcoming Children* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 2020); *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Searcy, AR: Resource Publications, 2018); *GodWorks: Joining Jesus on the Journey* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 2016); and *Listening to His Heartbeat: What the Bible Says about the Heart of God* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009).

Currently, Harold works as a consultant with faith-based organisations. He provides services including writing Bible study material, offering support for those working with troubled children and families, and helping Christian leaders around the globe to obtain advanced educational degrees in the US. Harold and his wife Sally, have two sons and are grandparents. Harold and Sally are members of Memorial Road Church of Christ in Edmond, Oklahoma, where he serves as an elder.

2

Brief Background to 1 & 2 Chronicles

In the original Hebrew Bible, 1 & 2 Chronicles are not separate books but constitute one book. Due to its length, the book was divided into two. However, it was originally written as one book with one coherent storyline. In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles is the last book of the Old Testament. It offers an overview of the biblical story from Adam to Israel's return from exile during the post-exilic period.

The post-exilic period is key to helping us understand the context of Chronicles. Harold explains this clearly in sermon 5 of the series. To summarise, the Israelites of this period were living in a time of poverty, isolation, powerlessness, and lack of influence. In other words, they were nameless with no king to lead them. Their traditions had been changed and taken away from them during the exile. Thus, substantial segments of the Israelites were influenced by Persian culture and worldview. In this way, much of Israel's tradition and identity was taken away from them. In that era of great change, the Israelites were searching for their identity.

The author of Chronicles is not known for certain. Some scholars believe that Ezra was the author. In any case, traditionally the author has been called "the Chronicler." The author could have been a priest or Levite who was employed in temple service during the Persian era from 539-322 B.C. The Chronicler might have had scribal training and access to temple records. It is also likely that the Chronicler had in-depth knowledge of significant Old Testament names and events.

As the last book in the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles summarises the covenant, continuing relationship, and restoration of fellowship between God and Israel. The structure of Chronicles invites the reader to discover significant stories and historical events that feature in the Old Testament. Biblical accounts about David, Solomon, God's temple, the kings of Judah, and how they all work together. Chronicles is also an excellent historical reference for other parts of the Old Testament.

According to Harold Shank, Chronicles offers an overview of Old Testament history from Adam to the post-exilic period. However, Chronicles does not provide a detailed history; instead, the Chronicler focuses on Scripture, events, and people that give contemporary readers some guidance and direction for our lives today.

The central message Chronicles revolves around a messianic king who would emerge from the lineage of King David. Genealogy is thus key to helping us understand that the covenants made by God through Abraham and David are seen through these names. They are considered important because they are all part of God's redemptive history.

3

Sermon 1 An Incredible Man: David – 1 Chronicles 17

Discussion Questions

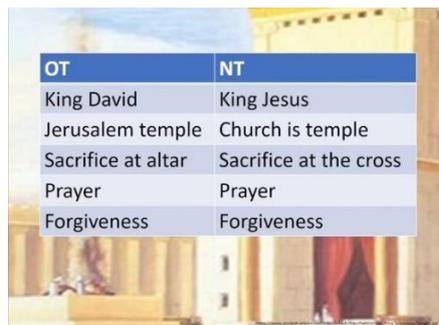
1. Harold shares true stories about people like Ellen and E.H. Ijams who faced rejection. Why do you think everyone goes through rejection at some stage in their lives?
2. Can you recall a time when you were rejected? What happened and how did you respond?
3. Harold mentions that each person responds differently to rejection and other crises of life. Based on what you know about King David, explain how he faced the crises and rejections in his life? How did he respond to these challenges?
4. Among the three qualities Harold describes about David, what quality of David strikes you most? Why?
5. In one sense, Chronicles is about legacy and the passing on of values to the next generation. Read Deuteronomy 6 for a better understanding of what God says about passing on values to the next generation. How important is it to pass on solid Christian values? Why do you think many people pass on valuables but not values?
6. Besides the three qualities mentioned by Harold about David, what other qualities can you see about David that made him a person to admire?

4

Sermon 2 An Incredible Verse: 2 Chronicles 7:14

Discussion Questions

1. Do you have a difficult time forgiving others? Why or why not?
2. Harold describes the Jerusalem Temple in 2 Chronicles along with its features. Why was the concept of a temple so important during this period?
3. Harold illustrates a clear parallel between the Old Testament and New Testament. If you can compare the sacrifice on the Temple altar vs the sacrifice at the Cross, why is the sacrifice at the Cross more special than the one on the Temple altar? (See Hebrews 10:4) What other similarities and differences do you see?



OT	NT
King David	King Jesus
Jerusalem temple	Church is temple
Sacrifice at altar	Sacrifice at the cross
Prayer	Prayer
Forgiveness	Forgiveness

4. Read and reflect on the prayer for forgiveness in seven different situations as outlined in 2 Chronicles 6:22-39. Among the seven, which one strikes you the most and why?



Prayer about Forgiveness

1. The case of a sin against a neighbor (6:22, 23)
2. The case of Israel's sin leading to defeat (6:24, 25)
3. The case of sin leading to drought (6:26, 27)
4. The case of sin leading to 9 miseries (6:28-31)
5. The case of a request from a foreigner (6:32, 33)
6. The case of God supporting Israel in war (6:34, 35)
7. The case of Israel's sin leading to captivity (6:36-39)

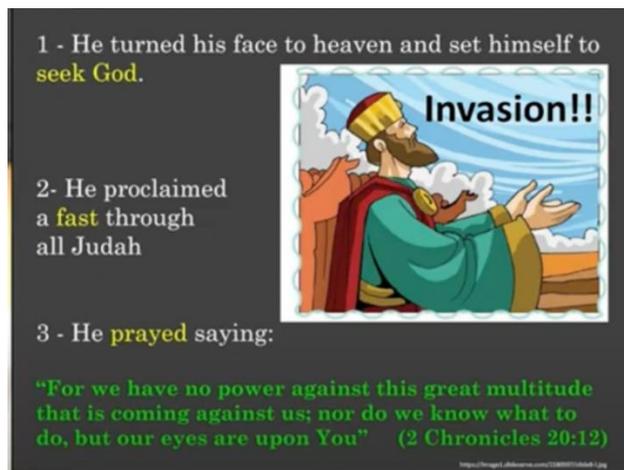
5. Reflect on 2 Chronicles 7:14 and God's requests. How can this verse apply to us today?

5

Sermon 3 An Incredible Story of War and Worship: 2 Chronicles 20

Discussion Questions

1. Read and reflect on King Jehoshaphat's prayer in 2 Chronicles 20:6 – 7:12. What does this text tell us about Jehoshaphat's character, faith in God, and response to the crisis?



2. Harold mentions several examples of how the crises of life test our faith. In what ways have challenges in your life tested your faith?
3. Which other characters in the Bible can you think of responded to a crisis by seeking God and praying? How do they encourage you to face life with hope and faith, and to respond to future crises in your life?
4. During and after the Covid-19 pandemic, many people suffered tragedies. Harold mentions that people turn to God in tragedies. How do you think challenges in your own life have helped you turn to God?
5. According to Harold, worship can be viewed as a commitment to trust God in an emergency. What other accounts in the Bible can you think of which demonstrate this biblical truth?

6

Sermon 4 An Incredible God: 1 Chronicles 21

Discussion Questions

1. What is your understanding of God's nature and character?
2. Harold mentions that we often put our trust in our leaders to solve the problems that we face. How can we reshape our thinking to put our trust in God in order to help solve problems that we face in our country, community, and family?
3. We all face our own "monsters." It could be people who resist Jesus, unhealthy relationships, physical ailments, or unethical business deals. Now that we know that an "Incredible God" is with us, how does that help us face our monsters in future?
4. Read and reflect on David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:11. How can this prayer give you a better understanding of the true nature and character of God?
5. Since God does not give up on us, what motivates you to continue fighting against your own monsters? Why should we not give up?

7

Sermon 5 Of One the Lord Has Made the Race: 1 Chronicles 1

Discussion Questions

1. In this sermon, Harold mentions the idea of being invisible or insignificant. Was there a time in your life you felt unimportant? What was that like?
2. Chronicles was written in the post-exilic period of Israel's history. It was a time of change, insecurity, and traditions being challenged. Think of your own situation. How important are your traditions to you? How do you respond when your traditions are changed, challenged, or taken away?
3. 1 Chronicles 1-8 records various genealogies. What benefits could flow to the post-exilic Israelites from knowing names? How can genealogies benefit us today?
4. Harold mentions how Steve & Beth from his church are hosting and helping a refugee who has lost his family, his home, and his dreams, and must now start all over again in a strange country among a strange people. What do you think motivates Steve & Beth to go out of their way to help the refugee?
5. At the beginning of the sermon, Harold tells the story of J. M. McCaleb (1861-1953), a Church of Christ missionary who taught the Gospel in Japan for more than 50 years. McCaleb was asked to leave Tokyo in 1941, before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. What is the significance of McCaleb not putting up a Japanese or American flag at his Tokyo home? What is the significance of the lyrics of his most famous song, *The Gospel is For All*? [The opening lines are: "Of one the Lord has made the race..."]



John Moody McCaleb
(1861-1953)



The McCaleb house
around 1907.



The McCaleb house today,
known as the Zoshigaya
Missionary Museum, in
Zoshigaya, Tokyo.

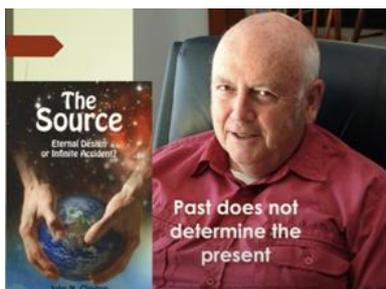
8

Sermon 6 Portraits from the Past: 1 Chronicles 1-9

1. In this sermon, Harold mentions that “every name represents a unique person.” There are almost 3,000 names mentioned in the Bible. How important are names to you? Does your name represent or mean something?
2. Harold also reads a statement about “Our World is in Trouble” by Mallika Dutt, an international activist. Among other things, Dutt refers to societies, institutions, political leaders, and philosophy. In contrast, Harold points out that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is about people and their God. What point(s) is Harold making here?



3. According to Harold, the past does not always determine the present. God uses people from all walks of life like David, Er, and others. These individuals had pasts which were not perfect. Yet they were used by God to demonstrate His glory. What other individuals in Chronicles have life stories which support Harold’s assertion that the past does not always determine the present?
4. Think of other individuals you have come across who had a dark past and yet became followers of Christ. What lessons can you draw from them?
5. Near the end of this sermon, Harold shares a story about his friend John Clayton, who was an atheist. Despite John’s attempt to write a book which can discredit God’s Word, his writing pad showed little. What can this tell us about the nature of God’s Word?

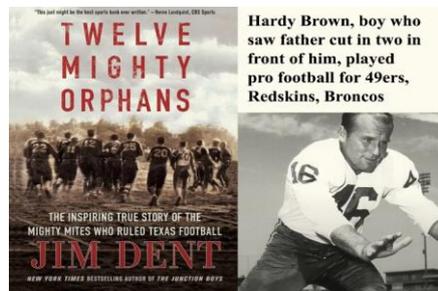


9

Sermon 7 Magical Moments of Mercy: 2 Chronicles 28

Discussion Questions

1. In this sermon, Harold says that misery is a common experience. What is your conception of misery? Share a time in your life where you experienced misery.
2. Harold also mentions tragic stories of people like Terry, Russel, Rusty, and Hardy who all went through some form of misery, pain, sorrow, and brokenness. Do you know anyone in your life who went through misery? How did they respond, and what happened to them afterward?



3. In 2 Chronicles 28, there were battles between three ancient nations: Aram, Israel, and Judah. About 120,000 Judeans were killed by King Pekah and more Judeans became prisoners. How does Harold explain the idea of misery through this scene?



4. As we think about our lives, churches, and neighbourhoods, how important is it for you to help others overcome misery?
5. Towards the end of the sermon, Harold uses the Parable of the Good Samaritan to highlight the idea of mercy in the face of misery. Typically, we think of the good Samaritan as the hero of the parable. If we examine it from the perspective of the man who was robbed, beaten, and left half dead, how does this change the way you think about people's brokenness and misery?

10

Sermon 8 Everybody Needs a Micah: 2 Chronicles 29-30

Discussion Questions

1. In this sermon, Harold explains the idea of adulthood or growing up. Do you recall a time when you had a hard time growing up? What was that like?
2. Hezekiah became King at age 25. Even in Hezekiah's day that was considered young to be a king. Looking at the initiatives he ordered as king, how do they demonstrate his maturity? How does this affect the way you think about young leaders?



3. Micah made a difference in Hezekiah's life. Harold also shares a time when he was young and met his "Micah" (a farmer & his wife). Then Harold gave up some old friends in order to follow Christ. Share a time when you met your "Micah". What happened?



4. Harold also makes a reference to Saul the Pharisee. There may be individuals in our time who, like Saul, persecuted Christians only to be transformed later by Christ. What do you think prompts such a transformation?
5. Think of someone who needs to be transformed by God's Word and a Christian community. How can you be a "Micah" to that someone?

