

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism • Christianity • Islam*

DOCUMENT 265

SEVEN OFFICES, ONE KING

A Covenant Deep Dive into the Prophet, Priest, Elder, Patriarch, King, Judge, and Sage in the Tanakh

What Is Each Office, Who Called the One Who Held It, How Was It Entered, What Was It For, How Did It Fail, and Who May Hold It Today? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Rabbinic tradition traces a chain of offices: <i>“Moses received the Torah at Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly”</i> (Mishnah Avot 1:1). It holds that prophecy ceased after Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, that the <i>kohanim (priests)</i> are still known by family tradition, and that the king and the Great Sanhedrin await restoration.	Since Eusebius (<i>Ecclesiastical History</i> 1.3) and Calvin (<i>Institutes</i> 2.15), Christian teaching has gathered prophet, priest, and king into one <i>“threefold office.”</i> The churches today use the titles elder, priest, bishop, patriarch, and prophet in very different ways. The Tanakh speaks first: what each office was before any later use of its name.	The Qur'an honors the <i>nabi (prophet)</i> and the <i>rasul (messenger)</i> , names Talut (Saul) and Dawud (David) as kings, and calls Dawud a <i>khalifa (vicegerent)</i> who judges with truth (Q. 38:26). It says the prophets, the rabbis, and the scholars are judged by the Torah (Q. 5:44). Islam has no sacramental priesthood; its scholars are called <i>“heirs of the prophets”</i> (Sunan Abi Dawud 3641).

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh's** own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh's** covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written *Tanakh* to seven offices: the prophet, the priest, the elder, the patriarch, the king, the judge, and the sage. For each office it asks what the Hebrew word means, who called the man or woman who held it, how the office was entered, what it was for, how it failed, and whether it can be held today. **Yahweh** (יהוה) and **Elohim** (אֱלֹהִים) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books and personal names are given in English. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with their English meaning, also bold italic, in parentheses. Scripture references are bold. Verse numbers follow the English versions; where the Hebrew numbering differs, it is given in brackets. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. Each finding is graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as **Corroborated** (two or more independent Tanakh witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Three audiences are addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic literature, the New Testament, church teaching, and the Qur'an and hadith appear only in the opening table, the Comparative Texts table, and the Three-Religion Audit, as historical and comparative reference — not as binding authority. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	The patriarchs and their altars; Sinai and the priesthood; the elders and the seventy; the charter of the offices in Deuteronomy 16:18–18:22
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	The judges as deliverers; the rise and the law of the king; the calling and testing of prophets; corrupted offices and the promise of their restoration
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles	Elders at the gate; the words of the wise; Ezra the scribe and judges outside the Land; Jehoshaphat's courts; the priesthood closed to those without a proven genealogy

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
New Testament	Matthew 23:8–10; Acts 2:29; 7:8; 14:23; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9; Hebrews 5:4; 7:1–17; 1 Peter 2:9	How Christianity uses the titles elder, patriarch, prophet, and priest; the Melchizedek argument; <i>“a royal priesthood”</i>
Qur'an and hadith	Q. 2:247, 251; 3:79; 4:59; 5:44; 9:31; 31:12; 33:40; 38:26; 42:38; Sunan Abi Dawud 3573, 3641	Prophets and messengers; kings, judges, and the wise in the Islamic witness; scholars as heirs of the prophets
Rabbinic literature	Mishnah Avot 1:1; Mishnah Sanhedrin 1:6; Tosefta Sotah 13:3; Talmud Bava Batra 12a; Maimonides, Laws of Kings 1:1 and Laws of the Sanhedrin 4:11	The chain of tradition; the end of prophecy; the sages; the king and the court awaited

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Church history and teaching	Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> 1.3; Council of Nicaea, canon 6 (325); Council of Chalcedon, canon 28 (451); Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> 2.15; Luther, <i>To the Christian Nobility</i> (1520); Council of Trent, Session 23 (1563); James I, <i>The True Law of Free Monarchies</i> (1598); Doctrine and Covenants 107	The “ <i>threefold office</i> ”; the rise of patriarchates; ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of all believers; divine right of kings; modern offices of patriarch and prophet
Historical sources	Septuagint (Greek) of Chronicles; Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i> 1.41	Where the word “ <i>patriarch</i> ” comes from; the ancient view that the line of prophets had ended

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — SEVEN OFFICES, ONE KING

I-A. The Question as It Is Asked

The words are used every day in every covenant tradition: prophet, priest, elder, patriarch, king, judge, sage. Churches ordain elders and priests. Some men call themselves prophets. Eastern churches have patriarchs. Rabbinic Judaism is built on the teaching of the sages. Islam honors its scholars as the heirs of the prophets. Very few who use these titles stop to ask what the Tanakh actually meant by them.

This study asks the same six questions of each office:

First: what does the Hebrew word mean?

Second: who called the person who held it — **Yahweh** directly, the people, or an earlier office-holder?

Third: how was the office entered — by birth, by anointing, by the laying on of hands, by recognition, or by a gift?

Fourth: what was the office for?

Fifth: how did it fail, and what did the prophets say when it did?

Sixth: can it be held today, and by whom?

This study builds on earlier work in the Library and does not repeat it. **Doc 146** (*The Shofar, the Sod, and the Sovereign*) examined **Amos 3:7** and the prophet's place in the council of **Yahweh**. The May 2026 study *The Office of the Prophet in the Tanakh* examined the tests of a prophet and the long silence.

Doc 218 examined the true and false prophet in **Jeremiah 23:26–28**. The June 2026 study *A Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation* examined **Exodus 19:6**. **Doc 132** examined the demand for a king in **1 Samuel 8**, and **Doc 221** examined the law of the king. **Doc 209** examined the holy anointing oil. **Doc 216** (*Called and Chosen*) examined the anointing of the elder, and **Doc 228** examined the words of the wise in **Ecclesiastes 12:9–14**. The present document sets all seven offices side by side, shows how they fit together and where the Torah keeps them apart, and refines four points in Doc 216 (Section XIII).

I-B. The Governing Text — Yahweh Holds Every Office First

One verse names three of the offices and gives all three to **Yahweh** before any man holds them:

“For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king; He will save us” (Isaiah 33:22).

כִּי יְהוָה שֹׁפֵטֵנוּ יְהוָה מְחַקְקֵנוּ יְהוָה מֶלֶכְנוּ הוּא יוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ

Every human office in this study is a delegated office. The judge judges because *“judgment belongs to Elohim”* (**Deuteronomy 1:17**). The king reigns under a King (**1 Samuel 8:7**). The prophet speaks words that are not his own (**Deuteronomy 18:18**). The priest serves at an altar that is not his own (**Numbers 18:7**). The sage has nothing that was not given (**Proverbs 2:6**). The elder and the patriarch govern households and towns that belong to **Yahweh** (**Leviticus 25:23**). The title of this study states the point: seven offices, one King.

I-C. The Charter of the Offices — Deuteronomy 16:18 to 18:22

Moses sets out the offices of the covenant nation in one continuous passage, in the order a nation needs them. The table shows the sequence.

TEXT	OFFICE	WHAT THE TEXT ESTABLISHES
Deuteronomy 16:18–20	Judges and officers	<i>“In all your gates”</i> — local courts that must not pervert justice, show partiality, or take a bribe
Deuteronomy 17:8–13	The higher court	The Levitical priests and <i>“the judge who shall be in those days,”</i> at the place Yahweh chooses
Deuteronomy 17:14–20	The king	Chosen by Yahweh , from among the brothers, limited in horses, wives, and silver, writing and reading the Torah all his days

TEXT	OFFICE	WHAT THE TEXT ESTABLISHES
Deuteronomy 18:1–8	The priests and Levites	No inheritance in the Land; Yahweh is their inheritance; they serve in His name
Deuteronomy 18:9–22	The prophet	Raised up by Yahweh from among the brothers, with Yahweh's words in his mouth, tested by whether his word comes to pass

Three further offices stand outside this charter but run all through it. The elders sit at the gate in every town (**Deuteronomy 19:12; 21:19; 22:15; 25:7**). The fathers of the nation stand behind it as the ones to whom the covenant was sworn (**Deuteronomy 1:8**). The wise are the men Moses told the tribes to choose (**Deuteronomy 1:13**), and the keeping of the statutes is called the nation's wisdom in the sight of the peoples (**Deuteronomy 4:6**).

I-D. How the Findings Are Graded

Every finding below is graded. A finding is **Corroborated** when two or more independent Tanakh witnesses carry it (**Deuteronomy 19:15**). It is a **Single witness** when only one text carries it. It is **Not in the text** when it is taught but the Tanakh does not say it.

II. THE WORD STUDY — WHAT THE HEBREW SAYS

The Tanakh names each office by what it does. The table sets out the vocabulary this study relies on.

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>navi (prophet)</i> , נָבִיא	H5030	One who speaks for another; the mouth of Yahweh to the people	Exodus 7:1; Deuteronomy 18:18
<i>ro'eh (seer)</i> , רֹאֶה, and <i>chozeh (visionary)</i> , חֹזֶה	H7203 / H2374	Older names for the prophet, from verbs of seeing	1 Samuel 9:9; 2 Samuel 24:11
<i>ish ha-Elohim (man of Elohim)</i> , אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים	H376 / H430	A title for a prophet sent by Yahweh	Deuteronomy 33:1; 1 Samuel 9:6
<i>kohen (priest)</i> , כֹּהֵן	H3548	One who stands and serves before Yahweh at His altar	Exodus 28:1; Numbers 3:10

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>Levi (Levite)</i> , לֵוִי, לֵוִי	H3878	The tribe given to assist the priests and guard the sanctuary	Numbers 3:5–10; 18:1–7
<i>zaken (elder)</i> , זָקֵן, זָקֵן	H2205	An old man; by extension, a recognized head of a town or tribe	Leviticus 19:32; Deuteronomy 21:19
<i>avot (fathers)</i> , אָבוֹת, and <i>rashei avot (heads of fathers' houses)</i> , ראְשֵׁי אָבוֹת, אָבוֹת	H1 / H7218	The fathers to whom the covenant was sworn; the heads of family lines	Exodus 3:15; Numbers 1:4
<i>nasi (chieftain)</i> , נָשִׂיא, נָשִׂיא	H5387	One lifted up; a tribal leader or prince	Genesis 23:6; Numbers 1:16
<i>melech (king)</i> , מֶלֶךְ, מֶלֶךְ	H4428	One who reigns	Deuteronomy 17:14–15; Isaiah 33:22
<i>nagid (designated leader)</i> , נָגִיד, נָגִיד	H5057	One set in front; the ruler Yahweh designates	1 Samuel 9:16; 10:1
<i>shofet (judge)</i> , שֹׁפֵט, שֹׁפֵט	H8199	One who decides cases, sets things right, and delivers	Deuteronomy 16:18; Judges 2:16
<i>shoter (officer)</i> , שֹׁטֵר, שֹׁטֵר	H7860	An official who records and enforces	Deuteronomy 16:18
<i>chakham (wise one / sage)</i> , חָכָם, חָכָם	H2450	One who is skilled; one who has wisdom for living	Deuteronomy 1:13; Proverbs 22:17
<i>chokhmah (wisdom)</i> , חֲכָמָה, חֲכָמָה	H2451	Skill — of the craftsman, the counselor, the righteous	Exodus 31:3; Proverbs 9:10
<i>etsah (counsel)</i> , עֵצָה, עֵצָה	H6098	Advice; a plan; the gift of the wise	Jeremiah 18:18; 2 Samuel 16:23
<i>mashach (to anoint)</i> , מָשַׁח, מָשַׁח	H4886	To smear with oil; to consecrate	Exodus 29:7; 1 Samuel 16:13
<i>samakb (to lay [the hand])</i> , סָמַךְ, סָמַךְ	H5564	To lean or lay upon; the act of commissioning	Numbers 27:18, 23

Three lexical observations govern what follows.

First, each office is named for a work, not a rank.

The *navi* (*prophet*) speaks.

The *kohen* (*priest*) serves.

The *shofet* (*judge*) sets things right.

The *chakham* (*sage*) is skilled.

The word *chakham* (*wise*) is first used in the Torah of craftsmen: **Yahweh** filled the “*wise of heart*” to make Aaron’s garments (**Exodus 28:3**), and Bezalel was filled “*with the spirit of Elohim, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all workmanship*” (**Exodus 31:3**). None of these words is a title of honor detached from a task.

Second, the word “patriarch” is not Hebrew. The Tanakh speaks of *avot* (*fathers*), of *rashei avot* (*heads of fathers’ houses*), and of the *nasi* (*chieftain*). The English word comes through the Greek *patriarchēs* (ruler of a family line), which the Septuagint uses in Chronicles for the heads of fathers’ houses (for example, the Greek of **1 Chronicles 24:31** and **27:22**). Section VI examines what the Hebrew terms cover.

Third, the Tanakh itself groups the offices by what each one gives. When Jeremiah’s enemies plotted against him, they said:

“For the Torah shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet” (**Jeremiah 18:18**).

כִּי לֹא תֵאָבֵד תּוֹרָה מִכֹּהֵן וְעֵצָה מִחֲכָמִים וְדָבָר מִנְבִּיא

Ezekiel lists the same three gifts as they fail on the day of judgment:

“they shall seek a vision from the prophet, but the Torah shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders” (**Ezekiel 7:26**).

The priest gives *torah* (*instruction*).

The prophet gives the *davar* (*word*) or the *chazon* (*vision*).

The wise man, or the elder, gives *etsah* (*counsel*).

Finding: that the priest, the prophet, and the wise or elder were known by three distinct gifts is Corroborated (**Jeremiah 18:18; Ezekiel 7:26**). Ezekiel puts the elders where Jeremiah puts the wise, which shows how closely the two were joined.

III. THE PROPHET — THE MOUTH OF YAHWEH

III-A. What the Word Means

The Torah defines the *navi (prophet)* by an example before it gives a law. When Moses protested that he was slow of speech, **Yahweh** made Aaron his spokesman:

“He shall be your spokesman to the people; he shall be to you a mouth, and you shall be to him as Elohim” (Exodus 4:16).

Then **Yahweh** named the relationship:

“See, I have made you as Elohim to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet” (Exodus 7:1).

A prophet is a mouth for another. The law of the prophet says the same as the prophet **Yahweh** raises: *“I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him”* (Deuteronomy 18:18). Jeremiah received the same commission in the same words: *“Behold, I have put My words in your mouth”* (Jeremiah 1:9).

The older names stress seeing rather than speaking. *“He who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer”* (1 Samuel 9:9). Gad is called *“the prophet, David’s seer”* (2 Samuel 24:11). Moses and the prophets after him are also called *ish ha-Elohim (man of Elohim)* (Deuteronomy 33:1; 1 Samuel 9:6).

Finding: the prophet is one who receives a word or a vision from **Yahweh** and speaks it to others.
Corroborated (Exodus 4:16; 7:1; Deuteronomy 18:18; Jeremiah 1:9).

III-B. How a Prophet Was Made

No text in the Tanakh shows a prophet appointed by a man, elected by the people, or born into the office. Every recorded call comes from **Yahweh** directly. Isaiah saw **Yahweh** on His throne and answered, *“Here am I; send me”* (Isaiah 6:8). Jeremiah was told, *“Before I formed you in the belly I knew you ... I appointed you a prophet to the nations”* (Jeremiah 1:5). Ezekiel was sent to a rebellious house (Ezekiel 2:3–5). Amos answered the priest of Bethel:

“I was no prophet, nor was I a prophet’s son; I was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore figs. And Yahweh took me from following the flock, and Yahweh said to me, Go, prophesy to My people Israel” (Amos 7:14–15).

Women held the office by the same call. Miriam is *“the prophetess”* (Exodus 15:20). Deborah was *“a prophetess”* who judged Israel (Judges 4:4). Huldah was consulted by King Josiah’s officers when the

book of the Torah was found, and her word was received as the word of **Yahweh** (2 Kings 22:14–20). Isaiah's wife is called *“the prophetess”* (Isaiah 8:3). The office could also be counterfeited by women as by men; Nehemiah names *“Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets”* who tried to frighten him (Nehemiah 6:14).

Was the prophet anointed with oil? **Yahweh** commanded Elijah, *“Elisha the son of Shaphat ... you shall anoint to be prophet in your place”* (1 Kings 19:16). The fulfillment, however, records no oil. Elijah found Elisha plowing and *“cast his mantle upon him”* (1 Kings 19:19). Isaiah speaks of being anointed, but explains the anointing as the spirit of **Yahweh** (Isaiah 61:1). The patriarchs are called **Yahweh's** *“anointed ones”* in a psalm that also calls them *“My prophets”* (Psalms 105:15; 1 Chronicles 16:22), yet no oil is ever poured on them in Genesis.

Finding: a prophet was made by the direct call of **Yahweh**, not by human appointment or descent. **Corroborated** (Isaiah 6:8; Jeremiah 1:5; Amos 7:14–15). That any prophet received literal anointing oil is **Not in the text**; the one command to anoint a prophet (1 Kings 19:16) was carried out with a mantle (1 Kings 19:19).

III-C. What a Prophet Did

He stood in the council. Jeremiah's test of the false prophets was whether they had stood in **Yahweh's** *sod (council)*, **תיו**: *“But if they had stood in My council, then they would have caused My people to hear My words, and turned them from their evil way”* (Jeremiah 23:22; compare 23:18). Amos says the same: *“Surely the Lord Yahweh does nothing, unless He reveals His counsel to His servants the prophets”* (Amos 3:7). Doc 146 examined that verse in full.

He called the nation to return. *“Yahweh testified against Israel and against Judah by all the prophets and every seer, saying, Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments”* (2 Kings 17:13; compare Zechariah 1:3–4).

He interceded. The first man called a prophet in the Torah is called one because he prays: *“He is a prophet, and he shall pray for you, and you shall live”* (Genesis 20:7). **Yahweh** later named Moses and Samuel as the great intercessors (Jeremiah 15:1).

He watched. *“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; when you hear a word from My mouth, you shall warn them from Me”* (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7). If he failed to warn, their blood would be required at his hand (Ezekiel 33:8).

He confronted kings. Nathan told David, *“You are the man”* (2 Samuel 12:7). Elijah met Ahab in Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:17–24). Gad brought David the choice of judgments (2 Samuel

24:11–14). Samuel anointed Saul and David and rebuked Saul (**1 Samuel 10:1; 15:22–23; 16:13**). The prophet stood outside the king's authority and over his conscience.

III-D. The Tests of a Prophet

Because a prophet's word claims **Yahweh**'s authority, the Torah gives the people tests to apply. They are corroborated across the Torah and the Prophets.

TEST	TEXT	WHAT IT REQUIRES
Loyalty to Yahweh	Deuteronomy 13:1–5	Even if a sign comes true, a prophet who says <i>“Let us go after other gods”</i> is false
The word comes to pass	Deuteronomy 18:21–22	If the thing does not happen, Yahweh has not spoken; the prophet spoke presumptuously
Speaking without being sent	Deuteronomy 18:20; Jeremiah 23:21	A prophet who speaks a word Yahweh did not command, or in the name of other gods, is condemned
A prophet of peace	Jeremiah 28:8–9	The prophet who promises peace is known as sent only when his word comes to pass
Stolen and dreamed words	Jeremiah 23:25–32	<i>“What is the straw to the wheat?”</i> Dreams are not the word (Doc 218)
Moral fruit	Jeremiah 23:14; Micah 3:5, 11	Prophets who strengthen evildoers or divine for money are condemned

Moses himself stands apart from all later prophets. To others **Yahweh** speaks *“in a vision ... in a dream”*; with Moses He speaks *“mouth to mouth, plainly, and not in riddles”* (Numbers 12:6–8). *“There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face”* (Deuteronomy 34:10). Every later prophet is measured by the Torah given through Moses, never the other way around (Deuteronomy 13:1–5; Isaiah 8:20).

III-E. The Silence

The Tanakh itself records that there were times without prophetic vision. *“The word of Yahweh was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision”* (1 Samuel 3:1). After the destruction of the first Temple a psalmist lamented, *“We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet”* (Psalms 74:9). Amos foresaw *“a famine ... of hearing the words of Yahweh”* (Amos 8:11). The prophets

also look forward to a return: **Yahweh will pour out His spirit on all flesh, and their sons and daughters will prophesy** (Joel 2:28 [Hebrew 3:1]), and He will send Elijah before the great and fearful day of **Yahweh** (Malachi 4:5 [Hebrew 3:23]). The May 2026 prophet study examined these promises, and Doc 261 examined Elijah's departure.

Finding — the prophet: the prophet is Yahweh's mouth, called directly by Him, standing in His council, calling the nation to return, interceding, watching, and confronting kings, and tested by loyalty to Yahweh and by whether his word comes to pass. Corroborated on every point. The Tanakh records periods with no prophetic vision and promises a future outpouring.

That any person may make himself a prophet, or be made one by an institution, is Not in the text.

IV. THE PRIEST — THE ONE WHO STANDS AT THE ALTAR

IV-A. Before Sinai

Priests appear in Genesis before Israel was a nation. *“Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of El Elyon”* (Genesis 14:18). Moses' father-in-law Jethro was *“the priest of Midian”* (Exodus 2:16; 3:1; 18:1), and Joseph married the daughter of *“Potiphera priest of On”* (Genesis 41:45). Within the covenant family there is no priestly office, but the fathers offered sacrifice themselves. Noah built an altar and offered burnt offerings (Genesis 8:20). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob built altars wherever they settled (Genesis 12:7–8; 26:25; 33:20; 35:7). Job *“rose early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all”* for his children (Job 1:5).

Even at Sinai, before Aaron was consecrated, the text mentions *“the priests who come near to Yahweh”* (Exodus 19:22, 24), and Moses sent *“young men of the children of Israel”* to offer the burnt offerings of the covenant (Exodus 24:5).

Finding: before the Aaronic priesthood, sacrifice was offered by heads of families and by recognized priests outside Israel. Corroborated (Genesis 8:20; 14:18; Job 1:5; Exodus 19:22; 24:5).

IV-B. At Sinai — A Kingdom of Priests, and One Family at the Altar

At Sinai two things were said about priesthood, and both must be held together. To the whole nation:

“You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6).

And to Moses about one family: *“Bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest”* (Exodus 28:1). *“The*

priesthood shall be theirs by a perpetual statute” (Exodus 29:9). The first is a calling of the whole people among the nations. The second is the office at the altar, and the Torah closes it:

“You shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall keep their priesthood; and the stranger who comes near shall be put to death” (Numbers 3:10; compare 18:7).

The word *zar* (*stranger / outsider*), זָר, here means anyone who is not of Aaron's line, including other Israelites and other Levites. Korah was a Levite. When he and his company claimed that *“all the congregation is holy, every one of them”* and offered incense (Numbers 16:3), the earth swallowed them, and their censers were hammered into a covering for the altar

“to be a memorial to the children of Israel, that no stranger who is not of the seed of Aaron should come near to offer incense before Yahweh” (Numbers 16:40 [Hebrew 17:5]).

The June 2026 study of Exodus 19:6 examined the national calling.

Finding: after Sinai, the office of priest at the altar belonged to Aaron's descendants alone.
Corroborated (Exodus 28:1; 29:9; Numbers 3:10; 16:40; 18:7).

IV-C. What the Priest Did

The priest's work was more than sacrifice. The Torah assigns him six duties, each with more than one witness.

DUTY	TEXTS	WHAT IT MEANT
Serve at the altar and make atonement	Leviticus 16; Numbers 18:5–7	Offerings, incense, the Day of Atonement (Doc 239)
Distinguish and teach	Leviticus 10:10–11; Deuteronomy 33:10; Ezekiel 44:23	Teach the difference between holy and common, clean and unclean, and teach all the statutes
Keep knowledge	Malachi 2:6–7; Haggai 2:11–13	<i>“The lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and they should seek Torah at his mouth”</i>
Bless the people	Numbers 6:22–27; Deuteronomy 21:5	<i>“So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them”</i>
Judge with the judge	Deuteronomy 17:8–12; 21:5; 2 Chronicles 19:8	Sit with the judge in the hard cases at the place Yahweh chooses

DUTY	TEXTS	WHAT IT MEANT
Inquire of Yahweh	Numbers 27:21; 1 Samuel 23:9–12	By the Urim before Yahweh , for the leader of the people

The Levites were given to the priests as helpers:

“They shall keep your charge and the charge of the whole tent; only they shall not come near the vessels of the sanctuary or the altar” (Numbers 18:3; compare 3:5–10).

They carried the Tabernacle, guarded it, sang, and taught (Numbers 4; 1 Chronicles 23:28–32; Nehemiah 8:7–8). The Tanakh keeps the two apart: every priest was a Levite, but not every Levite was a priest (Deuteronomy 18:1–8; Ezekiel 44:10–16).

IV-D. Who May Not Serve

The Tanakh records three rulers who took priestly service on themselves, and in each case the act is judged.

Saul. Waiting at Gilgal, Saul offered the burnt offering himself. Samuel said, *“You have done foolishly ... now your kingdom shall not continue”* (1 Samuel 13:9–14).

Uzziah. The king of Judah went into the Temple to burn incense. Azariah the priest and eighty priests withstood him: *“It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to Yahweh, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense”*. Leprosy broke out on his forehead, and he was a leper until his death (2 Chronicles 26:16–21).

Jeroboam. The first king of the northern kingdom *“made priests from among all the people, who were not of the sons of Levi”*, and *“this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam”* (1 Kings 12:31; 13:33–34).

One verse stands in tension with this pattern. 2 Samuel 8:18 says *“David’s sons were kohanim (priests)”*, while the parallel in 1 Chronicles 18:17 calls them *“chief at the king’s side.”* The word in Samuel may have carried a court sense in that verse; no text shows David’s sons serving at the altar. It is a **Single witness** and cannot overturn the corroborated rule of Numbers 3:10.

IV-E. When the Priest Fails

Eli’s sons took the people’s offerings by force, and *“the sin of the young men was very great before Yahweh”* (1 Samuel 2:12–17).

Hosea brought Yahweh's charge against the priests of his day: *“Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being priest to Me”* (Hosea 4:6).

Jeremiah: *“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own hands; and My people love to have it so”* (Jeremiah 5:31).

Malachi: *“You have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble in the Torah; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi”* (Malachi 2:8).

Doc 250 showed that Malachi rebuked the priests before he said a word about the tithe.

IV-F. Where the Priesthood Stands Now

After the exile, men who claimed priestly descent but *“sought their register among those who were enrolled by genealogy, but it was not found”* were *“excluded from the priesthood as unclean”*, and they were not to eat the most holy things *“until a priest should stand up with Urim and Thummim”* (Ezra 2:62–63; Nehemiah 7:64–65).

Hosea foresaw that Israel would remain *“many days without king, without prince, without sacrifice, without pillar, and without ephod”* (Hosea 3:4).

The promise of restoration names the priesthood: “I will also take some of them for priests and for Levites, says Yahweh” (Isaiah 66:21), and to the restored people, “you shall be called the priests of Yahweh” (Isaiah 61:6).

Finding — the priest: the office at the altar was given to Aaron's line, closed to every outsider, and charged with service, teaching, blessing, judging with the judge, and inquiry. Corroborated. The whole nation was called to be a kingdom of priests among the nations. Corroborated (Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6). That any person today, without a proven genealogy and a standing altar, holds the office of *kohen* (priest) is Not in the text (Ezra 2:62–63).

V. THE ELDER — THE TESTED HEAD AT THE GATE

V-A. Age and Office

The word *zaken* (elder) means an old man before it means an officer. The Torah commands honor for age itself:

“You shall rise up before the gray head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear your Elohim; I am Yahweh” (Leviticus 19:32).

From the same word comes the office: the *zekenim* (*elders*), זִקְנִים, the recognized heads of families, towns, and tribes.

Elders are the oldest office of the covenant nation. They existed in Egypt before the Exodus. **Yahweh** told Moses, *“Go and gather the elders of Israel together”* (Exodus 3:16), and Moses and Aaron *“gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel”* (Exodus 4:29). Moses gave the command for the first Passover through them (Exodus 12:21).

Before there was a priest, a king, or a judge in Israel, there were elders.

V-B. Elders at Sinai and in the Wilderness

Seventy of the elders went up the mountain with Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu: *“They saw the Elohim of Israel ... and they beheld Elohim, and ate and drank”* (Exodus 24:9–11). When Moses could no longer carry the people alone, **Yahweh** said:

“Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be elders of the people and officers over them ... and I will take of the spirit that is upon you and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you” (Numbers 11:16–17).

Two details matter. The seventy were already elders; **Yahweh** did not create the office there but empowered men who held it. And the text records no laying on of hands:

“Yahweh came down in the cloud ... and took of the spirit that was upon him, and put it upon the seventy elders” (Numbers 11:25).

When Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp and Joshua wanted them stopped, Moses answered,

“Would that all Yahweh’s people were prophets, that Yahweh would put His spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:29).

V-C. Elders at the Gate

In the Land, the elders sat in the gate of every town and carried the covenant’s civil law. The Torah assigns them specific cases, and the narrative shows them doing it.

CASE	TEXT	THE ELDERS’ DUTY
The deliberate murderer	Deuteronomy 19:11–12; Joshua 20:4	Fetch him from the city of refuge and deliver him to the avenger; hear the manslayer at the gate
The unsolved killing	Deuteronomy 21:1–9	The elders of the nearest town wash their hands over the heifer and declare their innocence

CASE	TEXT	THE ELDERS' DUTY
The rebellious son	Deuteronomy 21:18–21	Hear the parents' charge at the gate of the town
The slandered bride	Deuteronomy 22:13–19	Hear the evidence and fine the husband who brought an evil name
The brother's widow	Deuteronomy 25:7–9; Ruth 4:1–11	Witness the refusal or the redemption at the gate

Boaz *“took ten men of the elders of the city”* and settled Ruth's redemption before them; they answered, *“We are witnesses”* (Ruth 4:2, 9–11). The capable wife's husband *“is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land”* (Proverbs 31:23).

The elder was a judge, a witness, and a keeper of the town's covenant record.

V-D. Elders and the Nation

The elders spoke for the nation in its great decisions.

“All the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel” to demand a king (1 Samuel 8:4).

“All the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them” (2 Samuel 5:3).

The kingdom divided when Rehoboam *“forsook the counsel of the elders, which they had given him,”* and followed the young men who had grown up with him (1 Kings 12:6–8, 13). Joel called the elders to lead the nation's fast (Joel 1:14; 2:16).

The office could also fail. Ezekiel saw *“seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel”* burning incense to images in the dark, saying, *“Yahweh does not see us”* (Ezekiel 8:11–12). In the ruin of Jerusalem, *“the faces of elders were not honored”* (Lamentations 5:12).

V-E. Age Is Not the Same as Wisdom

The Tanakh honors the Elder without making age a guarantee.

The young Elihu waited for his elders to speak, then said: *“It is not the great who are wise, nor the aged who understand judgment”* (Job 32:9).

The psalmist: *“I understand more than the elders, because I keep Your precepts”* (Psalms 119:100).

Ecclesiastes: *“Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king”* (Ecclesiastes 4:13).

The office rested on tested character, not on years alone.

V-F. How Elders Were Placed

Moses told the people,

“Choose for yourselves wise, understanding, and known men from your tribes, and I will make them heads over you” (Deuteronomy 1:13).

The people identified men already known among them, and Moses appointed them (Deuteronomy 1:15).

Jethro's counsel had set the standard: *“capable men, who fear Elohim, men of truth, hating unjust gain”* (Exodus 18:21).

A leader lays his hands on a successor only once in the Torah, at Joshua's succession to Moses:

“Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him ... and commission him in their sight” (Numbers 27:18–19; compare 27:23; Deuteronomy 34:9).

Doc 216 built the Library's practice of commissioning an elder on this text, and that practice rests on a sound pattern: a qualified man, publicly commissioned by one already holding office, in the sight of the community. Section XIII refines two points in Doc 216's account of it.

Finding — the elder: the elder is a tested, known head of a family, town, or tribe, honored for age but judged by character, who sits at the gate as judge and witness and speaks for the people. Corroborated on every point.

Elders were identified by the people and appointed by Moses (Deuteronomy 1:13–15); the empowering of the seventy was Yahweh's act (Numbers 11:25). That the seventy elders received the laying on of hands is Not in the text. Of all seven offices, the elder is the one most plainly able to continue in every covenant community, in or out of the Land.

VI. THE PATRIARCH — THE FATHERS AND THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE

VI-A. What the Tanakh Calls a Patriarch

As Section II showed, “patriarch” is a Greek word. The Hebrew Tanakh uses three terms for what the English word covers.

The fathers. The *avot (fathers)* are first of all Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **Yahweh** named Himself by them at the burning bush:

“Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob ... this is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations” (Exodus 3:15).

The Land was sworn *“to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob”* (Deuteronomy 1:8; compare Genesis 50:24; Deuteronomy 9:5).

The heads of fathers' houses. Every tribe was made of *batei avot (fathers' houses)*, and each had its *rosh (head)*. The census was taken *“by their families, by their fathers' houses”*, with *“a man from every tribe, each one head of his father's house”* (Numbers 1:2, 4; compare Exodus 6:14).

The chieftain. The *nasi (chieftain)* is the leader of a tribe (Numbers 1:16; 2:3; 7:2). The Hittites called Abraham *“a prince of Elohim among us”, nesi Elohim (a mighty prince)* (Genesis 23:6), and Ishmael was promised *“twelve chieftains”* (Genesis 17:20; 25:16).

VI-B. The Three Fathers — An Office That Is Closed

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob hold a place no one after them can hold.

1. The covenant was cut with them (Genesis 15:18; 17:7),
2. the promise was confirmed to each by name (Genesis 26:3–5; 28:13–15),
3. and **Yahweh** still remembers the covenant because of them:

“I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham I will remember; and I will remember the land” (Leviticus 26:42).

Moses' prayer for Israel after the golden calf rested on the same fathers: *“Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self”* (Exodus 32:13).

Finding: the fathers as the recipients of the sworn covenant are three named men, and the office is unrepeatable. Corroborated (Exodus 3:15; 32:13; Leviticus 26:42; Deuteronomy 1:8).

VI-C. What a Patriarch Did

Genesis shows the fathers doing six things, every one of them for the household **Yahweh** had placed in their hands.

WORK	TEXT	WHAT THE TEXT SHOWS
Teach the household	Genesis 18:19	<i>“That he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice”</i>
Build altars and call on the Name	Genesis 12:7–8; 13:18; 26:25; 33:20; 35:7	Worship led by the father, wherever the household settled
Intercede	Genesis 18:22–33; 20:7, 17	Abraham pleads for Sodom and prays for Abimelech's house
Give the covenant sign	Genesis 17:23–27	Abraham circumcised every male of his house the same day
Bless the next generation	Genesis 27; 48:15–20; 49	Isaac blesses Jacob; Jacob blesses Joseph's sons and his twelve sons
Guard the covenant line in marriage	Genesis 24:3–4; 28:1–2	Wives sought from the covenant family, not from Canaan

Job, outside Israel and before Sinai, acted in the same way as his household's intercessor (**Job 1:5; 42:8**). And as Section III showed, the fathers are called prophets (**Genesis 20:7; Psalms 105:15**).

VI-D. After Sinai — What Changed and What Did Not

Two parts of the patriarch's work passed to other offices at Sinai. Sacrifice passed to Aaron's line (Section IV-B), and offerings were to be brought to one place:

“Take heed that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which Yahweh chooses” (**Deuteronomy 12:13–14**).

The priestly blessing in the Name was given to the priests (**Numbers 6:23**).

The rest stayed with the father. He still teaches: *“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house”* (**Deuteronomy 6:7**), and when his son asks what the testimonies mean, the father answers (**Deuteronomy 6:20–25**).

He still leads the household's Passover: *“They shall take for themselves every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household”* (**Exodus 12:3**),

and he explains it to his children (**Exodus 12:26–27; 13:8, 14**).

The heads of fathers' houses still led the tribes in the wilderness (Numbers 7:2),
divided the Land with Joshua and Eleazar (Joshua 14:1),
sat with Jehoshaphat's judges (2 Chronicles 19:8),
and led the return from Babylon (Ezra 1:5; 8:1)
and its rebuilding (Nehemiah 7:70–71).

VI-E. The Mother in the House

The Torah never gives the father the household alone. *“Honor your father and your mother”* (Exodus 20:12). *“Every man shall fear his mother and his father”*

— with the mother named first (Leviticus 19:3). *“Hear, my son, the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the torah of your mother”* (Proverbs 1:8; 6:20).

When Abraham hesitated, **Yahweh** told him, *“In all that Sarah says to you, listen to her voice”* (Genesis 21:12).

The capable wife *“opens her mouth with wisdom, and the torah of kindness is on her tongue”* (Proverbs 31:26).

Finding — the patriarch: the three fathers hold a closed office as the recipients of the sworn covenant. Corroborated. The head of a father's house continues after Sinai as teacher, Passover head, and leader of his family line, together with the mother, but without the altar and without the priestly blessing. Corroborated (Exodus 12:3; Deuteronomy 6:7, 20–25; 12:13–14; Numbers 6:23).

That a head of household after Sinai holds a priesthood is Not in the text (Section XIII).

VII. THE KING — A RULER UNDER THE TORAH

VII-A. Yahweh Is King

Israel's first song of deliverance ends with the kingship of **Yahweh**:

“Yahweh shall reign forever and ever” (Exodus 15:18).

When the people asked Gideon to rule over them, he answered, *“**I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; Yahweh shall rule over you**”* (Judges 8:23).

When they demanded a king from Samuel, **Yahweh** said, “They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Samuel 8:7; compare 12:12).

David confessed the same at the height of his reign: *“Yours is the kingdom, O Yahweh, and You are exalted as head over all”* (1 Chronicles 29:11). Doc 132 examined 1 Samuel 8 in full.

VII-B. The Promise and the Permission

Yet kings were promised, not merely tolerated. Yahweh told Abraham, *“Kings shall come from you”* (Genesis 17:6), and said of Sarah, *“kings of peoples shall be from her”* (Genesis 17:16; compare 35:11).

Jacob blessed Judah: *“The scepter shall not depart from Judah”* (Genesis 49:10).

The Torah anticipated the request and governed it before it was made:

“When you come to the land ... and say, I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me, you shall surely set a king over you whom Yahweh your Elohim chooses; one from among your brothers you shall set as king over you” (Deuteronomy 17:14–15).

VII-C. The Law of the King

The king of Deuteronomy is limited before he is crowned. Doc 221 examined this law against civil law; its points are set out here as the office's own charter.

REQUIREMENT	TEXT	PURPOSE STATED OR SHOWN
Chosen by Yahweh	Deuteronomy 17:15	The king is not self-made
A brother, not a foreigner	Deuteronomy 17:15	He belongs to the covenant people
Not multiply horses	Deuteronomy 17:16	Not to return the people to Egypt or trust in chariots (Isaiah 31:1)
Not multiply wives	Deuteronomy 17:17	<i>“That his heart not turn away”</i> (compare 1 Kings 11:1–4)
Not greatly multiply silver and gold	Deuteronomy 17:17	Wealth must not become the king's goal
Write a copy of the Torah	Deuteronomy 17:18	<i>“From before the Levitical priests”</i> — the king receives the text, he does not make it
Read it all his days	Deuteronomy 17:19	To learn to fear Yahweh and keep the statutes
Not exalt himself	Deuteronomy 17:20	<i>“That his heart not be lifted up above his brothers”</i>

When Saul was made king, *“Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Yahweh”* (1 Samuel 10:25). The kingdom began with a written limit.

VII-D. Designated and Anointed

The king was entered by anointing. Yahweh told Samuel, *“You shall anoint him to be nagid (designated leader) over My people Israel”* (1 Samuel 9:16), and Samuel poured the flask of oil on Saul’s head (1 Samuel 10:1). He anointed David *“in the midst of his brothers, and the spirit of Yahweh came upon David from that day forward”* (1 Samuel 16:13). Zadok anointed Solomon with the horn of oil from the Tent (1 Kings 1:39). So the king is *mashiach Yahweh (the anointed of Yahweh)*, and David refused to lift his hand against Saul for that reason (1 Samuel 24:6; 26:9). Yahweh then made a covenant with David’s house (2 Samuel 7:12–16), which Doc 200 examined.

VII-E. What the King Was For

Justice. *“David reigned over all Israel, and David did justice and righteousness for all his people”* (2 Samuel 8:15). David’s last words: *“He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of Elohim”* (2 Samuel 23:3). Solomon asked for *“an understanding heart to judge Your people”* (1 Kings 3:9). King Lemuel’s mother taught him: *“Open your mouth for the mute ... judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy”* (Proverbs 31:8–9).

Knowing Yahweh. Jeremiah told Josiah’s son what made his father a king: *“He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Was not this to know Me? says Yahweh”* (Jeremiah 22:16).

Shepherding. Yahweh told David, *“You shall shepherd My people Israel”* (2 Samuel 5:2). Ezekiel 34 is Yahweh’s judgment on the shepherds of Israel — its rulers — who fed themselves and not the flock.

Leading the covenant. Josiah gathered the elders, the priests, the prophets, and all the people, read the book of the covenant in their ears, and *“made a covenant before Yahweh”* (2 Kings 23:1–3).

VII-F. Under the Prophet and Outside the Sanctuary

The king was not above the other offices. The prophet judged him (2 Samuel 12:7; 1 Kings 21:17–24). The priest withstood him at the altar (2 Chronicles 26:17–18). The Torah he copied came *“from before the Levitical priests”* (Deuteronomy 17:18). Hosea named kings who were not

chosen at all: *“They have set up kings, but not by Me”* (Hosea 8:4), and *“I gave you a king in My anger, and took him away in My wrath”* (Hosea 13:11).

Of the kings of the nations, the Tanakh says they reign under **Yahweh's** rule:

“By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice” (Proverbs 8:15);

“He removes kings and sets up kings” (Daniel 2:21);

“the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He will” (Daniel 4:17 [Hebrew 4:14]).

To the exiles in Babylon, Jeremiah wrote, *“Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive ... for in its peace you shall have peace”* (Jeremiah 29:7).

Finding — the king: Yahweh is King!

The human king was promised to the fathers, permitted and limited by **Deuteronomy 17**, anointed, charged with justice for the poor, and kept under the Torah, the prophet, and the priest. **Corroborated** on every point. Israel would be *“many days without a king”* (Hosea 3:4), and the restoration is promised to David's house (**Hosea 3:5; Ezekiel 37:24**).

That any ruler today holds the anointed office of king over Israel is Not in the text.

That any ruler governs by a right that places him above the Torah is Not in the text (Deuteronomy 17:18–20).

VIII. THE JUDGE — THE ONE WHO SETS THINGS RIGHT

VIII-A. The Judge of All the Earth

Abraham's plea for Sodom rests on a single question:

“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justice?” (Genesis 18:25).

Moses told the first human judges, *“You shall not be afraid of the face of any man, for the judgment is Elohim's”* (Deuteronomy 1:17).

Psalms 82 shows **Elohim** standing in the assembly and judging the judges:

“How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? ... Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy” (Psalms 82:2–3).

VIII-B. Courts in Every Gate

The first human judges were appointed on Jethro's counsel, because Moses sat judging the people from morning until evening (**Exodus 18:13–26**).

The qualifications were stated then and never withdrawn:

“capable men, who fear Elohim, men of truth, hating unjust gain” (**Exodus 18:21**).

The Torah later commanded courts for every town:

“Judges and officers you shall appoint in all your gates ... and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe ... Justice, justice you shall pursue” (**Deuteronomy 16:18–20**).

1. The judge must not favor the poor or honor the great (**Leviticus 19:15**),
2. must not follow a crowd to do evil or take a bribe (**Exodus 23:2, 8**),
3. and must establish every matter by two or three witnesses (**Deuteronomy 19:15**).
4. Hard cases went to the higher court of the Levitical priests and the judge at the place **Yahweh** would choose (**Deuteronomy 17:8–13**).

VIII-C. The Judges of the Book of Judges

The book that bears their name shows a second kind of *shofet* (judge): a deliverer raised by Yahweh in a crisis.

“Yahweh raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them” (**Judges 2:16**).

Of Othniel: *“The spirit of Yahweh came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war”* (**Judges 3:10**).

Deborah, a prophetess, *“judged Israel at that time”*, and the children of Israel came up to her under her palm tree for judgment (**Judges 4:4–5**). These judges were neither elected nor hereditary. When Gideon's son Abimelech made himself king by murder, it ended in his death (**Judges 9**). The book closes with the judgment of an age without lawful order:

“In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes” (**Judges 17:6; 21:25**).

Samuel was the last of these judges. *“Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life,”* going on a yearly circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah (**1 Samuel 7:15–17**). When he made his sons judges,

“they turned aside after gain, took bribes, and perverted justice” (1 Samuel 8:1–3). The demand for a king followed directly.

VIII-D. Jehoshaphat’s Charge to the Judges

No text in the Tanakh states the judge’s office more fully than King Jehoshaphat’s charge:

“Consider what you do, for you do not judge for man but for Yahweh, who is with you in the judgment. Now let the fear of Yahweh be upon you; take heed and do it, for there is no injustice with Yahweh our Elohim, nor partiality, nor taking of bribes” (2 Chronicles 19:6–7).

He set judges in every fortified city of Judah, and in Jerusalem he set Levites, priests, and heads of fathers’ houses to judge. He placed Amariah the chief priest *“over you in all matters of Yahweh”* and Zebadiah *“in all the king’s matters”* (2 Chronicles 19:5, 8, 11).

The king appointed the judges, but he kept the matters of Yahweh in the priest’s hand.

VIII-E. When the Judge Fails

The prophets name corrupt judges as a chief reason for judgment.

“Your princes are rebellious ... everyone loves bribes and follows after rewards; they do not judge the fatherless” (Isaiah 1:23).

“Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for hire, and her prophets divine for money” (Micah 3:11; compare 7:3).

“They afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate” (Amos 5:12; compare Zephaniah 3:3).

The promise of restoration begins with the judges: *“I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning; afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness” (Isaiah 1:26).*

VIII-F. Judges Outside the Land

One witness shows covenant judges appointed outside the Land and without a king of Israel. The Persian king’s letter to Ezra reads:

“You, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your Elohim that is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your Elohim; and teach those who do not know them” (Ezra 7:25).

The Aramaic words are *shaftin* (*magistrates*), שַׁפְּטִין, and *dayyanin* (*judges*), דַּיָּיִן. Together with **Deuteronomy 16:18**, which commands judges “*in all your gates*,” it shows that the local court belongs to wherever the covenant people live.

Finding — the judge: Yahweh is the Judge of all the earth; human judges serve His judgment, are appointed in every town by the character standard of Exodus 18:21, and must refuse partiality and bribes. Corroborated.

The judges of the Book of Judges were deliverers raised by **Yahweh** in crisis. **Corroborated** (Judges 2:16; 3:9–10; 4:4–5). That covenant judges may serve outside the Land is **Corroborated** (Deuteronomy 16:18; Ezra 7:25). The higher court of Deuteronomy 17:8–13, at the place Yahweh chooses, is not standing today.

IX. THE SAGE — THE ONE WHO GIVES COUNSEL

IX-A. Wisdom Is Given

Wisdom in the Tanakh is first a gift.

Yahweh filled the craftsmen of the Tabernacle with it (Exodus 28:3; 31:3–6), and “*all the women who were wise-hearted spun with their hands*” (Exodus 35:25–26).

Solomon received “*a wise and understanding heart*” because he asked for it (1 Kings 3:12). “*For Yahweh gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding*” (Proverbs 2:6).

IX-B. The Beginning of Wisdom

Every wisdom book says where wisdom begins.

“*The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge*” (Proverbs 1:7);

“*The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom*” (Proverbs 9:10; Psalms 111:10);

“*Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding*” (Job 28:28).

The Torah itself is called the nation's wisdom:

“*Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples*” (Deuteronomy 4:6).

IX-C. The Sages of Israel

Solomon is the model sage: his wisdom “*excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east*”, and he spoke three thousand proverbs (1 Kings 4:29–34 [Hebrew 5:9–14]). Proverbs collects “*the words of the wise*” beyond Solomon’s own (Proverbs 22:17; 24:23). Ecclesiastes describes the sage’s work: he “*taught the people knowledge*”, weighed and arranged many proverbs, and sought “*words of delight, and that which was written uprightly, words of truth*” (Ecclesiastes 12:9–10). Doc 228 examined those verses.

Two women are named for their wisdom in Samuel. Joab brought “*a wise woman*” from Tekoa to move David’s heart toward Absalom (2 Samuel 14:2). “*A wise woman*” of Abel Beth-maacah saved her city by her counsel (2 Samuel 20:16–22).

After the exile, Ezra the scribe joined learning to obedience:

“Ezra had set his heart to seek the Torah of Yahweh, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:10; compare 7:6).

The order — seek, do, then teach — is the sage’s standard.

IX-D. Counsel That Failed

The Tanakh is blunt about wisdom cut off from Yahweh.

Ahithophel’s counsel “*was as if a man had inquired at the word of Elohim*” (2 Samuel 16:23), yet he joined Absalom’s revolt; “*Yahweh had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel*”, and when his advice was not followed he went home and hanged himself (2 Samuel 17:14, 23). Rehoboam lost ten tribes by rejecting the counsel of the elders (1 Kings 12:8).

The prophets turned the charge on the wise of their own day.

“How can you say, We are wise, and the Torah of Yahweh is with us? Behold, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie. The wise men are ashamed ... they have rejected the word of Yahweh, and what wisdom is in them?” (Jeremiah 8:8–9).

“Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes” (Isaiah 5:21; compare Proverbs 3:7).

“The wisdom of their wise men shall perish” (Isaiah 29:14).

“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom ... but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me” (Jeremiah 9:23–24 [Hebrew 9:22–23]).

IX-E. The Sages of the Nations

The Tanakh measures the wisdom of the nations against wisdom from Yahweh.

Pharaoh's wise men could not interpret his dream; Joseph said, *"It is not in me; Elohim will give Pharaoh an answer of peace"*,

and Pharaoh said, *"There is no one so discerning and wise as you"* (Genesis 41:8, 16, 39).

Babylon's wise men could not tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream; Daniel answered, *"There is an Elohim in heaven who reveals secrets"* (Daniel 2:27–28; compare 5:7–8). The prophets foretold the end of Edom's famous wisdom (Obadiah 8; Jeremiah 49:7).

IX-F. No Ordination for the Sage

There is no text in the Tanakh that appoints, anoints, or ordains a sage.

The sage's standing comes from the fruit of his counsel and its agreement with the Torah.

The way is open to anyone who will seek it: *"If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures, then you shall understand the fear of Yahweh"* (Proverbs 2:4–5).

"I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation" (Psalms 119:99).

And the promise to the faithful wise is great: *"Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament"* (Daniel 12:3).

Finding — the sage:

1. wisdom is a gift of Yahweh that begins with the fear of Yahweh and is measured by the Torah;
2. the sage teaches, gives counsel, and writes words of truth. Corroborated.
3. Wisdom that rejects the word of Yahweh is condemned. Corroborated (Jeremiah 8:8–9; Isaiah 29:14).
4. That the sage is an ordained office, or that the sage's ruling carries authority over the written word, is Not in the text.

X. HOW THE OFFICES FIT TOGETHER

X-A. The Seven Offices Side by Side

OFFICE	HOW ENTERED	CORE WORK	KEY TEXTS
Prophet <i>navi</i>	The direct call of Yahweh	Speak His word; stand in His council; intercede; warn; confront kings	Deuteronomy 18:18–22; Amos 7:14–15
Priest <i>kohen</i>	Birth in Aaron's line and consecration	Altar and atonement; teach the statutes; bless; judge hard cases	Exodus 28:1; Numbers 3:10; Malachi 2:7
Elder <i>zaken</i>	Known among the people, chosen by them, appointed	Judge and witness at the gate; give counsel; speak for the people	Deuteronomy 1:13–15; Ruth 4:2–11
Patriarch <i>avot; rosh beit av</i>	The three fathers by Yahweh's covenant; heads of houses by family	Teach the household; lead the Passover; bless; guard the covenant line	Genesis 18:19; Exodus 12:3; Deuteronomy 6:7
King <i>melech</i>	Chosen by Yahweh , anointed, confirmed by the people	Justice for the poor; shepherd the people; lead the covenant	Deuteronomy 17:14–20; 2 Samuel 23:3
Judge <i>shofet</i>	Appointed by Moses, a king, or Ezra; or raised up by Yahweh	Decide cases without partiality or bribe; deliver	Deuteronomy 16:18–20; Judges 2:16
Sage <i>chakham</i>	A gift of Yahweh ; no ordination	Give counsel; teach knowledge; write words of truth	Proverbs 2:6; Ecclesiastes 12:9–10

X-B. The Offices Are Kept Apart

The Torah does not put all authority in one hand.

The **king** receives the Torah “*from before the Levitical priests*” (**Deuteronomy 17:18**), may not serve at the altar (**2 Chronicles 26:18**), and is judged by the prophet (**2 Samuel 12:7**).

The **priest** teaches and sits in the higher court with the judge (**Deuteronomy 17:9**), but he does not reign.

The prophet has no inheritance in any office and may come from any tribe and any trade (**Amos 7:14–15**).

Jehoshaphat set this order in his courts: the chief priest over *“all matters of Yahweh”*, the governor of Judah over *“all the king's matters”* (**2 Chronicles 19:11**).

Every recorded attempt to seize another office ended in judgment

1. Korah reaching for the priesthood (**Numbers 16:10, 31–35**),
2. Saul offering the sacrifice (**1 Samuel 13:13–14**),
3. Uzziah burning incense (**2 Chronicles 26:19–21**),
4. and Jeroboam making priests of his own (**1 Kings 13:33–34**).

Finding: the offices of the covenant nation were kept distinct, and taking another office by one's own will was judged. Corroborated.

X-C. Those Who Held More Than One Office

Some servants of **Yahweh** held more than one office, and in every case the Tanakh shows the second office as given, not taken.

PERSON	OFFICES	TEXTS
Melchizedek	King and priest (outside Israel, before Sinai)	Genesis 14:18; Psalms 110:4
Moses	Prophet, judge, and named among the priests; he consecrated Aaron	Deuteronomy 34:10; Exodus 18:13; Psalms 99:6; Leviticus 8
Deborah	Prophetess and judge	Judges 4:4–5
Samuel	Prophet, judge, and one who offered sacrifice	1 Samuel 3:20; 7:9, 15–17
David	King, and one through whom the spirit of Yahweh spoke	2 Samuel 23:1–2; 6:14
Solomon	King and sage	1 Kings 3:9–12; 4:29–34
Jeremiah and Ezekiel	Priests by birth and prophets by call	Jeremiah 1:1, 5; Ezekiel 1:3

Samuel's case needs one honest note. **1 Samuel 1:1** calls his father Elkanah “*an Ephrathite*” from the hill country of Ephraim, while **1 Chronicles 6:22–28, 33–34** [Hebrew 6:7–13, 18–19] places Samuel's family in the Levite line of Kohath. The two may be reconciled as a Levite family living in Ephraim (compare **Joshua 21:5, 20**), and that is how this study reads them, but the reader should know both texts.

X-D. The Offices in the Promises of Restoration

The prophets do not say the offices will vanish. They promise them back.

“Yahweh your Elohim will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers” (Deuteronomy 18:15).

“David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, nor shall the Levitical priests lack a man before Me to offer burnt offerings” (Jeremiah 33:17–18).

“I will restore your judges as at the first” (Isaiah 1:26).

“Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek Yahweh their Elohim and David their king” (Hosea 3:5; compare Ezekiel 37:24).

Two texts speak of a priest who also rules.

To David's lord: *“You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”* (Psalms 110:4).

And of the man called the Branch: *“He shall build the temple of Yahweh, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and there shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both”* (Zechariah 6:13).

The Hebrew *ve-bayah kohen al-kis'o* can be read *“he shall be a priest on his throne”* (one man holding both) or *“there shall be a priest by his throne”* (two men, with *“between them both”* naming the king and the high priest Joshua of verse 11).

Jeremiah 33:17–18 keeps David's line and the Levitical priests as two lines. The text supports both readings of Zechariah, and this study does not settle it beyond what is written.

Finding: the restoration texts promise a prophet like Moses, a king of David's line, Levitical priests, and restored judges. **Corroborated** (Deuteronomy 18:15; Jeremiah 33:17–18; Isaiah 1:26; Hosea 3:5). Whether the coming king also holds the priesthood is carried by **Psalms 110:4** and one reading of **Zechariah 6:13**; the other reading of Zechariah and **Jeremiah 33:17–18** keep the offices in two hands. Both readings are honestly held.

XI. WHO MAY HOLD WHICH OFFICE TODAY?

The structures the Torah built around several of these offices are not standing: there is no altar at the place Yahweh chose, no priest with Urim and Thummim, no anointed king of David's house, and no higher court of Deuteronomy 17.

The table applies the findings above to the present.

OFFICE	CAN IT BE HELD TODAY?	BASIS
Prophet	Only by Yahweh's direct call, and only as tested. <u>No institution can appoint a prophet, and no claim to the office stands without the tests of Deuteronomy 13 and 18.</u>	Deuteronomy 13:1–5; 18:20–22; Jeremiah 23:21
Priest	Not at the altar. No altar stands and no genealogy is proven. The calling of a kingdom of priests belongs to the whole covenant people.	Numbers 3:10; Ezra 2:62–63; Hosea 3:4; Exodus 19:6
Elder	Yes. Known men of tested character can be recognized by the community and set apart publicly.	Exodus 18:21; Deuteronomy 1:13–15; Numbers 27:18–23
Patriarch	The three fathers: no. The head of a father's house, together with the mother: yes, in every household.	Exodus 3:15; Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:7; Leviticus 19:3
King	No anointed king of Israel reigns. The rulers of the nations govern under the Most High and are judged by His standard.	Hosea 3:4–5; Daniel 4:17; Jeremiah 29:7
Judge	Yes, as local judges and arbiters within the covenant community. The higher court at the chosen place is not standing.	Deuteronomy 16:18–20; Ezra 7:25; Deuteronomy 17:8–13
Sage	Yes, for anyone who fears Yahweh and seeks wisdom, so far as the counsel agrees with the written word.	Proverbs 2:1–6; Psalms 119:99; Jeremiah 8:8–9

XI-A. The Standard Applied to This Institution

Miqdash Bethel applies the same standard to itself. Its founder holds the title of Elder, and the Library's practice of commissioning elders (Doc 216) rests on the corroborated pattern of the known man, publicly commissioned (**Deuteronomy 1:13; Numbers 27:18–23**).

This Institution does not appoint prophets, does not claim the priesthood of Aaron, does not crown kings, and does not claim the office of the higher court.

Doc 240 stated the same about the court that sets the calendar.

1. A teacher who explains the prophets is not thereby a prophet.
2. A minister who serves a congregation is not thereby a *kohen (priest)*.
3. A ruler who governs a nation is not thereby the anointed of **Yahweh**.
4. A scholar who rules on practice is a sage only so far as the ruling agrees with the Torah.

XI-B. Four Questions for Anyone Who Claims an Office

First: who gave it? The Torah's answer is never ***"I took it"*** (**Numbers 16:3–10; Jeremiah 23:21**).

Second: what does the Tanakh say the office is for, and is that what is being done? (**Deuteronomy 17:18–20; Malachi 2:7; Ezekiel 34:2–4**)

Third: does the person meet the stated qualifications — capable, fearing **Elohim**, truthful, hating unjust gain? (**Exodus 18:21**)

Fourth: does the word, the ruling, or the counsel agree with the written Torah, and does it come to pass? (**Deuteronomy 13:1–5; 18:22; Isaiah 8:20**)

XII. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION USES THE SEVEN OFFICES

The table sets the three traditions against Tanakh's findings. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only, in keeping with the standing rule of this document.

ELEMENT	✧ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Practice today	Prophecy is held to have ended with Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi (Tosefta Sotah 13:3); the Talmud says prophecy was <i>“taken from the prophets and given to the sages”</i> (Bava Batra 12a). <i>Kobanim (priests)</i> known by family tradition give the priestly blessing and redeem the firstborn, without altar service. Rabbis receive a title called <i>semikhab (ordination)</i>, but the ancient court ordination lapsed; Maimonides held it could be renewed if all the sages in the Land agreed (Laws of the Sanhedrin 4:11). He counts appointing a king among the commands for entering the Land (Laws of Kings 1:1). The Great Sanhedrin had seventy-one members (Mishnah Sanhedrin 1:6).	Catholic and Orthodox churches ordain priests (Council of Trent, Session 23) and bishops; Eastern churches are led by patriarchs, a rank whose rise is traced through Nicaea canon 6 and Chalcedon canon 28. Protestant churches teach the priesthood of all believers (Luther, 1520; 1 Peter 2:9) and ordain elders (Titus 1:5–9). Latter-day Saints ordain elders and patriarchs in a <i>“Melchizedek Priesthood”</i> and call their president a prophet (Doctrine and Covenants 107). Many charismatic churches recognize modern prophets (Ephesians 4:11). Christ is taught as prophet, priest, and king (Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> 2.15).	The Qur’an distinguishes the <i>nabi (prophet)</i> and the <i>rasul (messenger)</i> and calls Muhammad the <i>“seal of the prophets”</i> (Q. 33:40). Islam has no priesthood; prayer is led by an <i>imam (one who stands in front)</i> chosen for knowledge and character. The <i>qadi (judge)</i> applies the law, and a hadith warns that of three judges two are in the fire (Sunan Abi Dawud 3573). Rulers are owed obedience (Q. 4:59) and are governed by <i>shura (consultation)</i> (Q. 42:38). Luqman is given wisdom (Q. 31:12), and the scholars are <i>“heirs of the prophets”</i> (Sunan Abi Dawud 3641).
Covenant strength	Keeps the priesthood closed to those outside Aaron’s line, as Numbers 3:10 requires; refuses to name anyone a prophet without a test; waits for the king and the court rather than inventing them. That posture matches Ezra 2:63: “until a priest should stand up with Urim and Thummim.”	Hebrews 5:4 restates the Torah’s rule: <i>“No one takes this honor for himself, but he who is called by Elohim, just as Aaron was.”</i> The elder qualifications of Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 parallel Exodus 18:21. Matthew 23:8–10 warns against titles of honor. 1 Peter 2:9 echoes the national calling of Exodus 19:6.	Claims no priesthood where no altar stands. Treats the judge’s danger as seriously as Deuteronomy 16:19 and 2 Chronicles 19:7. Q. 5:44 places the prophets, the rabbis, and the scholars under the Torah, judging by it. Talut chosen by Allah (Q. 2:247) parallels 1 Samuel 9:16; Dawud given kingship and wisdom (Q. 2:251) parallels 1 Kings 3:12.

ELEMENT	✡ JUDAISM	✝ CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Covenant departure	The claim that prophecy passed to the sages (Bava Batra 12a) gives later scholars a standing the Tanakh never gives the sage (Section IX-F). The chain of Avot 1:1 makes elders and sages the carriers of an oral law the written text does not name (Deuteronomy 4:2; 31:24–26).	A ministerial priesthood at a non-Aaronic altar is, by the Tanakh's own standard, the act Numbers 3:10 and 16:40 forbid. <i>“Patriarch”</i> as a church rank has no Tanakh office behind it. Modern claims to the prophet's office are rarely submitted to Deuteronomy 18:22 . The <i>“divine right of kings”</i> (James I, 1598) set the king above the law that Deuteronomy 17:18–20 sets above the king.	The Tanakh's prophet law names a prophet raised <i>“from among their brothers”</i> (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18) and tested by Deuteronomy 13 and 18; Islam reads <i>“brothers”</i> to include Ishmael's line, while the same phrase in Deuteronomy 17:15 and 18:2 refers to fellow Israelites. Scholarly consensus is given a binding weight the Tanakh gives no sage.
Covenant witness	The refusal to rebuild the altar or crown a king without the place, the genealogy, and the prophet honors the Tanakh's own conditions.	Read from the Tanakh outward, Matthew 23:8–10 and Hebrews 5:4 call every church back to one rule: offices are given, not taken, and no title replaces service.	Q. 9:31 warns against taking <i>“rabbis and monks as lords besides Allah”</i> — the same warning Jeremiah 8:8–9 gives against making teachers masters of the word.

XIII. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

The Library's rule is that its own earlier work is tested by the same standard as everyone else's. Four points in **Doc 216** (*Called and Chosen*, August 2026) need refinement. Doc 216's central finding — that an elder is a known man of tested character, publicly commissioned by one who already holds office, and never self-appointed — stands, and this document confirms it (Section V).

Correction 1 — the seventy elders and the laying on of hands. Doc 216 (Section IV-A) speaks of Moses' *semikhab* (*laying on of hands*) *“on Joshua and on the seventy elders”*, citing **Numbers 11:16–17** and 11:24–25. **Numbers 11** records no laying on of hands; **Yahweh** came down in the cloud and placed the spirit on the seventy (**Numbers 11:25**). The only laying on of hands by a leader upon his successor in the Torah is Joshua's (**Numbers 27:18, 23; Deuteronomy 34:9**). The citation of **Numbers 11** for hand-laying should be removed; **Numbers 11** remains a witness that the empowering of elders is Yahweh's act.

Correction 2 — the anointing of a prophet. Doc 216 (Section IV-B) says anointing was given *“in one recorded case for a prophet (Elisha, 1 Kings 19:16).”* That verse records the command. The

fulfillment records a mantle, not oil (**1 Kings 19:19**). The wording should be: commanded once for a prophet (**1 Kings 19:16**), carried out by the casting of the mantle (**1 Kings 19:19**).

Correction 3 — *“priesthood and patriarch over his family.”* Doc 216 (Section V-D and Declaration VI) describes the elder’s office in his household as *“priesthood and patriarch,”* citing **Exodus 40:15**. That verse concerns Aaron’s sons, whose priesthood is closed to every other line (**Numbers 3:10; 16:40**).

After Sinai the Tanakh does not call the head of a household a priest. What it gives him is the work set out in Section VI-D — teaching, leading the household’s Passover, and leading his father’s house — and, with the whole people, the calling to be *“a kingdom of priests”* (**Exodus 19:6**). Suggested wording: *“head of his father’s house over his family, within the calling of a kingdom of priests.”* This concerns the Institution’s own practice, so it is set out for Elder Kepha’s decision.

Correction 4 — **comparative sources and dating.** Doc 216 (Section IV-A) cites Maimonides and a date of about 360 CE for the end of the ancient ordination in the body of the study. Under the Library’s standing rule of September 28, 2026, such sources belong in the Comparative Texts table and the Three-Religion Audit. Doc 240 also noted that the fourth-century date tied to the fixed calendar is disputed by modern scholarship, and any revision should carry that caveat. Doc 216 also predates the September 22 naming and location rules and the miqdashbethel.ai website (MLI v59, Open Item 14).

XIV. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON THE OFFICES

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no doctrine may stand on a single text. Each declaration below draws on more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	Every office belongs first to Yahweh , who is Judge, Lawgiver, and King. Every human office is delegated and answerable to Him.	Isaiah 33:22; Deuteronomy 1:17; 1 Samuel 8:7
II	The prophet is called by Yahweh alone and tested by loyalty to Him and by whether his word comes to pass. No one makes himself a prophet, and no institution can make one.	Deuteronomy 13:1–5; 18:18–22; Jeremiah 23:21–22; Amos 7:14–15

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
III	The altar priesthood belongs to Aaron's line and cannot be claimed today without the altar and a proven genealogy. The whole covenant people are called to be a kingdom of priests.	Exodus 19:6; 28:1; Numbers 3:10; 16:40; Ezra 2:62–63
IV	The elder and the judge continue wherever the covenant people live: known men of tested character who judge without partiality or bribe, by two or three witnesses.	Exodus 18:21; Deuteronomy 1:13–17; 16:18–20; 19:15; Ezra 7:25
V	The three fathers hold an unrepeatable place in the covenant. Every head of a father's house, with the mother, still teaches, leads the Passover, and guards the covenant line.	Exodus 3:15; Genesis 18:19; Exodus 12:3; Deuteronomy 6:7; Leviticus 19:3
VI	The king is under the Torah, the prophet, and the priest. No ruler stands above the law he is commanded to copy and read all his days.	Deuteronomy 17:14–20; 2 Samuel 12:7; 2 Chronicles 26:16–21; Hosea 8:4
VII	Wisdom is the gift of Yahweh , beginning with His fear and measured by His word. Wisdom that rejects His word is not wisdom.	Proverbs 1:7; 2:6; Deuteronomy 4:6; Jeremiah 8:8–9

XV. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS TO THE ONE WHO ASKS

Behind the question about the offices there is usually a person who has been told to obey someone because of a title — a prophet's word, a priest's authority, an elder's ruling, a king's decree — or who wants to know what he or she is called to do. Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

First: know who holds every office first. *“Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king”* (Isaiah 33:22). Every human office is answerable to Him.

Second: test every claim. A prophet's word must agree with the Torah and come to pass (Deuteronomy 13:1–5; 18:22). A teacher's ruling must agree with the written word (Isaiah 8:20). And no one may take an office for himself; Korah's company learned that the office is given, not seized (Numbers 16:10, 40).

Third: honor the elder and the judge who meet the standard, and become one. Look for men who are *“capable, who fear Elohim, men of truth, hating unjust gain”* (Exodus 18:21), and live so that the description fits you. *“Justice, justice you shall pursue”* (Deuteronomy 16:20).

Fourth: take up the office every household already has. The fathers' altar is closed and the priest's altar is not standing, but the father's and mother's teaching is commanded today: ***"You shall teach them diligently to your children"*** (Deuteronomy 6:7). Abraham was chosen ***"that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of Yahweh"*** (Genesis 18:19).

Fifth: seek wisdom, and wait for what Yahweh has promised to restore. ***"If you seek her as silver ... then you shall understand the fear of Yahweh"*** (Proverbs 2:4–5). Yahweh has promised to restore the judges, the prophet, the priests, and the king of David's house (Isaiah 1:26; Deuteronomy 18:15; Jeremiah 33:17–18; Hosea 3:5). No person may seize an office Yahweh has promised to give.

SCRIPTURE INDEX

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Genesis 14:18	Melchizedek, king and priest	IV-A; X-C
Genesis 17:6, 16	Kings promised to Abraham and Sarah	VI-A; VI-B; VI-C; VII-B
Genesis 18:19–33	Abraham teaches his household; intercedes; the Judge of all the earth	VI-C; VIII-A; X-A; XI; XIV; XV
Genesis 20:7, 17	Abraham called a prophet who prays	III-C; VI-C
Genesis 23:6	Abraham, a prince of Elohim	II; VI-A
Genesis 41:8–39	Pharaoh's wise men and Joseph	IV-A; IX-E
Genesis 49:10	The scepter of Judah	VII-B
Exodus 3:15–16	The Elohim of the fathers; the elders in Egypt	II; IV-A; V-A; VI-A; VI-B; XI; XIV
Exodus 4:16; 7:1	Aaron as Moses' mouth and prophet	II; III-A; V-A
Exodus 12:3, 21, 26–27	The Passover by fathers' houses, given through the elders	V-A; VI-D; VI-E; X-A; XIV
Exodus 18:13–26	Jethro's counsel; the qualifications of judges	IV-A; V-F; VIII-B; VIII-F; X-C; XI; XI-B; XII; XIV; XV

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Exodus 19:6, 22	A kingdom of priests; priests before Aaron	I-A; IV-A; IV-B; IV-F; XI; XII; XIII; XIV
Exodus 24:5, 9–11	Young men offer; seventy elders see Elohim	IV-A; V-B
Exodus 28:1, 3; 29:9	Aaron chosen; the wise-hearted; a perpetual priesthood	II; IV-B; IX-A; X-A; XIV
Exodus 31:3–6; 35:25–26	Wisdom given to craftsmen, men and women	II; IX-A
Leviticus 10:10–11	The priest distinguishes and teaches	IV-C
Leviticus 19:3, 15, 32	Mother and father; impartial judgment; honor the elder	II; V-A; VI-E; VIII-B; XI; XIV
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“For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king; He will save us.”

Isaiah 33:22 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

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