



- The Elders of Israel - 2
- Their Work



- 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

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

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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 Work of Elders

- Work of Elders

The Work of Elders

Judge

(Exodus 18:22, 26)

- Judge
 - Exodus 18:22: And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.
 - Exodus 18:26: And they judged the people at all times. Any hard case they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves.
- Knowledge of Law
 - Exodus 18:15-16:15 And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God; 16 when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and **I make them know the statutes of God and his laws.**”
 - Exodus 19:7: So Moses came and called the **elders** of the people and **set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him.**

The Work of Elders

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The Work of Elders

Judge

(Exodus 18:22, 26)

murder / manslaughter (Deuteronomy 19:11-13; 21:1-9; Joshua 20:4)

- murder / manslaughter
 - Kills, flees to city; elders of city take to avenger of blood, die (no pity, purge)
 - Deuteronomy 19:11-13 (ESV) 11 “But if anyone hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him and attacks him and strikes him fatally so that he dies, and he flees into one of these cities, 12 then the **elders of his city shall send and take him from there**, and hand him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die. 13 Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, so that it may be well with you.

The Work of Elders

Judge

(Exodus 18:22, 26)

murder / manslaughter (Deuteronomy 19:11-13; 21:1-9; Joshua 20:4)

- Dead man found in country; elders and judges determine closest city; atonement offering made by closest elders that they didn't shed blood or see it.
 - Deuteronomy 21:1-9 (ESV) 1 "If in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess someone is found slain, lying in the open country, and it is not known who killed him, 2 then **your elders and your judges shall come out, and they shall measure the distance to the surrounding cities.** 3 And the elders of the city that is nearest to the slain man shall take a heifer that has never been worked and that has not pulled in a yoke. 4 And the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley. 5 Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come forward, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to him and to bless in the name of the Lord, and by their word every dispute and every assault shall be settled. 6 And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, 7 and they shall testify, 'Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it shed. 8 Accept atonement, O Lord, for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and do not set the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel, so that their blood guilt be atoned for.' 9 So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

The Work of Elders

Judge

(Exodus 18:22, 26)

murder / manslaughter (Deuteronomy 19:11-13; 21:1-9; Joshua 20:4)

- manslaughter; flee to city of refuge, explain case to elders
 - Joshua 20:4: He shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and **explain his case to the elders of that city**. Then they shall take him into the city and give him a place, and he shall remain with them.

The Work of Elders

Judge

(Exodus 18:22, 26)

murder / manslaughter (Deuteronomy 19:11-13; 21:1-9; Joshua 20:4)

rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

- Rebellious son
 - Deuteronomy 21:18-21 (ESV) 18 “If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, 19 then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, 20 and they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ 21 Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

The Work of Elders

Judge

(Exodus 18:22, 26)

murder / manslaughter (Deuteronomy 19:11-13; 21:1-9; Joshua 20:4)

rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

confirming virginity (Deuteronomy 22:13-21)

- Confirming virginity
 - Deuteronomy 22:13-21 (ESV) 13 “If any man takes a wife and goes in to her and then hates her 14 and accuses her of misconduct and brings a bad name upon her, saying, ‘I took this woman, and when I came near her, I did not find in her evidence of virginity,’ 15 then the father of the young woman and her mother shall take and bring out the evidence of her virginity to the elders of the city in the gate. 16 And the father of the young woman shall say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man to marry, and he hates her; 17 and behold, he has accused her of misconduct, saying, ”I did not find in your daughter evidence of virginity.” And yet this is the evidence of my daughter’s virginity.’ And they shall spread the cloak before the elders of the city. 18 Then the elders of that city shall take the man and whip him, 19 and they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name upon a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife. He may not divorce her all his days. 20 But if the thing is true, that evidence of virginity was not found in the young woman, 21 then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done an outrageous thing in Israel by whoring in her father’s house. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

The Work of Elders

Judge

(Exodus 18:22, 26)

murder / manslaughter (Deuteronomy 19:11-13; 21:1-9; Joshua 20:4)

rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

confirming virginity (Deuteronomy 22:13-21)

levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:7-9)

- levirate marriage
 - Deuteronomy 25:7-9 (ESV) 7 And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, I do not wish to take her,' 9 then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.'
 - Ruth 4:2: And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.
 - Ruth 4:9: Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon.
 - Ruth 4:11: Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem,

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confirming virginity (Deuteronomy 22:13-21)

leverite marriage (Deuteronomy 25:7-9)

anointing king (2 Samuel 5:3)

- anointing king
 - 2 Samuel 5:3 (ESV) So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel.

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

- Religious matters

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

passover (Exodus 12:21)

- took lead in preparing for passover
 - 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.
- Why was the selection and killing of lamb so important that it must be an elder who did it?
- Knowledge/responsibility

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

passover (Exodus 12:21)

sin offering (Leviticus 4:13-15)

- Sin offering
 - Leviticus 4:13-15 (ESV) 13 “If the whole congregation of Israel **sins unintentionally** and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do any one of the things that by the Lord’s commandments ought not to be done, and they realize their guilt, 14 when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd for a sin offering and bring it in front of the tent of meeting.

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

passover (Exodus 12:21)

sin offering (Leviticus 4:13-15)

- Sin offering
 - 15 **And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the Lord, and the bull shall be killed before the Lord.**

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

passover (Exodus 12:21)

sin offering (Leviticus 4:13-15)

reading law (Deuteronomy 31:9-13; 2 Kings 23:1-3)

- Reading Law
 - Deuteronomy 31:9-13 (ESV) 9 Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the **elders of Israel**.

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

passover (Exodus 12:21)

sin offering (Leviticus 4:13-15)

reading law (Deuteronomy 31:9-13; 2 Kings 23:1-3)

- 10 And Moses commanded them, “At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose, **you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.**

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

passover (Exodus 12:21)

sin offering (Leviticus 4:13-15)

reading law (Deuteronomy 31:9-13; 2 Kings 23:1-3)

- 12 Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, 13 and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

passover (Exodus 12:21)

sin offering (Leviticus 4:13-15)

reading law (Deuteronomy 31:9-13; 2 Kings 23:1-3)

- Josiah: 2 Kings 23:1-3 (ESV) **Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him.** 2 And the king went up to the house of the Lord, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the Lord. 3 And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people joined in the covenant.

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

passover (Exodus 12:21)

sin offering (Leviticus 4:13-15)

reading law (Deuteronomy 31:9-13; 2 Kings 23:1-3)

mourning sin (Joshua 7:6; 1 Chronicles 21:16; Joel 1:14)

- mourning sin
 - Defeat at Ai:
 - Joshua 7:6: Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads.

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- Censur of people:
 - 1 Chronicles 21:16: And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

The Work of Elders

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passover (Exodus 12:21)

sin offering (Leviticus 4:13-15)

reading law (Deuteronomy 31:9-13; 2 Kings 23:1-3)

mourning sin (Joshua 7:6; 1 Chronicles 21:16; Joel 1:14)

- Joel 1:14: Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

Wisdom
(Ezekiel 7:26)

- Wisdom (implied)
 - Ezekiel 7:26: Disaster comes upon disaster; rumor follows rumor. They seek a vision from the prophet, **while the law perishes from the priest and counsel from the elders.**

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

Wisdom
(Ezekiel 7:26)

- Counsel
 - (CWSB Dictionary) meaning advice, a plan.
 - (TWOT) "to give counsel, deliberate, purpose, determine."

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

Wisdom
(Ezekiel 7:26)

- Psalms 73:24 (ESV) You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory.
- Proverbs 19:20-21 (ESV) 20 Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. 21 Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

The Work of Elders

Judge
(Exodus 18:22, 26)

Religious

Wisdom
(Ezekiel 7:26)

- How did “counsel” perish from elders?
 - Did they suddenly have no idea what to tell people?
 - No, they had abandoned God and wisdom from God’s laws

The Failures of the Elders

- The Failures of the Elders

The Failures of the Elders

Requesting a King

- Asking for a king (1 Samuel 8:4-5)
 - 1 Samuel 8:4-5: Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah 5 and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.”

The Failures of the Elders

**Requesting
a King**

- Rejecting God, God's Plan
- Following after the wisdom of the world

The Failures of the Elders

**Requesting
a King**

**Taking Ark of
the Covenant
into Battle**

- Using Ark of Covenant in Battle (1 Samuel 4:3-4; 11, 22)
 - 1 Samuel 4:3-4: 3 And when the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord here from Shiloh, that **it may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies.**” 4 So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

The Failures of the Elders

**Requesting
a King**

**Taking Ark of
the Covenant
into Battle**

- Using Ark of Covenant in Battle (1 Samuel 4:3-4; 11, 22)
 - 1 Samuel 4:11: And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.
 - 1 Samuel 4:22: And she said, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”

The Failures of the Elders

**Requesting
a King**

**Taking Ark of
the Covenant
into Battle**

- Superstitious talisman vs. actually accomplishing the will of Jehovah: inquiring, obeying
- Still common today: crosses, buildings, forms and rituals
 - substituted for true obedience.
 - forgetting that the power is God!

The Failures of the Elders

**Requesting
a King**

**Taking Ark of
the Covenant
into Battle**

**Aiding
Jezebel's
Evil Plot**

- Obeying Jezebel (1 Kings 21:8, 11)
 - 1 Kings 21:8: So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the leaders who lived with Naboth in his city.
 - 1 Kings 21:11: And the men of his city, the elders and the leaders who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters that she had sent to them,

The Failures of the Elders

**Requesting
a King**

**Taking Ark of
the Covenant
into Battle**

**Aiding
Jezebel's
Evil Plot**

- Instead of doing what was right (regardless of consequences) they capitulated to the idolatrous queen and king.

The Failures of the Elders



- Oppression (Isaiah 3:12-15)
 - Isaiah 3:14 The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: “It is you who have **devoured the vineyard**, the **spoil of the poor** is in your houses. 15 What do you mean by **crushing my people**, by **grinding the face of the poor**?” declares the Lord God of hosts.

The Failures of the Elders



- Using, Abusing, Scattering Sheep (Ezekiel 34:1-10)
 - Don't feed sheep, rather feed off of sheep
 - Use sheep selfishly
 - Scatter sheep instead of protecting sheep
 - Don't care for sheep, let them suffer without out aid instead of caring, healing, helping
 - Rule with force and harshness

The Failures of the Elders



- Idolatry (Ezekiel 8:7-13; 14:1-5)
 - Ezekiel 8:12 Then he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in his room of pictures? **For they say, The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.**” 13 He said also to me, “You will see still greater abominations that they commit.”
 - Ezekiel 14:1-5 (ESV) 1 Then certain of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. 2 And the word of the Lord came to me: 3 “Son of man, these men have **taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces.** Not faithful to true God

The Failures of the Elders



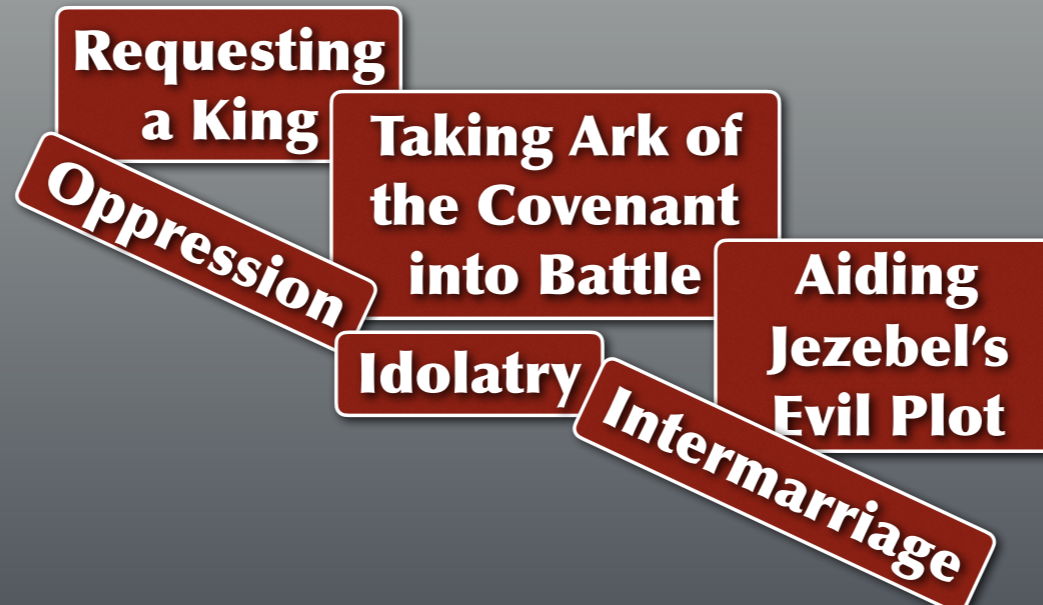
- Hearts are given to iniquity and sin
- Dismissive of true God: cannot see, cannot act

The Failures of the Elders



- Intermarriage (Ezra 10:8, 14)
 - Ezra 10:8: and that if anyone did not come within three days, by order of the officials and the elders all his property should be forfeited, and he himself banned from the congregation of the exiles.

The Failures of the Elders



- Intermarriage (Ezra 10:8, 14)
 - Ezra 10:14: Let our officials stand for the whole assembly. Let all in our cities who have taken foreign wives come at appointed times, and with them the elders and judges of every city, until the fierce wrath of our God over this matter is turned away from us.“

The Failures of the Elders



- Bad example
- Failure to obey God, Word

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?

- Learn?

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?

- Learn?

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?

**Elders led in
worshiping
Jehovah.**



- leading worship: mourning sin, sin offerings, reading law; passover
 - Contrast: Idolatry
- Should not elders in the church be in the forefront of our worship?
- Godly men who fear God demonstrating reverence and joy and sorrow in our worship; reading law.

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?

**Elders led in
worshiping
Jehovah.**

**Elders maintained
justice between
brethren.**

- Maintaining Justice between brethren
 - Innocence vs. guilt
 - Punishment? Discipline? Too harsh? Too severe? Too tolerant?
 - Contrast: Jezebel's lackey's

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?

**Elders led in
worshiping
Jehovah.**

**Elders maintained
justice between
brethren.**

- We know that brothers and sisters don't always get along as they should
 - sin, forgiveness
 - opinion (eating of meats; honoring days - Romans 14)
 - words
- Elders, using God's word, help us maintain pure relationships.

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?

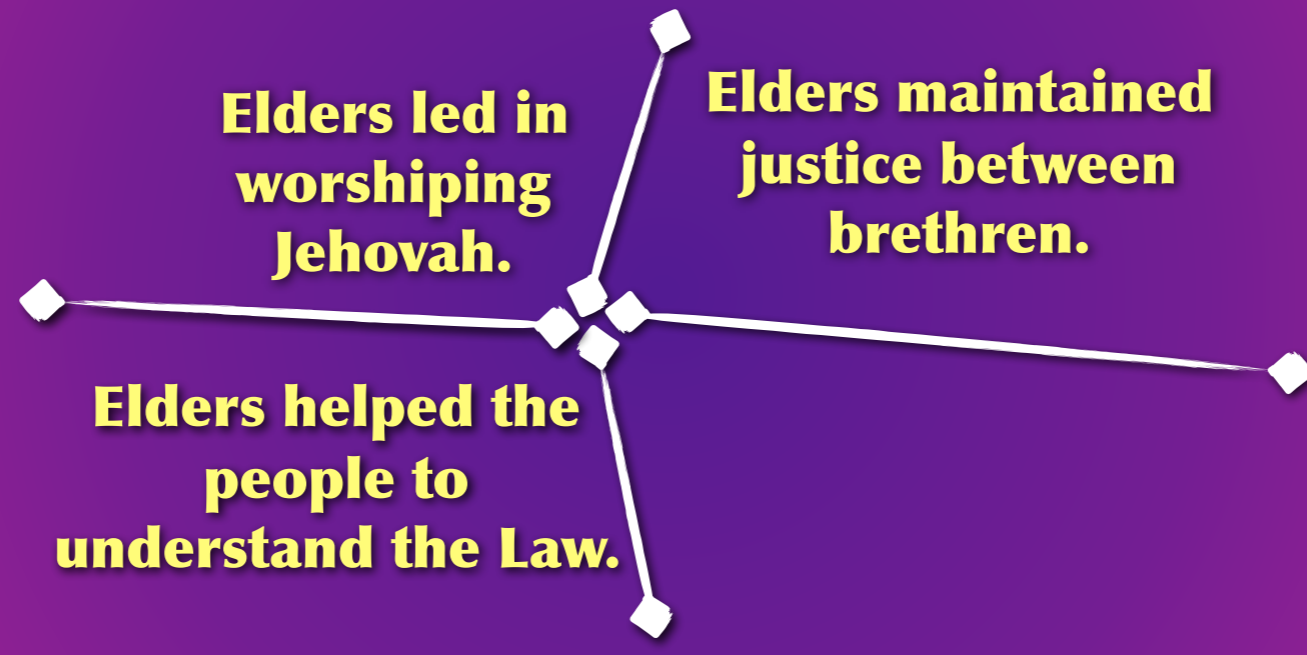
**Elders led in
worshiping
Jehovah.**

**Elders maintained
justice between
brethren.**

**Elders helped the
people to
understand the Law.**

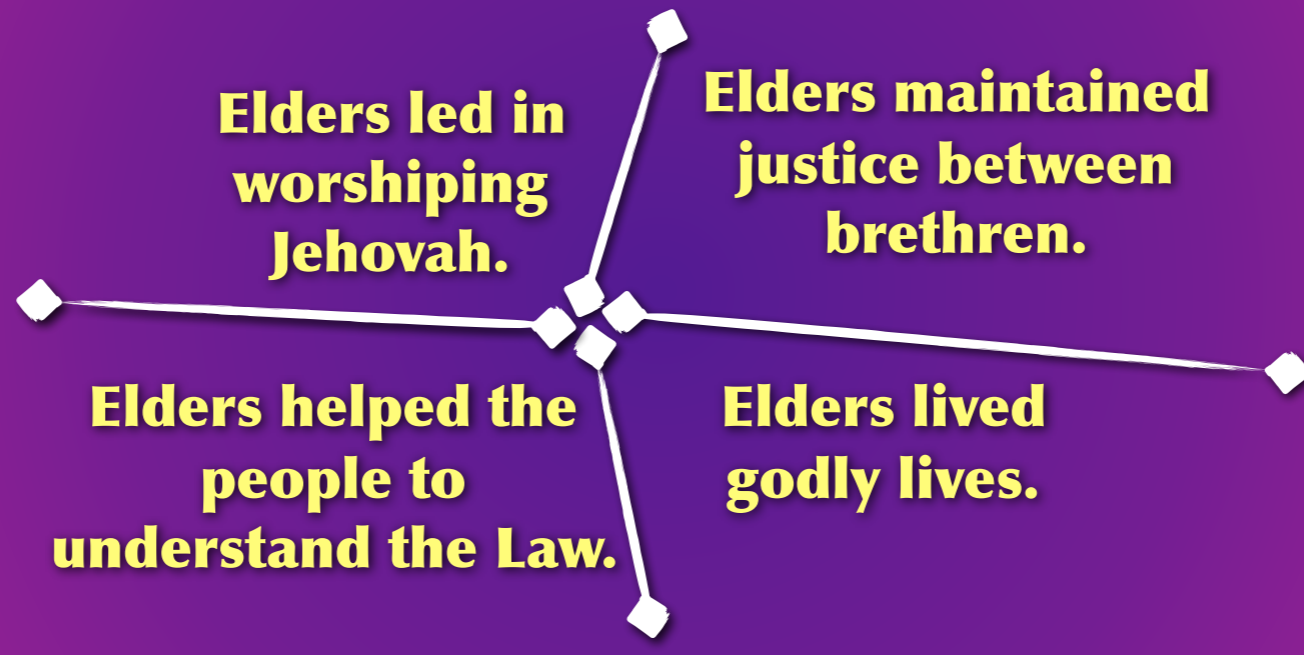
- Helping people to understand the nuances of God's Law in their lives; help them to make correct decision.
 - Men of truth; reading of law —> know law, apply correctly
 - Always based in Truth; God's Word
 - Help to bring understanding of correct application in specific situation
 - Contrast: superstitious use of Ark;

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?



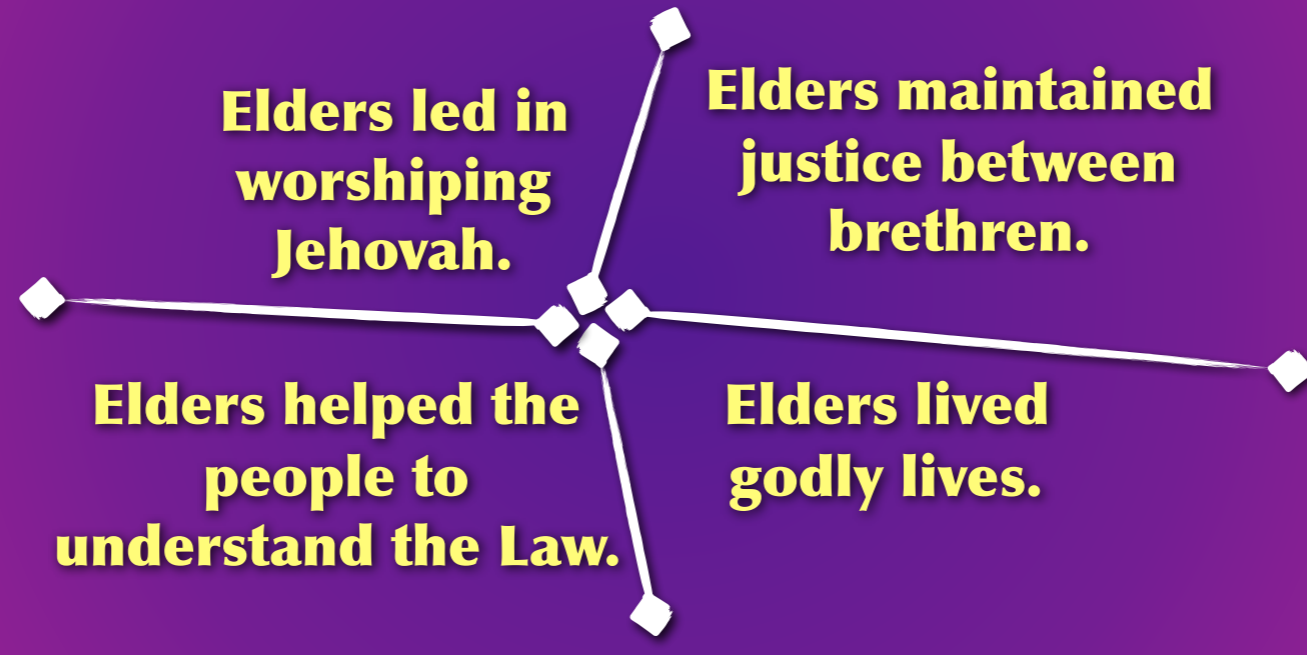
- Contrast: superstitious use of Ark;
- Elders are not making rules or laws; not ruling, not lords.
 - Not force or harshness
 - God's Law — apply correctly in difficult situations
 - You may have different understanding: they are elders, I submit.

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?



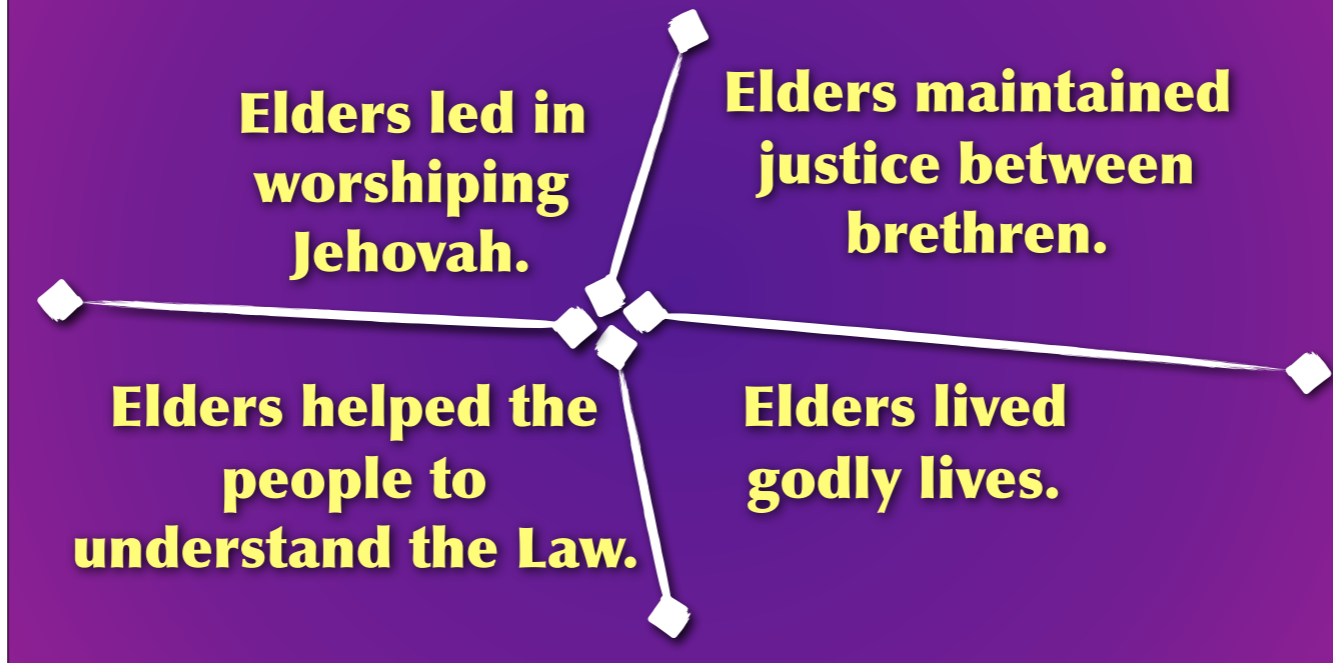
- Lived godly, holy lives
 - able men who fear God (Exodus 18:21)
 - Instrumental in making or leading in making changes for the better or the worse.
 - Asking for king
 - Anointing David?
 - contrast: intermarriage
- Set a good example for brethren

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?



- If looking to world, denominations, etc. instead of God, God's plan, God's purpose: church will depart from right way.

What do we learn from the elders of Israel?



- Does this not provide a great help for us understanding the role of elders in the church?
- It's not conclusive; but is very helpful to see.
- What men among us have demonstrated they are such leaders as God desires?
 - Which of us have demonstrated that we are willing to be lead by such men in difficult and trying circumstances?

**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>

Shepherds

#04

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The Elders of Israel: Work

Exodus 18:21

Synopsis: The role of the elders of Israel helps us to understand the breadth of the work intended by those who shepherd His church today.

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