



- The Elders of Israel



- Ruth 4:1-2 (ESV) 1 Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, “Turn aside, friend; sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down. 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.



- Who are these elders of Israel?
- What did they do?
- How did their role serve as a precursor for the role of elders in local congregations?
 - Can we learn anything from them that helps us to understand role and importance of elders for us?

The Origin of Elders

Exodus 3, 4, 18; Numbers 11

- Exodus 3, 4, 18; Numbers 11
- Origin of Elders
 - Nothing mentioned before Israel enters Egypt

Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt,

Exodus 3:16

- Exodus 3:16: Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt,

And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.'

Exodus 3:18

- Exodus 3:18: And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.'

Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel.

Exodus 4:29

Exodus 4:29: Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel.

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb.”

Exodus 12:21

Exodus 12:21: Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb.

Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.

Exodus 18:21

Exodus 18:21: Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.

Then Jehovah said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you.

Numbers 11:16

Numbers 11: 16-17: (ESV) 16 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you.

24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. 25 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

The Character of Elders

Exodus 18:19-23

- Exodus 18:19-23
- Closest we get to the character of elders

The Character of Elders

of Israel

Exodus 18:19-23

- Exodus 18:19-23
- Closest we get to the character of elders

The Character of Elders

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- Elder
 - implies age-based
 - used two ways, determine by context
 - old man
 - community leader
 - connotes:
 - maturity
 - experience
 - dignity
 - honor
 - authority
 - wisdom
 - recognized by the majority

The Character of Elders

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Able

Strength

Ability

Wealth

- Able
 - Strength, ability, wealth (army, force)
 - CWSB: Basic idea of strength and influence

The Character of Elders

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The land of Egypt is before you. Settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any **able men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.**

Genesis 47:6



Able

Strength

Ability

Wealth

- Genesis 47:6: The land of Egypt is before you. Settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.
- What kind of men does Pharaoh want caring for his flocks?

The Character of Elders

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Able

- Men who have demonstrated that
 - they know what needs to be done
 - they can do what needs to be done
 - strong in body
 - strong in determination, mind, wisdom
 - courageous, not afraid to act, to what must be done

The Character of Elders

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Fear God

Able

- Fear God
 - Exodus 20:20 (ESV) Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.”

The Character of Elders

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Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.”

Exodus 20:20



Fear God

Able

- Fear God
 - Exodus 20:20 (ESV) Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.”
- Luther
 - servile fear: afraid of displeasing, consequences
 - filial fear: love, desire to please, fear of disappointing

The Character of Elders

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And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear Jehovah your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of Jehovah, which I am commanding you today for your good?

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

- Fear God
 - Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (ESV) 12 “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?”

The Character of Elders

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The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1:7



Fear God

Able

- Fear God
 - Proverbs 1:7 (ESV) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The Character of Elders

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Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of Jehovah. What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Psalms 34:11-14

Able

- Psalms 34:11-14 (ESV) 11 Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12 What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good? 13 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. 14 Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

The Character of Elders

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Fear God

Able

- Fear God
 - Understands Who God is
 - Understands God's laws
 - Wisdom and knowledge
 - Determination to keep God's laws from heart
 - Do Good, turn from Evil

The Character of Elders

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Trustworthy
"men of truth"

Fear God

Able

- Trustworthy ("men of truth")
 - BDB: firmness, faithfulness, truth; sureness; stability; faithfulness, reliability
 - TWOT: At the heart of the meaning of the root is the idea of certainty
 - CWSB: To walk in truth is to conduct oneself according to God's holy standards (1 Kgs. 2:4; 3:6; Ps. 86:11; Isa. 38:3).

The Character of Elders

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that Jehovah may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying, If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in **faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel!**

1 Kings 2:4

- Promise to David about His sons
 - 1 Kings 2:4 (ESV): that the Lord may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying, If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

The Character of Elders

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And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.

1 Kings 3:6

- Solomon about David:
 - 1 Kings 3:6 (ESV): And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.

The Character of Elders

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Trustworthy
"men of truth"

**Teach me your way, O Jehovah, that I
may walk in your truth; unite my heart to
fear your name.**

Psalm 86:11

- David's Prayer: Psalms 86:11 (ESV): Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.

The Character of Elders

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Trustworthy
"men of truth"

"Please, O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Isaiah 38:3

- Hezekiah
 - Isaiah 38:3 (ESV) and said, "Please, O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

The Character of Elders

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Trustworthy
"men of truth"

Fear God

Able

- A man who knows the Truth, lives according to the truth; who can be depended on to do what is right according to God's standards.

The Character of Elders

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Hate a bribe

Trustworthy

Fear God

Able

- Hate a bribe (hate dishonest gain; hating unjust gain; hating pride; hating covetousness)
 - (TWOT) Personal advantage derived from some activity.
 - (TWOT) it is very easy for the acquisition of personal gain to become the ruling motive of one's life, obscuring duty, honesty and the rights of others.

The Character of Elders

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Hate a bribe

Trustworthy

Fear God

Able

- (TWOT) The contexts in which עֲלֵזָב and עֲלֵזָב occur emphasize two points concerning the lust for personal gain. First, it is a special temptation to leaders, and those showing any predilection in that direction should be disqualified (Ex 18:21).

The Character of Elders

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Hate a bribe

Trustworthy

Fear God

Able

- (TWOT) The leader who succumbs to this temptation to use his position for his own ends will certainly play his people false (Ezek 22:27).

The Character of Elders

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Hate a bribe

Trustworthy

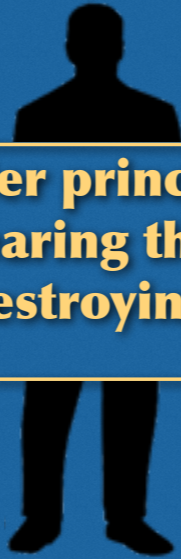
Fear God

Able

- (TWOT) Again and again in the OT, it was the desire of the leaders for personal gain which led Israel into disaster (cf. 1 Sam 8:3; Isa 56:11; Jer 8:10; 22:17; etc.).

The Character of Elders

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Hate a bribe

**Her princes in her midst are like wolves
tearing the prey, shedding blood,
destroying lives to get dishonest gain.**

Ezekiel 22:27

Able

- Ezekiel 22:27 (ESV) Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain.

The Character of Elders

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Hate a bribe

Trustworthy

Fear God

Able

- The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (2 Timothy 6:10); desire to be rich
- One who loves money is may easily be swayed away from righteousness and truth.

The Character of Elders

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Hate a bribe

Trustworthy

Fear God

Able

- An elder, then, is a man who has demonstrated by his life that he can reasonably and efficiently deal with people and the various struggles they face. His character is rooted in His fear of God and loyalty to the truth so that he can be relied upon to do what is correct in all circumstances. He is not swayed from his faithfulness to God and God's people and Righteousness by the desire for personal gain.

The Character of Elders

in the Church

1 Timothy 3; Titus 1

- text

Exodus 18:21	1 Timothy 3:1-7	Titus 1:5-9
<p>able fear God trustworthy hates a bribe</p>	<p>above reproach husband of one wife sober-minded self-controlled respectable hospitable able to teach not a drunkard not violent, but gentle not quarrelsome not a lover of money manage own household well not a recent convert well thought of by outsiders</p>	<p>above reproach husband of one wife children are faithful above reproach not arrogant not quick-tempered not a drunkard not violent not greedy for gain hospitable lover of good self-controlled upright holy disciplined hold firm to the word</p>

- Elders of Israel
- Elders in Church (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)

Exodus 18:21	1 Timothy 3:1-7	Titus 1:5-9
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- Able
 - above reproach
 - husband of one wife
 - sober minded
 - self controlled
 - respectable
 - not violent but gentle
 - not quarrelsome
 - manage household
 - well thought of by outsiders
 - children are faithful

Exodus 18:21	1 Timothy 3:1-7	Titus 1:5-9
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- fear God
 - hospitable
 - not a drunkard
 - not arrogant
 - not quick tempered
 - lover of good
 - upright
 - holy
 - disciplined

Exodus 18:21

able
fear God
trustworthy
hates a bribe

1 Timothy 3:1-7

above reproach
husband of one wife
sober-minded
self-controlled
respectable
hospitable
able to teach
not a drunkard
not violent, but gentle
not quarrelsome
not a lover of money
manage own household well
not a recent convert
well thought of by outsiders

Titus 1:5-9

above reproach
husband of one wife
children are faithful
above reproach
not arrogant
not quick-tempered
not a drunkard
not violent
not greedy for gain
hospitable
lover of good
self-controlled
upright
holy
disciplined
hold firm to the word

- trustworthy
 - able to teach
 - not a recent convert
 - hold firm to the word

Exodus 18:21	1 Timothy 3:1-7	Titus 1:5-9
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- hates a bribe/ unjust gain
 - not a lover of money
 - not greedy for gain

Exodus 18:21	1 Timothy 3:1-7	Titus 1:5-9
<p>able fear God trustworthy hates a bribe</p>	<p>above reproach husband of one wife sober-minded self-controlled respectable hospitable able to teach not a drunkard not violent, but gentle not quarrelsome not a lover of money manage own household well not a recent convert well thought of by outsiders</p>	<p>above reproach husband of one wife children are faithful above reproach not arrogant not quick-tempered not a drunkard not violent not greedy for gain hospitable lover of good self-controlled upright holy disciplined hold firm to the word</p>

- While not perfect or even conclusive, interesting
- Role of Elders in local congregation is more clearly defined and vital in some ways:
 - clarity of God's word for us is vital
 - right men for the job
 - just being old is not enough!



- Whether male or female, clear our God desires his people to excel.
 - Be Able: be ready to do what God desires to be done, depend on His strength
 - Fear God: Know who God is, Know His Law and Do Good.



- Trustworthy (man of truth): Standard of your life is God's word only; reliable
- Hate a Bribe: Beware of covetousness and materialism of the world that easily distracts from serving God and His people.

**We implore you on
behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.**

2 Corinthians 5:20



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Moses, Jethro, Elders: <http://www.cartoons4christ.com/Exodus-18-Jethro-and-Moses.html>

Boaz and Elders: <http://mimaryvee.blogspot.com/2011/10/boaz-redeems-ruth.html>

The Elders of Israel: Origin and Character

Exodus 18:21

Synopsis: While not much information is given about the origin and character of the Elders of Israel can help us understand the kind of leaders that our Father values for His people

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"Let all that you do be done with love."