

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONCEPT IN CHRONICLES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO THE ESCHATOLOGICAL REMNANT

O Conceito Antropológico em Crônicas e suas Implicações para o Remanescente Escatológico

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ABSTRACT

The Chronicler masterfully weaves the biblical view of human nature into the fabric of the remnant motif. This understanding of humanity could well be a useful example for God's end-time covenant community to define its own anthropological perception and its self-identity as remnant, for there is a noticeable parallel between both communities: the postexilic and the eschatological one. Two lessons from Chronicles help us to perceive the importance of this subject to God's end-time community of faith. The first lesson is that anthropology should be defined by God's revelation and not by a secular or social view of anthropology. Secondly, self-identity of the remnant is a natural fruit of God's grace, operating through His chosen institution: in the old covenant the temple and its rituals, in the new covenant the church and its mission.

KEYOWRDS: ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONCEPT; CHRONICLE; ESCHATOLOGICAL REMNANT

RESUMO

O Cronista magistralmente tece a visão bíblica da natureza humana no tecido do motivo remanescente. Esta compreensão da humanidade poderia muito bem ser um exemplo útil para a comunidade da aliança do fim dos tempos para definir a sua própria percepção antropológica e sua autoidentidade como remanescente, pois há um paralelo notável entre as duas comunidades: a pós-exílica e escatológica. Duas lições de Crônicas nos ajudam a perceber a importância do tema para a comunidade de fé do fim dos tempos. A primeira lição é que a antropologia deve ser definida pela revelação de Deus e não por uma visão secular ou social da antropologia. Em segundo lugar, autoidentidade do remanescente é um fruto natural da graça de Deus, operando através de Sua instituição escolhida: na antiga aliança, o templo e seus rituais, na nova aliança, a Igreja e sua missão.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: CONCEITO ANTROPOLÓGICO; CRÔNICA; REMANESCENTE ESCATOLÓGICO.

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INTRODUCTION

In this postmodern society, where economic, cultural and religious globalization is the trend of the moment, questions regarding anthropology arise a new: (a) “should anthropology be limited to the study of a specific response of a social group to its environment?” (b) “Should anthropology study human self-awareness based on human self-understanding?” (c) “Does ‘self’ define selfhood?” (d) “Does this kind of inquiry belong to the realm of sociology or to anthropology, or to both? What about biblical anthropology? Should it be defined based on sociological premises?”

Based on this inquiry, the ultimate question to be asked to define biblical anthropology could well be, “who or what defines anthropology in the Bible? Consequently, should we not ask some epistemological questions like “what is” or “are the sources of biblical anthropological knowledge?” and “how self can define and obtain knowledge of its own existence, since it is unconscious or, at best, oblivious of its real condition, both before and after the fall”?² Thus, if humans are the source and definers of “the” biblical anthropological paradigm, then this study does not go beyond sociology, and we may fall into the trap of ethnocentrism.³

A typical encyclopedia definition of anthropology, as it is understood in sociology, goes as follows: “it is the scientific study of humanity and of human culture.” It focuses on all aspects of life, namely, physical, social, and cultural. It includes the study of beliefs and values of a specific social group. The main branches of anthropology are physical anthropology, archeology, linguistic anthropology and social anthropology also called cultural anthropology. These branches often overlap. Notice that the study of beliefs and values are included into social (or cultural) anthropology, as if they were just social phenomena. This paper, however, is a tentative approach to biblical anthropology, letting the book of Chronicles define anthropology, instead of letting social science dictate its definition.

The concept of anthropology in Chronicles places mankind as the recipients of God’s revelation. According to this concept mankind is neither the definer nor the source of knowledge to understand human selfhood. The source of anthropological knowledge in Chronicles is rooted in the reality of God, as it is revealed in the Scripture.

Therefore, our quest is not for Nietzsche’s insistent call to understand humanity in the person of the *Übermensch*, nor for Bonhoeffer’s *mündiger*

² George Knight, *Filosofia y educación: una introducción a la perspectiva Cristiana* (Miami, FL: APIA, 2002), 32: According to Knight when human beings philosophize, they are talking about themselves. This is because humans are the subject and the object of study.

³ Ethnocentrism is to place one’s own culture as the only possible way to live and to solve problems of life. This leads to racism and intolerance. A sad example of that is Nazism.

Mensch.⁴ The quest of Biblical anthropology must be rooted in the various ways humans can be understood as such, based on God's revelation. Thus, Chronicles gives us a clear glimpse into this matter.

The Chronicles' notion on anthropology is significant for the end time community of faith. Notice that the postexilic remnant were living in a period of transition; the traditional worldview of the Ancient Near East was being shifted into the new Persian paradigm approach to life and very soon the Hellenistic philosophical understanding would come into the historical arena as the sole interpreter of reality. In this maze of human philosophical ideas God had to reveal His understanding of humanity to reach men in their fallen condition, thus giving them the hope of a new era that was about to come in the person of the Messiah. Therefore, only the Creator God could define what humanity means in its fullness. The Chronicler was able to encapsulate God's definition of humanity in the selection of the events for his text.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONCEPT IN CHRONICLES

The book of Chronicles was written to the remnant of Israel, to the tribe of Judah in particular.⁵ The author, one may call him the Chronicler, was inspired to convey a specific message to his community of faith. This community already had the guidance of quite a few prophets and religious leaders like Zerubbabel, Zachariah, Haggai, Ezra, and Nehemiah, etc. The books of the Old Testament were their written revelation of Jehovah's covenant and will. They were the true and faithful remnant that went through the hard experience of the Babylonian exile for seventy years (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10). Now, as the prophecies were fulfilled regarding their returning and rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem (2 Chr 36:23), they occupied an important place in the history of salvation; for they were the continuing line of the remnant. They were those who should carry the true representation of what humanity could become by the infinite grace of God.

It is here, in the context of the remnant motif, that the Chronicler masterfully wove the biblical view of human nature. This understanding of humanity, as mentioned before, could well fit into the anthropological

4 Peter Frick, "Nietzsche's Übermensch and Bonhoeffer's mündiger Mensch: Are They of any Use for a Contemporary Christian Anthropology?" *Sino-Christian Studies*, 7 (2009): 42.

5 For a view of anthropology in the Old Testament see Thomas Overholt, *Anthropology and the Old Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996). He devoted a great deal of space to the Elijah-Elishah cycle and how it is related to the Old Testament concept of anthropology; John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000). His emphasis is on the discussion regarding the dualistic approach to human existence, namely, soul and body; Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life: the Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008). He answers, based on Genesis and on the New Testament, the question, what does it mean to be human? So far I have not found a specific book dealing with anthropology in Chronicles.

definition of God's end-time covenant community; for there is a noticeable parallel between both, the postexilic and the end-time, communities. Notice that both leave Babylon, historical and spiritual respectively; both are considered as remnant communities of faith; both are composed of the faithful people, who have the faith and the testimony of Jehovah/Jesus Christ (Rev 12:17); both communities have a responsibility toward their fellow mankind (2 Chr; Rev 14:6-10); both are mentioned in a parallel line in some of the prophetic books (Isa 11:6-9, 10-13), etc. Therefore, for a better understanding of the anthropological concept in the postexilic community, in this case in the Chronicles message, one should have a basic knowledge of the remnant motif during this postexilic period of Judah's history as it was revealed to and experienced by the Chronicler.

REMNANT MOTIF IN CHRONICLES⁶

It can be seen also in the postexilic prophet Haggai that the returnees were considered as the remnant, the continuation of Israel, "Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet . . .," (Hag. 1:12). Since Chronicles was written in the postexilic period and to the inhabitants of the Persian province of Yehud, this book was also written to the remnant of Israel mentioned by the prophet Haggai.

The genealogies (1 Chr 1-9) start with the first human being, Adam and ends with the postexilic community. It might be an effort to include not only Israel in the promise, but all the faithful from past generations. These genealogies provide a connection of the postexilic Judah to the promises given by God to Abraham. Hence, the postexilic community was the true inheritor of the Old Testament promises; they were the sole remnant of Israel as a whole and the continuing line until the future eschatological remnant expecting the second coming of Jesus in the cloud of heaven.

The theology of Chronicles seems to be an allusion to Isaiah's prophesy, "The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them will return . . .," (Isa. 10:21-22). The apostle Paul brings up the same text while writing about the spiritual Israel (Rom. 9:27). Thus, faithfulness to Jehovah's covenant of grace was an earmark of the remnant people of God, the true Israel. Faithfulness was the logical fruit of God's grace in His covenantal people. This, however, does not indicate self-achievement or self-

⁶ For a further information on the remnant motif in the postexilic time see, Tarsee Li "The Remnant in the Old testament" in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant*, Angel Manuel Rodriguez, ed., (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), 34-40.

righteousness. Their righteousness was not meritorious; on the contrary, they were just the recipients of God's mercy, His instrument to impart the knowledge of His grace to the world.

His people had a peculiar character that should not be lost or mixed with the popular religion of their neighbors, "Remember His covenant forever, The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac, And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel for an everlasting covenant," (1 Chr 16:15-17).

The foundation of His covenant is His immutable law, then written on the tablets of stone, now hidden from human sight since Jeremiah's time, "And there I have put the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD which He made with the children of Israel," (2 Chr 6:11). Probably the disappearance of the ark, which is not mentioned in the Bible, was the beginning of the preparation for the chosen people to receive the new covenant that was the same as the old, with the sole exception that now the law was to be written in their hearts (character), "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people," (Heb 8:10; Jer 31:33-34, Ps 40:8).

Therefore, there was not a necessity for the law to be written in tablets of stones anymore; it was written in the Torah, and God wanted to write them in His people's hearts and mind (Jer 31:31-33). In this manner humanity, that had lost partially the image of God, would be able to reflect again the character of God that had been obliterated by sin since Adam's unfaithfulness. Remember that Judah went into captivity due to their unfaithfulness (1 Chr 9:1) and Saul lost his life in battle due to his unfaithfulness (1 Chr 10:13). In Chronicles one can see God working with His remnant people to transform their fallen nature into a new nature that would change their condition of unfaithfulness. Therefore, faithfulness is an important component of their self-identity as remnant.

The postexilic prophets made reference to an eschatological remnant as well. It indicates that they were not the last remnant but just the faithful continuation of the true Israel of old (Zech 8:6, 11-12; 13:8, 14:2; Joel 2:32). This future eschatological expectation for the remnant is extended to other nations besides Judah, "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles," (Zech 14:16). Therefore the postexilic community was not the eschatological one; there would be the last one at the end of time that would be as faithful as the postexilic remnant was to Jehovah's covenant; this faithfulness could only be attained by the grace of God.

Since God's written revelation defines biblical anthropology and the remnant are the receivers of God's revelation; then, for a better understanding

of the anthropological concept of Chronicles, it should be studied having the remnant motif as its backdrop.

THE BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONCEPT IN CHRONICLES

I have organized this section according to the basic biblical anthropological understanding, namely, creation, fall, the state of the dead, free will, etc.⁷ Each of these theological themes is considered inside Chronicles in such a poignant way that it is hard to miss the point the author wanted to make. It seems that through the Chronicler's literary work God revealed the condition in which humanity is found as the direct consequence of departing from Jehovah's covenant. This revelation is not straightforward, but it is interwoven didactically in the narrative and in the choices of events presented in the text. Chronicles is a didactic book teaching not only the way the postexilic community should pursue as the remnant people, but also the treacherous condition in which humanity is found. Even within the remnant people sin has left its marks. In a few words one can summarize the anthropological message of Chronicles as "human nature can only be defined by God's revelation." Therefore, it is important for the eschatological remnant to understand the Chronicles' message as well.

I will start with the literary structure of Chronicles with the goal to present the centrality of the rituals and institutions that represented the didactical way God chose to teach them His will, the condition of human nature, their identity as remnant, and His sacredness. The centrality of the temple and its didactic rituals, in Chronicles, illustrates the importance that God bestows upon the spiritual needs of humanity; this sacred institution would meet human spiritual needs through its messianic hope, through their encounter with God and by the expiation of their sins. In other words, the remnant people would be taught their own spiritual condition, their need of salvation, and how to get acquainted with their Savior.

THE LITERARY STRUCTURE OF CHRONICLES

Chronicles (1 and 2) presents a symmetric seven constituents chiasmic structure. The focus of this structure can be easily noticed in the central constituent unit D. This central unit contains the central theme, the temple. The remaining constituent units guide the reader to the central theme.

Notice that the emphasis throughout Chronicles is on the fivefold institution revealed and established by God, namely, the temple, the priesthood, the Levites, the prophets and on the chosen royal house of David.

⁷ See note 1 for further details regarding a secular definition of anthropology.

The temple is central to Chronicles' theology. It represents the presence of God (Exod 25:8), the oracles of Jehovah, and the essence of the covenant broken in the past. This breaking of the covenant was the main reason for the Babylonian captivity (1 Chr 9:1); the priesthood represents the religious leadership, those responsible to preserve the covenant relationship received from God since Moses at Sinai. They were the mediators, in the ritual of the sanctuary, between God and men; the Levites, on the other hand, were the instructors of the people. They had the ministry of teaching the law; the prophets were charismatic figures that Jehovah raised, from time to time, when necessary to uphold the truth amid apostasy and rebellion. Finally, the chosen royal house of David and its lineage are of great importance for the postexilic returnees. The royal house of David was responsible for the protection of the covenant emblems symbolically represented in the temple rituals. It was the only legitimized line of the Messiah to come.

This fivefold institution can be easily observed in the literary structure of Chronicles; they were the didactical way chosen by God to educate His people to receive a new nature that would culminate with the coming of the Messiah in the new covenant He would make with His people (Jer 31:31-33) to accomplish what the old covenant was only a shadow (Heb 8:5).

The author wanted to convey the importance of the temple for what it meant for Israel's past, and for what it represents for Israel's future success as the chosen nation. For the Chronicler, the temple and its services represent a crucial part in Israel's self-identity, and this self-identity has a profound relationship with their condition as humans before a holy God. Thus this identity should reveal the fruit of an internal transformation of their human nature. This identity should not be lost in the postexilic community as it was lost before the exile. Therefore, they should follow carefully the rites that the temple contained in its daily services until the fulfillment of the promises represented symbolically in them.

One cannot miss the indirect messianic appeal established by this literary structure. First, while the daily services were being accomplished in the temple, the expectation toward the fulfillment of the promises of the coming Messiah would not be lost into a confusing maze of ideological and philosophical amalgamation of human understanding. Remember that the Chronicler could have had access to the books of Daniel, Isaiah, Zachariah, Haggai, etc., and to a many other prophetic books of the Old Testament that presented the messianic expectation in a clear and poignant manner. Secondly, the nation of Israel was about to enter the Inter-testament Period. In this period, due to many political factors, an unusual messianic expectation would be developed different from that one of the Old Testament. Therefore the only manner to preserve Israel's identity, as the chosen nation expecting the coming Messiah promised in the texts of the ancient prophets, was to

continue the rituals of the temple until the types would meet the antitypes, the shadow the reality, as one can see in the book of Hebrews in the New Testament. This messianic foreknowledge of the Chronicler could only be reached by divine revelation and inspiration as the prophets of old had received. Here is one remarkable prove of inspiration of the Sacred Writ.

CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF CHRONICLES⁸

A. Beginning: From Adam (1:1) to the Babylonian exile (9:1, “they were exiled to Babylon”), and return (9:2, “the first ones to resettle”), (1:1-9:44).

B. David’s Kingdom (1 Chr 10:1-22:1).

- Promise to David that his dynasty would continue forever (see verse 17:12b, “I will establish his throne forever”), (17:1-27).
- David’s intrusion into the priestly/levitical sphere of duty in the transportation of the ark (13:5-14; 15:12-15).
- David’s defeat of Syria (18:6; 19:19), Ammon (19-20), Moab (18:2), Edom (18:11), (in the Valley of Salt, 18:12), and Philistia (14:8-17).

C. David assembles all Israel to make preparation for Solomon’s building of the temple (1 Chr 22:2-29:30). Theme: Unity of all Israel (“David gathered...,” 23:2; 28:1), cooperation.

D. CENTER: Solomon, the temple builder (2 Chr 1:1-9:31).

C’. Division of all Israel: Judean kings from Rehoboam to Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 10:1-20:37). Theme: the disintegration of all Israel, conflict.

B’. Seven kings: Jehoram to Ahaz (2 Chr 21:1-28:27).

- Crisis threatening David’s dynasty promise (2 Chr 21:7; 21:16-22:1; 22:10-11; 23:3).
- Warfare with Syria (2 Chr 16; 18:28-34; 24:23), Ammon (20:22; 27:5), Moab (20:22-23), Edom (21:8; 26:14), (in the Valley of Salt, 25:11), and Philistia.
- King’s intrusion into the priestly/levitical sphere of duty (2 Chr 23:6; 26:16-21; 27:2).

⁸ This chiasitic literary structure was based on Dorsey’s work, with some modification adapted to the present work: David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bakers Books, 1999), 155-156.

A'. End: from Hezekiah (the man) to the Babylonian exile (2 Chr 36:20, "and He carried into exile ... to Babylon") and to the return (36:23, "let them go up," see also 2 Chr 29:1-36:23).

Chronicles' theology has the remnant motif as its context and the fivefold institution as its central interest; thus the anthropological concept is carefully cast into the text as a theological reminder of the true spiritual condition of humanity. The definition of anthropology, according to Chronicles, is meaningfully related to God's fivefold institution.

In Chronicles human nature and its spiritual needs are defined by God's revelation and not by a human philosophical or sociological understanding of anthropology. Hence, Bible anthropology is defined by God's revelation and guided by God's chosen institution with its didactical rituals. It aims to produce, by the grace of God, its natural fruit, namely, faithfulness to God by His covenantal people, in this case the remnant one. In other words, their self-identity as remnant is due to the operation of the grace of God didactically taught them by the means provided through God's revelation.⁹ Following, I have introduced various anthropological themes that best define the Chronicles view on this matter.

RELIGION AS REVEALED BY GOD

Emile Durkheim, the father of modern social studies, stated in his social theory that religion, in general, originates from a specific community; thus each social group develops its own religion and spiritual practices and creates their gods or goddesses, according to their unique tribal experience and spiritual or emotional needs. Thus religion, according to Durkheim, is purely another intrinsic element of sociology.¹⁰ Chronicles' theology, however, places the true religion where it should always be, in the realm of God's revelation. It is theocentric in its content and humans are the object of its effects. It is formulated by God to operate in humanity. The true religion originates from God to supply the spiritual inherent needs of mankind. It does not have its origin in men or women, but it ultimately benefits them, if they follow God's revelation.

⁹ It is with reference not only to the external evidence of the remnant identity, but also to the internal. In the New Covenant, however, the emphasis would be in the internal evidence of the remnant identity and then to the external as well, see Jer 31: 31-33.

¹⁰ See his theory of religion in his book: Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1995).

HUMANS AS CREATION OF GOD

Notice that the first word in Chronicles is “Adam” (v. 1). The author remounts to the Genesis account. Human history started “In the Beginning.” Thus humans are created by God (’elohim). All humans are descendent of the same ancestor, no matter the race or culture, we are all part of the same genealogical tree; we came from the hands of God. Therefore mankind was created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). It meant that humanity was originally endowed with the power of choice, free will, purity of character, and all godliness virtues. There is not superior race or any reason for racism, for we are all in a great family having Adam as our direct ancestor. Biblically speaking there is no other family, even if we wanted. In Chronicles humanity owes its moral hierarchical right to the Creator and without Him humanity would lose its humanity becoming just one specie among many in the animal kingdom. It is clear, in the text of Chronicles, that men did not remain in his/her original state. They fell out of God’s grace by incorrectly exercising their free will (Gen 3).

MANKIND AS HAVING SINFUL NATURE

The Chronicler started with Adam and immediately he mentions by name, Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. All of these biblical characters are found in Genesis as remnant of each generation after the fall of mankind and before the judgment by waters. It implies that the Chronicler knew that his readers or hearers would be able to connect the names of these antediluvian patriarchs to the information of Genesis account regarding the degeneration of humanity due to sin. Thus he omitted information that the reader could have easily accessed.

The Chronicler wanted to make a point, these antediluvian patriarchs, though remnant, were still in need of God’s saving grace and this condition continued until the postexilic time “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 will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chr 7:14). Therefore according to the biblical narrative, things did not change much regarding human nature since Adam’s fall! The postexilic community should be aware that humanity to be true to its original purpose depends entirely on the power of their Covenantal God, namely, Jehovah:

As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, You shall not fail to have a man as ruler in Israel. But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples," 2 Chr 17:20, (see another postexilic writer ". . . Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit' Says the LORD of hosts, Zach 4:6).

Humanity, according to the Chronicler, needs a great deal of external help to operate from inside its own nature to uplift its moral and spiritual condition. Based on the literary structure of the text, it is impossible to be human apart from God in the strict sense of creation. Mankind needs someone more powerful than his own nature; Humanity needs desperately the human Messiah implicit in the centrality of the temple and its rituals. Thus one can perceive that the focus of Chronicles has a sin equal non approach to Israel history. The author strives to convey the reasons to avoid the mistakes of the past and, at the same time, presents a motivation to continue looking towards the future in a more positive way. Chronicles presents the foundations of Israel's theocracy as being the covenant of Jehovah. Thus the emphasis is on the fivefold institution, namely, the temple, the priesthood, the Levites, the prophets and on the chosen royal house of David, as mentioned above.

The logical conclusion is that mankind has fallen, yes, but not beyond redemption! Hope exists in the plan of salvation delineated in the rituals of the sanctuary carefully presented in the literary structure of Chronicles implying the sure promise of the coming Messiah.

STATE OF THE DEAD IN CHRONICLES

This paper has not the primary intention of an exegetical exposé of this passage, 1 Chr 10. The purpose is just illustrative. At the end of the genealogical section (chapters 1-9) and at the beginning of the narrative account the reader can clearly notice a complete change of genre. In chapter ten the Chronicler suddenly starts with the historical narrative of Saul's death. He could have omitted this shameful event that mars Israel history, as he did with David's adultery with Bathsheba, but he wants to send a message to his community of faith. To illustrate it, this episode is presented in a most dramatic way found nowhere else in Chronicles. Saul's consultation with the

necromantic woman is detailed described; his death in the battle is graphically and meticulously presented in such manner to disturb the reader with the depth of Saul's rebellion against God's covenant of grace. This seems to be the primary purpose of the text.

The secondary purpose of this passage, however, was to demonstrate pragmatically that there is not soul apart from the body. Death is the natural end of all mortals, being them faithful like Samuel or unfaithful like Saul. Thus, even the faithful one will die without leaving a trace of their existence. This text does not contain the hope of resurrection either, because the ultimate purpose here was to instruct that faithfulness should be exercised while life shall last, death is the end of any possibility of repentance; echoing the word of God in the garden, “. . . in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die,” (Gen 2:17). Therefore for the Chronicler, man is a mortal being with no hope apart from God. There is not a trace of a platonic idea.

The resurrection is implicit in other sections of the text. The Chronicler, by mentioning the genealogies, implies that God is the God of the living one and He has power over death. He is the only everlasting God, “Blessed be the LORD God of Israel From everlasting to everlasting. (2 Chr 16:36). Twice the Chronicler uses the formula “O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers,” (1 Chr 29:18; 2 Chr 30:6), indicating that God continues to be the God of the patriarchs. It implies that the covenant has an eternal consequence for both, the faithful and the unfaithful.

HUMANITY AS THE BATTLE FIELD OF THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

As mentioned above, self-identity of the postexilic community is similar to that of the eschatological remnant. Therefore, one may conclude that the implication for both could be similar too. It implies that if the great controversy started through unfaithfulness to Jehovah's covenant, then the restoration process will have faithfulness as one of its main characteristic, the logical fruit of God's grace in human nature (Rev 12:17). This faithfulness includes willingness to share the true message to others welcoming them out the spiritual Babylon to the spiritual remnant who is waiting for the final fulfillment of the Bible promises regarding the end of the great controversy between good and evil (2 Chr 30:7-8; Zach 14:16-19).

In the context of the great controversy between good and evil, the message of the historical remnant throughout the ages was always God's grace (Gen 3:15; 6; Mat 24:14; Rev 14:6-7). This grace causes the remnant to produce the fruit of faithfulness toward God and his fellow man. This fruitfulness produces self-identity and it is an evidence of victory obtained

through God's grace in the battle field of the great controversy.¹¹ Therefore, Chronicles presents the continuation of the historical remnant that will culminate into the eschatological remnant at the end of God's complete restoration of human nature.

The Chronicler was aware of this conflict and he describes it especially in three occasions. The first one is narrated when Saul consults the medium from Endor "So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse," (1 Chr 10:13-14). It is clear here that the narrative has the purpose to indicate a war between good and evil. In this universe there are two sides only, namely, God and the power of darkness.

The second reference to the great controversy is found when "Satan moved David to number Israel," (1 Chr 21:1). In this occasion David is tempted by a supernatural power, implying a continuing war between good and evil in the heart of mankind.

The third instance occurs when God allowed a lying spirit to be in the mouths of the false prophets to speak with Ahab. This is not that God wanted it, but He allowed it because the false prophets were already willingly deceived by the power of darkness and they had rejected God and his prophets. Therefore the Lord allowed them to be guided by what they wanted, a lying spirit (2 Chr 18: 21-22).

It is clear in these passages that God will not force any one to follow Him, it must be a voluntarily decision of any human being as he or she exercise their free will given them by God. This implies the existence of a war, a controversy between good and evil in this planet and we are affected by this war in such way that our decisions bring eternal consequences to us and to those who surround us.

THE ROLE OF MANKIND IN RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

Worship and praise have their place in the plan of salvation. God created humans with the inherent need to worship Him. This need was obliterated by sin; thus, mankind started to worship the forces of nature, like the wind, sun, rain, etc. Consequently, the plan of salvation has the goal of redeeming humans from the fallen condition and re-educating them regarding the holiness of God.

Humans are unpredictable; God, however, is not (Mal 3:6). Thus He has a plan to redeem humanity from the situation they have fallen since

¹¹ Tarsee Li rightly stated regarding the story of Ruth that "the story emphasizes God's grace, rather than the faithfulness of the recipients of His grace," this can be applied to Chronicles as well, p. 31.

creation. This plan cannot be changed by humans, it is immutable. The only modifications are derived from the conditionality implied for the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies; humans are always free to choose their destiny.

Notice carefully, it has been widely accepted, that religion is a natural expression of a community and that its origin is ultimately in the human heart as they gather together to show respect to the forces of nature. It is a human expression before the unknown and supernatural. Thus, it has been proposed, that the elements of religion are born from within the human heart and mind. The deity is created by the worshippers.¹² This view, however, is challenged by Chronicles. In this literary work that closes the Old Testament, religion is an initiative of God, and He reveals his will regarding it to his worshippers. It sprung from God Himself; this is the anthropological difference between paganism and the Biblical concept of religion. Therefore, in the remnant community it is God who gives specific directions and principles for his praise and worship; humans willingly accept His authority as God or reject Him by their unfaithfulness (1 Chr 9:1-2). The expression of religion is an inborn need of humans that needs to be guided by God, otherwise it will degenerate into self-worship and ultimately into an anthropocentrism where there is no place for God and His will.

Having this in view, it is self-evident the interest that the Chronicler bestows upon the subject of worship.¹³ In a careful analysis of the occurrences of the words “music,” “song,” and “singing” only Psalms has more instances of these words than 1 and 2 Chronicles combined. Therefore one may conclude that music was an important element of worship to the postexilic community to whom the Chronicler addressed his book. The Chronicler wants to present a Bible-based guideline for the correct use of music in his community for the worship of Jehovah. It was an important matter, so important that it receives a great deal of space in Chronicles and was located at the center of the genealogy (center of chapter six). This indicates that the remnant people of God should have its worship modeled after the revelation of God about this subject and not make it a matter of personal taste or culture fashion. Israel in those days was surrounded by a variety of cultural approaches to music styles and instruments. They had spent seventy years in Babylon, and Israel was inhabited by a mixed population brought by the Assyrians since 722 B.C. Therefore the Chronicler had an enormous repertoire from where to get his music style and lyrics, but his choice was based on the revelation of God through His prophets.

¹² See Emile Durkheim.

¹³ See these books for a general view on worship in the OT: M. Patrick Graham, Rick R. Marrs and Steven L. McKenzie, eds. *Worship and the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of John T. Willis* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). In the chapter written by Graham this book deals with worship in 2 Chr 30:1-31. He analyzes what it meant to set the heart to seek God. The remainder portion of the book is about other books of the Old Testament.

In 1 Chr 6:32 a genealogical list of the musicians is introduced at the outset of the book, in order to avoid all misunderstanding regarding who is going to direct the songs of praise. In chapters 13 and 15 music, instruments and songs played an important role in the moving of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Music was so critical in these two instances that after David's failure and the death of Uzzah (chap. 13), the space dedicated to music in chapter 15 was enormous compared to chapter 13. It indicates that music style and lyrics should follow the guidelines revealed by God.

The Ark represented His presence and holiness, the music used for His worship should fit the high moral standard of His character. David gave the order “. . . to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy,” (1 Chr 15:16). This order was kept for the worship in the temple, “All these were under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps, for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the authority of the king,” (1 Chr 25:6). The lyric was based on the revelation of God through Psalms, “On that day David first delivered this psalm into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the LORD:” (1 Chr 16:8).

The instruments were considered as belonging to the will of God, His taste and preference, “[...]with instruments of the music of the LORD, which King David had made to praise the LORD[.]” (2 Chr 7:6). Centuries later king Hezekiah continued to follow the guidelines established by the revelation of God regarding music and musical instruments, “And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets.” (2 Chr 29:25). The silver trumpets were used also as part of the worship, “. . . the priests with the trumpets,” (2 Chr 29:26b). These trumpets were designed by God in the Pentateuch and Moses made them for the use in the sanctuary, in the assembly, for guiding the people, and in war time, etc., (Num 10:2-10; 2 Chr 23:13).

It is the only book that mentions a victorious battle gained through singing accompanied by the prescribed instruments “[...] he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: ‘Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever’” (2 Chr 20:21, 28). The message from King Jehoshaphat was “[...]Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper” (2 Chr 20:20). These were the two main foundations of Jehovah's covenant, His words, the Torah, and the Spirit of Prophecy, the prophet's message written or spoken.

Therefore one can rightly conclude that music is an inherent need of humans, an important part of worship and praise of the remnant, a way to express our inborn need to praise God. Thus, guidelines for the correct use of this element of praise are found in the Bible. In Revelation it is mentioned that one of the first things we are going to do in heaven is music “those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God,” (Rev 15:2). In the same chapter the saved ones “[...]sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb” (v. 3). These songs take place in the sanctuary in heaven (v. 5). Music was important in the past and will be in the future. Thus it is important for us today. Therefore God would not have left us without instructions for its use for His praise and worship, and mankind with all its “good intention” cannot add or modify any aspect revealed about this matter. God is unchangeable, this is one of the reasons we are not destroyed, (“For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore, you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob” Mal 3:6 and 2 Chr 30:9; “the LORD your God is gracious and merciful”).

FREEWILL OF HUMANITY EVEN AFTER THEIR FALL

For the Chronicler, humans have the right and the obligation of exercising correctly their God-given gift of freewill. Men and women are the masters of their own destiny. God may guide, instruct, help, correct, rebuke, love, have mercy, and change circumstances, but it depends solely and exclusively upon human’s final choice for the course of their actions. Clear examples of this are in Saul’s life. He was chosen by God and accepted by the people, blessed by the prophets, but his destiny was modeled by his own weak character and selfish motives. He had everything possible to succeed, but he decided to follow his own course ignoring God’s guidance and advices. His end was described in chapter ten; he and his family were destroyed as the direct consequence of his decisions.

David is another example of that. He also took unwise steps in his life. The Chronicler avoided mentioning the adultery with Beersheba and the murder of Uriah the Hittite, but he mentions the temptation of Satan to number the Israelites, a direct disobedience against God’s explicit command (chapter 21). The results were terrible upon Israel. The difference was that he repented and tried his best under the direction of God to change the situation. He was humble enough to recognize his mistakes.

There are several other examples in Chronicles regarding human freewill; it can be seen in the lives of the kings of Judah and their choices concerning Jehovah’s covenant. The lessons left by these two kings, Saul and

David, are suffice to show that each person has the right to choose to obey or to reject the guidance God has given them through the prophets and His written word; God, nevertheless, should not be blamed for the consequences, “. . . for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him,” (2 Chr 30:9)

CONCLUSION

Concluding this biblical anthropological approach to Chronicles, one can perceive the importance of this subject to God’s end-time community of faith as well. Two elements are crucial here. The first one is that anthropology should be defined by God’s revelation and not by social anthropology. Secondly, self-identity of the remnant is a natural fruit of God’s grace operating through His chosen instrument or institution, in the old covenant the temple and its rituals in the new covenant, the church and its mission. The Chronicler’s anthropological concept in a nutshell is as follows:

1. Humanity was created by God (1 Chr 1:1).
2. Religion is a revelation from God; it is theocentric in its nature (see the literary structure) and anthropocentric in its effect.
3. Humans fell from a state of purity and happiness to a state of sinfulness and sadness (2 Chr 7:14).
4. They need the Messiah, the Savior typified/symbolized in the fivefold institution (see literary structure).
5. Humans are mortals (1 Chr 10). The platonic idea is not present in Chronicles.
6. There is an ongoing conflict between good and evil, God and Satan, in nature and in the heart of mankind (1 Chr 10 and 21).
7. Worship should be according to the revealed will of God to supply the spiritual need of humans. Music responds to an intrinsic need of humans, it is central in God’s worship and should be guided by His revelation (see the literary structure).
8. Humans have freedom to choose their destiny (see Saul and David’s choices).
9. God’s revelation should be central to human activities and should be the guidance for human’s inner spiritual needs (see God’s fivefold institution mentioned above).
10. Self-identity and self-awareness as remnant is a natural fruit of God’s grace in human nature. It is not self-meritorious; it is a gift from God to His people (2 Chr 7:14).

11. Humans are the center of any anthropological study, but not the source of revelation about themselves. God is the source about human identity. Self cannot define selfhood. God as Creator is the only one that can define humans as such and to explain their spiritual needs. Thus to know human nature, one should study God's revelation about humanity.

This is the Chronicles' contribution to Biblical Anthropology.

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