

BIBLICAL ELDERS (1)
OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING
Covenant Fellowship Church
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1. The Role of Elders in the Old Testament

Elders are recognized as leaders, wise men, and decision-makers in the community. They are often involved in governance, judgment, and religious matters.

1.1 Elders as *Leaders and Rulers*

- Exod 3:16-Elders were involved in the leadership and gathering of the Israelites, such as in the Exodus under Moses.
- Exod 18:21-26- Moses appoints elders to help him judge the people.

1.2 Elders in the *Context of the Tribes of Israel*

- Num 11:16-17 -The LORD instructs Moses to appoint 70 elders to assist him in governing the people.
- Deut 19:12 -Elders are entrusted with decisions regarding cities of refuge.

2. Qualifications and Characteristics of Elders

Elders are to be men of *integrity, wisdom, and spiritual maturity*. The Old Testament stresses *moral and ethical qualities that reflect God's holiness*.

2.1 *Spiritual Wisdom and Discernment*

- Deut 1 13-17 - Moses asks the congregation for wise, understanding, and respected men to serve as leaders.
- 1 Kings 12:6-8 - Rehoboam consults with the elders who served his father Solomon but rejects their advice.

2.2 *Morality and Integrity*

- Deut 16:18- 20 -Elders must be just and free from corruption, ruling with fairness.
- Ps 82:2- 4- A call for righteous judgment from the elders.

3. The Elders in Worship and Religious Life

Elders play a significant role in leading worship, making decisions regarding the observance of religious practices, and advising the people in matters of faith.

3.1 *Elders in the Assembly*

- Lev 4:15 -Elders are involved in the responsibility of leading the congregation, especially in offering sacrifices.

- 1 Chr 24:1-5 - The division of the priests and Levites included elders overseeing worship duties.

3.2 Elders in Conflict Resolution and Decision-Making

- Deut 21:1-9 - Elders are involved in the process of resolving cases of unsolved murders.
- Josh 20:4 - Elders play a role in the establishment of cities of refuge and guiding the accused.

4. The Importance of Elders in the Community

Elders are essential for maintaining order, justice, and a strong spiritual life in the Israelite community.

4.1 Elders as Judges

- Deut 17:8-13 - Elders are to make judgments in cases too difficult for the people to resolve.

4.2 Elders in Social and Civil Matters

- Ruth 4:1-11 - Elders are involved in the legal process of property transfer and redemption, such as in the case of Ruth and Boaz.
- Neh 5:7 - Elders are called to address and correct injustice in society, such as the oppression of the poor.

5. The Disciplinary Role of Elders

Elders sometimes had the responsibility to discipline or rebuke those who were in rebellion or who violated God's commands.

5.1 Elders as Agents of Correction

- Jer 19:1-3 - Elders were involved in symbolic acts of judgment and correction on behalf of God.

5.2 Elders Exercising Judgment in Cases of Sin

- Ezek 22:6-7 - The elders are called to account for their negligence and corruption.

6. Conclusion

The Old Testament presents elders as critical to the leadership, judgment, and spiritual life of the Israelite community. They are appointed to govern, teach, mediate, and make decisions that reflect God's law and justice. Their role is rooted in wisdom, righteousness, and a deep understanding of the divine covenant with Israel.