

# **Significant Uncelebrated Torah Themes and the Presence of God**

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There is thirty-five-hundred-year barrier between us and knowing how Israel understood the Torah. We read the same words about the same events, but how can we know if the Hebrew people understood the Torah as we do?

Rules of interpretation are intended to bridge the millennia, but some argue that the rules are designed to arrive at predetermined conclusions about the text, while others argue that the rules are necessary for consensus on the text. Accepting the conclusions of a thousand readers with a thousand opinions would render the Hebrew text impotent.

Even more importantly, how does God want everyone throughout history to respond to the text? If the Torah was intended merely for the Israelites, it would be nothing more than a historical curiosity.

Computer analysis has identified approximately 1,400 sets of Hebraic Meter in the Torah written in multiples of 7s, 10s, and 12s. These series of phrases, sentences, events, personalities, actions, things, places, etc. are so pervasive they provide an objective, self-prioritizing, self-organizing guide to the text. With few exceptions, this literary genre is configured in a creative and relatively predictable format.

This is not a conjecture about some hidden or secret communication in the Bible, any more so than is grammar, sentence structure, and genre. The Torah has always and clearly said what it says. Hebraic Meter is a literary form through which the Bible comments about itself and establishes its own priorities.

Approximately half of the 1,400 sets of Hebraic Meter thus far identified in the Torah are arranged in a series of topic-groups. The sheer volume of these groupings illustrates the Torah's design priorities. Topic-groups are multiple sets or clusters of Hebraic Meter on the same subject. The more extensive the topic-group, the more significant the subject. Some are double, triple, or larger, in comparison to the topic-group presented in this article. An examination of the topic-groups on God, Lord, and Lord God, would fill a book and add more to our knowledge of God.

Readers familiar with the text of the Torah will recognize the following major themes emphasized by topic-groups set in Hebraic Meter: God, Lord, Lord God, Creation Genealogy, Moses, Aaron, Israel, Egypt, Passover, Promised Land, Word, Congregation, Commandments, Ceremonial Laws, Tabernacle, Altar, and Atonement.

On the other hand, topics such as Eden, the Fall, the Ark, the Flood, Babel, Sodom, miracles, battles, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Joseph, his brothers, crossing the Red Sea, and numerous family-drama scenarios—though intriguing to readers—are given surprisingly little emphases with Hebraic Meter. It appears the history is written to lead us to the metered back-story.

On yet another hand, there are major themes emphasized by topic-groups set in Hebraic Meter which have been largely overlooked by our generation. These include Heart, Commands, Listen-Hear, Swear, Eat, Canaan, Family, Priest, People, Purple, Blue, Gold, Camp, Journey, City, Wilderness, Mountain, Birth, Death, Male, Female, Animals, Servants, Nations, Blood, Sacrifice, Blessing, Curse, Anger, Cut off, Forever, Doorway, Elders, and Eyes, Balaam and Balak. (The account of Balaam and Balak is an exception and contains its own meter.) Extensive meter given to the Tabernacle door/doorway indicates a Divine portal on earth.

The words are there for all to read but we tend to pass over them; or at least we do not know why 3,500 years ago these subjects were significant to the Israelites. More likely, emphasis with topics-groups is by Divine design.

This article examines *Elders*, one of the less celebrated, but significant subjects in the Torah arranged in elegant Hebraic Meter.

Anyone familiar with Hebrew can check the data in this article. First, isolate the Hebrew text of the Torah and search the plural construct for elders preceded by an asterisk to pick up all the prefixes זקני\*(*zaqenie*, *zaw-ka-nee'*). An entire set of Hebraic Meter appears on the screen with these four Hebrew consonants.

We begin with the most common form of Hebraic Meter, a set of seven.- “*All the elders*” appears exactly seven times in the Torah. Israel had multiple levels of government: fathers as the heads of households; the tribal leader system of chiefs and officers; the pyramidal system of judges of 1000s, 100s, 50s, and 10s as established by Moses’s father-in-law; the hierarchical system of Levites and priests; and the elders of the cities or elders at the gate.

We can only speculate about how these *elders at the gate* were selected versus the *elders of Israel*. Also, how these overlapping jurisdictions interacted with each other is a matter for Torah scholars. It was a more complex legal system than we have today.

**All the elders 7 times in the Torah**

and <b>all the elders</b> of the land of Egypt.....	וְכָל זְקֵנֵי אֶרֶץ־מִצְרָיִם	(Gen 50:7)
<b>all the elders</b> of the sons of Israel.....	אֶת־כָּל־זְקֵנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 4:29)
<b>all the elders</b> of Israel.....	לְכָל־זְקֵנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 12:21)
and <b>all the elders</b> of Israel.....	וְכָל זְקֵנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 18:12)
And <b>all the elders</b> of that city.....	וְכָל זְקֵנֵי הָעִיר	(Deu 21:6)
and to <b>all the elders</b> of Israel.....	וְאֶל־כָּל־זְקֵנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Deu 31:9)
<b>all the elders</b> of your tribes.....	אֶת־כָּל־זְקֵנֵי שְׁבֻטֵיכֶם	(Deu 31:28)

The next set of Hebraic Meter is “*the elders of the city*” which repeats exactly ten times. There may be more individual sets of seven but Hebraic Meter in multiples of ten comprise thousands of verses. Notice that Deuteronomy 21:6 below is also included in the previous example.

**The elders of the city 10 times in the Torah\***

the elders of his city.....	זְקֵנֵי עִירוֹ	(Deu 19:12)
the elders of that city.....	זְקֵנֵי הָעִיר	(Deu 21:3)
the elders of that city.....	זְקֵנֵי הָעִיר	(Deu 21:4)
<b>And all the elders</b> of that city.....	וְכָל זְקֵנֵי הָעִיר	(Deu 21:6)
to the elders of his city.....	אֶל־זְקֵנֵי עִירוֹ	(Deu 21:19)
to the elders of his city.....	אֶל־זְקֵנֵי עִירוֹ	(Deu 21:20)

to the elders of the city.....	אֶל-זִקְנֵי הָעִיר	(Deu 22:15)
the elders of the city.....	זִקְנֵי הָעִיר	(Deu 22:17)
the elders of that city.....	זִקְנֵי הָעִיר	(Deu 22:18)
the elders of his city.....	זִקְנֵי-עִירוֹ	(Deu 25:8)

\*The or that is a matter of how translators want to interpret the same definite article.

Hebraic Meter in the phrase, “*the elders of Israel*” is twice as long (2 x 7) as the first example. Exodus 21:12 is found in both examples. This series does not include the “*elders of the city*” which may indicate that it is a different category of elders from whom “the seventy elders” were selected to follow Moses up Mount Sinai and eat with God.

#### **The elders of Israel 14 times in the Torah**

and you with the elders of Israel.....	אַתָּה וְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 3:18)
<b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	לְכָל-זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 12:21)
some of the elders of Israel.....	מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 17:5)
the elders of Israel.....	זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 17:6)
and <b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	וְכָל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 18:12)
and seventy of the elders of Israel.....	וְשִׁבְעִים מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 24:1)
and seventy of the elders of Israel.....	וְשִׁבְעִים מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Exo 24:9)
and to the elders of Israel.....	וּלְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Lev 9:1)
seventy men from the elders of Israel.....	שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Num 11:16)
and the elders of Israel.....	וְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Num 11:30)
the elders of Israel.....	זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Num 16:25)
and the elders of Israel.....	וְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Deu 27:1)
and to <b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	וְאֶל-כָּל-זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	(Deu 31:9)

The following is the fourth series of Hebraic Meter within the topic-group of *elders*. *Elders* may be a relatively obscure subject for us today but according to the extensive amount of Hebraic Meter dedicated to this subject, speaking to their elder may have been equivalent to our speaking to someone at City Hall.

Moses isolates a group of 24 elders (2 x 12) in the Torah by simply not adding a prefix to the Hebrew word for *elders*. This results in 24 repetitions of “the elders” without prefixes attached to the word *elder* such as *and*, *the*, *from*, or *to*. This next search for the Hebrew word *elders* removes the asterisk from זִקְנֵי (*zaqenie*, *zaw-ka-nee'*). This parameter brings up elders from Egypt, Midian, and Moab along with 20 (2 x 10) more repetitions of the elders from Israel. In the Book of Revelation John appears to recognize this list and repeats *elders* 12 times. He also lists the 24 elders seven times with the living beings.

#### **Living beings and elders 7 times in Revelation (no variants)**

And the four living <b>beings</b> and in the midst of the <b>elders</b>	(Rev. 5:6)
The four living <b>beings</b> and the 24 <b>elders</b>	(Rev. 5:8)
And the living <b>beings</b> and the <b>elders</b>	(Rev. 5:11)
And the four living <b>beings</b> saying amen, and the 24 <b>elders</b>	(Rev. 5:14)*
And the <b>elders</b> and the four living <b>beings</b>	(Rev. 7:11)
The four living <b>beings</b> and the <b>elders</b>	(Rev. 14:3)
The 24 <b>elders</b> and the four living <b>beings</b>	(Rev. 19:4)

\*Only SCR, STE (KJV) have 24 at 5:14, for a 3-4 division.

Elders from the gentiles are listed in Genesis 50:7, Numbers 22:4 and 7 and are included with 20 sets of elders from Israel, its tribes, the people, and the cities. Notice also that the first set of

seven “*all the elders*” becomes a subset within these 24 repetitions—and then how the list is evenly divided into 12 and 12 between the first four books of the Torah and Deuteronomy.

**The Elders (no prefix) 24 times in the Torah** זקני\*(*zaqenie, zaw-ka-nee'*)

**The Elders from Israel 20 times in the Torah**

**All the Elders 7 times in the Torah**

the elders of his household.....	זקני ביתו	(Gen 50:7)
and <b>all</b> the elders of the land of Egypt.....	וכל זקני ארץ-מצרים	(Gen 50:7)
the elders of Israel.....	את-זקני ישראל	(Exo 3:16)
<b>all</b> the elders of the sons of Israel.....	את-כָּל-זקני בני ישראל	(Exo 4:29)
<b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	לְכָל-זקני ישראל	(Exo 12:21)
the elders of Israel.....	זקני ישראל	(Exo 17:6)
and <b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	וכל זקני ישראל	(Exo 18:12)
the elders of the congregation.....	זקני העדה	(Lev 4:15)
the elders of the people.....	זקני העם	(Num 11:16)
the elders of Israel.....	זקני ישראל	(Num 16:25)
the elders of Midian.....	אֶל-זקני מדן	(Num 22:4)
the elders of Moab.....	זקני מואב	(Num 22:7)
the elders of his city.....	זקני עירו	(Deu 19:12)
the elders of that city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 21:3)
the elders of that city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 21:4)
And <b>all</b> the elders of that city.....	וכל זקני העיר	(Deu 21:6)
the elders of his city.....	אֶל-זקני עירו	(Deu 21:19)
to the elders of his city.....	אֶל-זקני עירו	(Deu 21:20)
to the elders of the city.....	אֶל-זקני העיר	(Deu 22:15)
the elders of the city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 22:17)
the elders of that city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 22:18)
the elders of his city.....	זקני-עירו	(Deu 25:8)
and to <b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	וְאֶל-כָּל-זקני ישראל	(Deu 31:9)
<b>all</b> the elders of your tribes.....	את-כָּל-זקני שבטיכם	(Deu 31:28)

When all the statements about the *elders of Israel* in the Torah are combined, the total is exactly 30. The first ten are in Exodus and there are ten more repetitions of *elders of the city* which is shown above. Thus, three sets of ten elders are integrated together with the addition of the words “*Israel*,” “*people*,” “*congregation*,” and “*tribes*” after “*elders*.”

**The Elders of Israel/ the city/ people/ congregation/ tribes) 30 times in the Torah**

the elders of Israel.....	את-זקני ישראל	(Exo 3:16)
and you with the elders of Israel.....	אתה וזקני ישראל	(Exo 3:18)
<b>all</b> the elders of the sons of Israel.....	את-כָּל-זקני בני ישראל	(Exo 4:29)
<b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	לְכָל-זקני ישראל	(Exo 12:21)
some of the elders of Israel.....	מזקני ישראל	(Exo 17:5)
the elders of Israel.....	זקני ישראל	(Exo 17:6)
and <b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	וכל זקני ישראל	(Exo 18:12)
to the elders of the people.....	לזקני העם	(Exo 19:7)
and seventy of the elders of Israel.....	ושבעים מזקני ישראל	(Exo 24:1)
and seventy of the elders of Israel.....	ושבעים מזקני ישראל	(Exo 24:9)
the elders of the congregation.....	זקני העדה	(Lev 4:15)
and to the elders of Israel.....	ולזקני ישראל	(Lev 9:1)
the elders of the people.....	זקני העם	(Num 11:16)
seventy men from the elders of Israel.....	שבעים איש מזקני ישראל	(Num 11:16)
seventy men of the elders of the people.....	שבעים איש מזקני העם	(Num 11:24)
and the elders of Israel.....	וזקני ישראל	(Num 11:30)
the elders of Israel.....	זקני ישראל	(Num 16:25)

the elders of his city.....	זקני עירו	(Deu 19:12)
the elders of that city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 21:3)
the elders of that city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 21:4)
And <b>all</b> the elders of that city.....	וכל זקני העיר	(Deu 21:6)
the elders of his city.....	אל־זקני עירו	(Deu 21:19)
to the elders of his city.....	אל־זקני עירו	(Deu 21:20)
to the elders of the city.....	אל־זקני העיר	(Deu 22:15)
the elders of the city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 22:17)
the elders of that city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 22:18)
the elders of his city.....	זקני־עירו	(Deu 25:8)
and the elders of Israel.....	וזקני ישראל את־העם	(Deu 27:1)
and to <b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	ואל־כָּל־זקני ישראל	(Deu 31:9)
<b>all</b> the elders of your tribes.....	את־כָּל־זקני שבטיכם	(Deu 31:28)

This last example based on the search for *elders* זקני\* (*zaqenie*, zaw-ka-nee') includes all 35 (7 x 5) repetitions. The increase from 30 to 35 is the addition of 5 repetitions of non-Israelite elders in Genesis 50:7, Numbers 22:4 and 7.

**The Elders 35 (5 x 7) times in the Torah**

the elders of his household.....	זקני ביתו	(Gen 50:7)
and <b>all</b> the elders of the land of Egypt.....	וכל זקני ארץ־מִצְרַיִם	(Gen 50:7)
the elders of Israel.....	את־זקני ישראל	(Exo 3:16)
and you with the elders of Israel.....	אתה וזקני ישראל	(Exo 3:18)
<b>all</b> the elders of the sons of Israel.....	את־כָּל־זקני בני ישראל	(Exo 4:29)
<b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	לְכָל־זקני ישראל	(Exo 12:21)
some of the elders of Israel.....	מִזְקני ישראל	(Exo 17:5)
the elders of Israel.....	זקני ישראל	(Exo 17:6)
and <b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	וכל זקני ישראל	(Exo 18:12)
to the elders of the people.....	לזקני העם	(Exo 19:7)
and seventy of the elders of Israel.....	ושבעים מזקני ישראל	(Exo 24:1)
and seventy of the elders of Israel.....	ושבעים מזקני ישראל	(Exo 24:9)
the elders of the congregation.....	זקני העדה	(Lev 4:15)
and to the elders of Israel.....	ולזקני ישראל	(Lev 9:1)
the elders of the people.....	זקני העם	(Num 11:16)
seventy men from the elders of Israel.....	שבעים איש מזקני ישראל	(Num 11:16)
seventy men of the elders of the people.....	שבעים איש מזקני העם	(Num 11:24)
and the elders of Israel.....	וזקני ישראל	(Num 11:30)
the elders of Israel.....	זקני ישראל	(Num 16:25)
the elders of Midian.....	אל־זקני מדִיָּן	(Num 22:4)
the elders of Moab.....	זקני מואב	(Num 22:7)
and the elders of Midian.....	וזקני מדִיָּן	(Num 22:7)
the elders of his city.....	זקני עירו	(Deu 19:12)
the elders of that city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 21:3)
the elders of that city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 21:4)
And <b>all</b> the elders of that city.....	וכל זקני העיר	(Deu 21:6)
the elders of his city.....	אל־זקני עירו	(Deu 21:19)
to the elders of his city.....	אל־זקני עירו	(Deu 21:20)
to the elders of the city.....	אל־זקני העיר	(Deu 22:15)
the elders of the city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 22:17)
the elders of that city.....	זקני העיר	(Deu 22:18)
the elders of his city.....	זקני־עירו	(Deu 25:8)
and the elders of Israel.....	וזקני ישראל את־העם	(Deu 27:1)
and to <b>all</b> the elders of Israel.....	ואל־כָּל־זקני ישראל	(Deu 31:9)
<b>all</b> the elders of your tribes.....	את־כָּל־זקני שבטיכם	(Deu 31:28)

There are five more identical plural absolutes in the text with the definite article translated as “*the elders*.” If these are added to the above, there are now 40 repetitions of elders. The first two are associated with the “*seventy elders*” and the next three *are* with the elders at the gate.

- ..... And to the elders..... אֱלֹהֵי־הַזְּקֵנִים (Exo 24:14)
- ..... upon the seventy elders..... עַל־שִׁבְעֵים אִישׁ הַזְּקֵנִים (Num 11:25)
- ..... to the elders..... אֱלֹהֵי־הַזְּקֵנִים (Deu 22:16)
- ..... to the gate to the elders..... הַשַּׁעֲרָה אֱלֹהֵי־הַזְּקֵנִים (Deu 25:7)
- ..... in the sight of the elders..... לְעֵינֵי הַזְּקֵנִים (Deu 25:9)

In comparison to other topic-groups *elders* comprises an average number and length of related sets in Hebraic Meter topic-groups. The question remains as to whether all the related sets of Hebraic Meter have been identified.

Another search was conducted with the same four Hebrew consonants, but this time an asterisk was added to the end (left) of the plural for elders \*זְקֵנִי\*. Surprisingly, the search pulled up exactly ten more repetitions for a grand total of 50, all plurals.

Adding an asterisk to the end of the four Hebrew consonants picked up pronouns and plurals that do not appear in the previous searches. (Hebrew pronouns appear at the end of nouns and adjectives as suffixes. *Your elders* in Hebrew is *elders yours* as one word.) It is not possible to include a plural translation for six of the following verses translated below as “*old*” in English. According to Hebrew Scholar Karl Randolph, the plural “*old*” here is related to an individual’s senior status.

**Old and Elders \*זְקֵנִי\* 10 times in the Torah**

**Old and Elders 7 with the possessive pronoun in the Torah**

- Now Abraham and Sarah were **old**..... וְאַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה זְקֵנִים (Gen 18:11)
- to Abraham in his **old** age..... לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן לְזָקְנָיו (Gen 21:2)
- yet I have borne him a son in his **old** age..... כִּי־יָלַדְתִּי בֶן לְזָקְנָיו (Gen 21:7)
- because he was the son of *his* **old** age..... כִּי־בֶן־זְקֵנִים (Gen 37:3)
- and a little child of *his* **old** age..... וְיָלֵד זְקֵנִים קָטָן (Gen 44:20)
- We shall go with our young and our **old**..... בְּנֹעָרֵינוּ וּבְזָקְנֵינוּ נֵלֶךְ (Exo 10:9)
- and your **elders**..... וְזָקְנֵיכֶם (Deu 5:23)
- and go out with your **elders**..... וְיָצְאוּ זְקֵנֶיךָ (Deu 21:2)
- your **elders**..... זְקֵנֵיכֶם (Deu 29:9)
- Your **elders**..... זְקֵנֶיךָ (Deu 32:7)

The astonishing discovery of the Joshua Tablet on Mount Ebal was accomplished by an archaeological team sponsored by TBS, The Bible Seminary, and Assembly of God congregations. The Joshua Tablet is the oldest Hebrew Bible-related series of words ever found. As anticipated by this writer for more than forty years, it confirms that “Hebraic Meter” was an ancient Hebrew genre.

God told the nation of Israel to divide with half its tribes’ writing blessings on Mount Gerizim and the other half writing curses on Mount Ebal (Deut. 27:4-13). As described in Job 19:24, The Joshua Tablet was written as a contract with an iron pen on lead. The tablet employs Hebraic Meter by repeating “curse” ten times in chiasmic form, divided in the middle by the name of the LORD.

This tablet is the earliest written record of the name of the LORD. By its writing style and chemical analysis of the lead tablet, it is dated to at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century. See the video *Mt. Ebal "Curse Tablet" Full Press Conference* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDD92qp\\_lfQ&t=13s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDD92qp_lfQ&t=13s) held at the Lanier Theological Library in Houston Texas.

This discovery is important because it confirms the earlier writing of the Hebrew text.

Rather than locating God in the Egyptian cult of the dead, Israel located God on its written scrolls inside the Ark of the Covenant. Unlike Noah's Ark, which saved the people in the Ark, Israel's Ark saved the people outside the Ark. Noah's Ark was 300 cubits long and the circumference of the Tabernacle was 300 cubits.

The Ark of the Covenant was sacred because God's written word was inside it. The same words inside the Ark are the same words printed in our Bibles. More than Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as with Israel, God is always present with His people in His word.

The curses in the Joshua Tablet at Ebal are on those who ignore the Torah, and the blessings are on those who believe and obey the Torah. Today this applies to the entire Bible, not just to the first five books (cf. Revelation 22:18-19).

Overall, the topic-groups in the Torah are about God, what He is doing for His people, and how He wants His people to respond. They represent the very core and intent of the Torah. The Torah scenarios tell us the history of God's interaction with His people, and the topic-groups tell us how we should live.