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RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Investigation into the Impact on our Understanding of the Prophets of the Chronicler Changing the Term *Nebiim* to *Leviim* When he was Copying 2 Kings 23:2 and Writing 2 Chronicles 34:30

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Abstract

The purpose of the research was to investigate the evidence that the Chronicler who wrote 1 and 2 Chronicles understood that the prophets of Yahuah were connected to specified father's house in Israel and were not just wandering nameless ecstasies who happened to be taken over by the spirit of Yahuah and so prophesied. The principal result of the research is that there is clear evidence that the Chronicler understood the prophets of Yahuah and the Levite singers of Yahuah were most of the time the same circle of people. The *nebiim* were well organized and were responsible to a specified watch which took the name of a father from the time of David. The teams were a combination of teachers and disciples who regularly ministered at the temple. This system did not arise in a vacuum but Samuel the seer had some influence on David's organizational principle. The study gives scholars a new way of understanding the prophets in the time of Samuel and onwards and give a background for relooking at the classical reform prophets.

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Introduction

The idea of a genealogy of prophets is not often heard about. In the past, scholars have taken up themes such as Prophetic Psychology, Prophecy and Cult, Prophetic Speech, Prophetic books and many other research interests. There has not been so much focus on the family relations of the *nebiim*.

This research falls into the category of cultic prophets because the cult was operated by the tribe of Levi and after Samuel by the kings of Israel and the sons of Levi. Many have noticed the levitical roots of Moses *hanabi* (the prophet), Aaron *hanabi*, Miriam *hanabia*, Samuel *hanabi*, Jeremiah *hanabi* ben Hilkiyah of Anathoth a city of *kohenim* (priests), Ezekiel *hakohen* son of Buzi, Isaiah's call vision of the inside of the holy place where only *kohenim* were allowed. Perhaps not so many have known the tradition that Elijah *hanabi* was a priest. Is it possible that the prophets of Yahuah after the time of Samuel were drawn specifically from one tribe? Is it possible that the prophets are not rootless wanderers without genealogy, dramatic lonely figures hanging out at the edge of society but rather are often people coming from families who were assigned by Yahuah's servant to be prophets?

This paper investigates the issue of men who received training in prophecy from their father to whom they were students and sons. It first undertakes review of past research in the field of cultic prophets and moves on to look at the evidence that Samuel organized the prophets of his generation and David with the help of Samuel organized and named the prophets of his time. This paper reveals why the Chronicler changed the word *nebiim* to *leviim* in his copying of the prophetic writer of the Kings record and perhaps, an approach to answering the enigmatic question of a local of Gibeath haelohim regarding visiting prophets: Mi Avihem? Who is their father? (1 Sam 10:12).

Overview of Critical Scholarship

In the last 130 years, there have been some fruitful insights into the work and ministry of the prophets. The late 19th century and early 20th century saw most works using the historical critical method and textual critical works. These gave some insight into the historical background of the prophets and their individual sayings (Eissfeldt, as cited in Rowley,

1961). The impression one gets from the interaction between Jeremiah and Hananiah, that both were prophets in an institution and that somehow there was a connection between the praising prophetic groups of the days of Samuel (1 Sam 10:5) and the established singers and prophesiers of the Davidic system prophesying under Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun (1 Chron. 25:1), have been examined in the work of Mowinckel (1923, 2002).

Mowinckel's (ibid.) thinking developed the form criticism of Gunkel which led to a breakthrough in the understanding of the Psalms. Mowinckel wrote a number of books and had a part in commentary of the Old Testament where he wrote the sections on the prophets (Mowinckel, 1929-1963). He also wrote a commentary on *The Prophet Isaiah* (1925) and *The Disciples of Isaiah* (1926). He also wrote a long article on *Palestine Before Israel* in which he noted on ecstatic *nebiim* in Canaan. He wrote on Jeremiah in *Motives and Forms in the Poetry of Jeremiah the Prophet* (1926), *Recognising God within the Old Testament Prophets* (1941) and *Prophecy and Tradition* (1946). Mowinckel (1923) notes the prophetic outbursts in, for example, Psalm 81 and Psalm 95 and points out their similarity to the full blown prophecies in the books of the prophets. Mowinckel (ibid.) thus concluded that "that the *nebiim* were originally representatives of the congregation seized by ecstasy of the orgiastic tumult of the cultic festival; they were filled with divine power to raving point" (Mowinckel, 1987, p. 120) and of course, for him, this leads to raving prophetic words.

Mowinckel (2002) also made the observation that the prophets were oral people. They spoke and rarely wrote. He observed the importance of their position in the cult. He noted also that originally, Moses was seen as far higher than the *nebiim* as seen in Numbers 12:6. Their messages were clear and concise and the term 'literary prophets' was seen as a misnomer for to him the prophets were not writers but spokesmen. The earlier terms used for *nabi* in Israel were *roeh* and *chozeh*. He observes a difference between *roeh* (seer) and *chozeh* (seer) as Petersen (1981, p. 98) later maintains. *Nebiim* were in function in pre Israelite Canaan and Israelite *nebiim*¹ were related to these even if they developed some unique characteristics especially their powerful impact on the morality of the nation (Mowinckel, 2002). Later tradition subsumed the terms *chozeh* and *roeh* under *nabi* and Moses became a *nabi*.

Mowinckel's brilliant insight to the role and functions of the prophets led to a breakthrough in the field. It was understood that although it appeared that many of their messages were against the cult, they were in fact a part of the cult (Mowinckel, 2002). His writings on the prophets were numerous but because much of it was in Norwegian and German it did not get as much exposure to peer review as his work on the Psalms did. Mowinckel's work was a breakthrough in this field of cult and prophecy. "If we are correct that men with prophetic gifts and inspiration had their place and calling in the fixed order of the cult, the fact remains that these prophetic Psalms - which unquestionably come from the circles of the cultic functionaries - were certainly composed by prophetically gifted men" (Mowinckel, 1987, p. 78). He then showed that prophecy came from the system of singers established in Israel. Singing is mainly the concern of a branch of the Levites (1 Chron. 25). The system of Levites and priests in their courses is attested to as established under David, at the command of Yahuah, not by Moses, but by Yahuah's prophets (2 Chron. 29:25)².

Mowinckel, perhaps, overemphasised the difference between Samuel and those prophets which came after him. Thus he saw Samuel as a priest seer rather than a Levite *nabi* who was indeed one of the *nebiim* even if their leader. A stronger focus on the father's houses of the prophets would have corrected this. The systems of organized prophets (cult prophets) have also been investigated by Hooke (1933) in *Myth and Ritual: Essays on the Myths and Ritual of the Hebrews in relation to the Cultic pattern of the near East*. His focus is on enthronement ritual and sacred kingship. Haldar's *Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites* (1945) discusses this line further.

In the area of groups of prophets, Rendtorff (1986) observes that these appear in the historical books. They speak of *chebel nebiim* - company, line or region of *nebiim* (1 Sam 10, 19). Rendtorff notes that the *nebiim* 200 years later under Ahab are in close touch with his court and he consults them before going to war (1 Kg. 22). There were *nebei yahuah* and *nebei habaal* (1 Kg. 18, 22). The phrase *benei hanebiim* is mentioned in relation to Elisha (1Kg. 20:35ff; 2 Kg: 2-9), who is located in different towns, Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal. Rendtorff (ibid.) notices that these had a common place of meeting where they would sit before Elisha, common meals, some married and had their own houses. They unlike those mentioned under Ahab above are independent of the court (Rendtorff, 1986). They also give political messages which pronounces Yahuah's judgement on a king (1 Kg 20:42) and the other anoints a military commander king of Israel and gives him an assignment from Yahuah (2 Kg. 9:3). It may be that they had a mark on their forehead or that they were

¹ The place in Hosea 12 and Deu 18:15, 34:10 are all seen as later tradition.

² The Rabbi maintains that the prophets never instituted anything that was not given to Moses on Sinai. For them this is then a revelation of a system which was present in the oral tradition from Sinai, Chafes, A Student Guide to the Talmud.

recognisable to the king (1 Kg 20: 38, 41).

Rendtorff however disagrees with Mowinckel (1923) and Johnson (1944) regarding the connection of the prophets to the cult. "During the later monarchy the sources no longer refer to ...*nebiim*... as a group. A history of this form of prophecy can hardly be reconstructed from the materials available. In particular, there is no real evidence for the current thesis that these groups are connected with the cultus" (Rendtorff, 1968, p. 800). Rendtorff continues arguing that coming down from the *bamah* or high place (1 Sam 10:5), and the fact that Ramah (1 Sam 19:19), Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho (2 Kg 2:1-5) were cultic centres cannot sustain the burden of proof that the prophets were connected to the cultic centres. Rendtorff also considered the reference to *nebiim* in 2 Kg 23:2 to be secondary since in his thinking, the later monarchy sources did not refer to prophets in the plural (ibid p.800). His position is clearly weakened by the reference to the *nebiim* in both Jeremiah (4:9, 5:31, 13:13) and Ezekiel (13:2-16) in the late monarchy period. Various scholars have studied individual prophets and argued their connection with the cults. These include Habakkuk, Haggai and Zechariah (Mowinckel, 1962) and Joel (Ahlstrom, 1971; Gordon, 1995, p. 9) among others.

The other very important work in this field is Johnson's *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel* (1944) where he makes many observations as to the connection between the Levites and the Prophets. Also in his *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody* (1979), he focuses on the Psalter rather than individual prophets (Gordon, 1995). Johnson's noble goal was to show that "at all Yahweh sanctuaries, but in particular at the temple in Jerusalem, the prophets stood side by side with the priests, and played at least as important a role, having indeed a double function" (Eissfeldt, 1952, p. 120). He also contended for their dual roles as intercessors and spokesmen for Yahweh. Even the strong rebukes of the prophets in the writing of the "classical" prophets were simply rebuking the misuse of the system, not the system itself (Eissfeldt, 1952, p. 123). Eissfeldt feels one limitation of these works is that they tend to relegate the prophet and his word to the sphere of the cult (Eissfeldt, 1952, p. 122).

The work of Petersen, *The Roles of Israel's Prophets* (1981), deals with the relationship between four of the words which refer to prophets: *Nabi*, *chozeh*, *roeh* and the *eish haelohim*. He concludes that the *roeh* (1 Sam. 9:9-19, 2 Sam. 15:27) "appears as an urban prophet who enacted his role within the context of the public sacrificial cults and who also worked on a fee basis for individuals" (p. 44). The second title is *eish ha elohim*, a man of God (Jud. 13:8, 1 Sam. 2:27, 1 Kings 12:2, 1 Kings 13:1). Holstein (1977) argues that *eish ha elohim* is "homogenous throughout the Hebrew Bible., and...is he maintains not a prophetic title since Hanan ben Yigdalyahu and David, non prophets, are so labelled (Petersen, 1981, p. 40). Instead, it is considered a title "to describe men of exceptional worth, men of 'honorific quality'" (ibid.). These positions are weakened by the fact that later Jewish tradition held that David was a prophet (Acts 2:30; 2 Chr. 29:25; Ganz 1995).

Petersen (1981) complains that "much recent work on this material has not been productive since such work has regularly avoided fundamental higher critical issues" (p. 40). Petersen argues *nabi* is the word for prophet used in the northern kingdom and *chozeh* is the word used in the southern kingdom. Another important publication by Petersen (1987) in this respect is *Prophecy in Israel, Search for an Identity*. In this work, he assembles some very important articles from the research from 1922 onwards regarding the identity of the prophets including sociological works like Max Weber's *The Prophet*, Petersen uses sociological terminological meaning to criticise other contributions in the field when they use such words as the "office" and "charisma" to describe the prophet. From the world of sociology, he feels role theory is more appropriate for the study of the prophets. To assume that scholars of the Bible must use such terms as "office" and "roles" as a sociologist does is to impose the standards of one discipline on another without any real historical or linguistic justification. These words are not uniquely tied to the discipline of sociology but are part of the English language as whole. This may be the biggest problem in this school of thought, imposing too rigidly modern categories of study on ancient societies which had a different way of organizing things with different contexts. Another work is by James Hilber (2005) on *Cult Prophecy in the Psalms*, especially his chapter 'Asaphite Psalms', which "have been frequently characterised as containing prophetic material." (p. 128). Hilber (ibid.) concludes that "while the prophetic character of the Asaphite tradition and their psalms is unquestioned, two different explanations have been offered for the origin of the prophetic speech in the Asaphite psalms. On the one hand there is cultic prophecy; on the other hand there is literary formation that merely imitates prophetic style" (p. 149). Perhaps an insight to the Asaph family tradition as prophets and prophets in training can help with this uncertainty. A more conservative Biblical tradition based approach is needed.

Lewis himself asserts in his *Ecstatic Religion* that these gods "strike without rhyme or reason; or at least without any substantial cause. They are not concerned with man's behaviour to man" (Lewis, as cited in Petersen, 1981, p. 46). However, this position in relation to Elijah is clearly not reflective of the traditions regarding him in 1 Kings, for

example his attitude to Ahab's stealing of Naboth the Jezreelite's vineyard (2 Kings 21) where the word of Yahuah came for the sake of justice. This idea of classifying Yahuah, Elijah's God as striking with no rhyme or no reason ignores the fact that Elijah, and Elisha fought against Israel's disobedience to the covenant they had with Yahuah, the judgements were a part of the covenant (Exod. 20:6, Deu. 28-30). Thus Elijah is sent by Yahuah to speak to Ahab "Thus says Yahuah, Hast thou killed and also taken possession?"...I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of Yahuah" (1 Kings 21:17-24). When scholars, then, apply the model "gods of peripheral possession" to the prophet Elijah and Elisha and conclude they serve an amoral god, they have clearly misunderstood the representation of nature of Yahuah in the source. A view of Elijah as one of the "unemployed" Levites of the northern Kingdom from whom the prophets of the north arose may be more accurate. So our focus will be a conservative text-based approach which, as a result, will illuminate the relationship between the prophets of Israel and their fathers in the sons *Levi*.

Main Discussion

Samuel as Ancestor to the Levites and *Nebiim* but not the *Kohenim*

Fundamental to our case is the transition from the rule of Yahuah as king (*melek*) during the reign of Samuel, to the reign of David as king with the prophets ministering alongside him. Whereas Samuel and his sons were responsible for judging Israelites in the earlier period, David and his sons had overall responsibility in the latter period, they did however appoint Levites to the task (1 Chr. 23:4). Mowinckel (2002) sees this as a movement from the earlier rule of Samuel as seer and priest. The priest gave divine revelation in the form of *torot* but it is the *nabiistic* oral style which replaces it. "The seers' forms of revelation – vision, nocturnal apparition, dream-- were taken over by the *nabi*" (ibid. 2002. p.104). Mowinckel sees the *nabi* "demonstrably as non Israelite origin", and is "a common Canaanite manifestation" (ibid. p. 104).

Mowinckel (ibid.) contrasts this with "seerism" which he considers as probably genuinely Israelite. "The type of seer is Samuel, and the form of this type is Moses; not until later tradition are both of them turned into *nebiim*" (ibid. p. 104). Using his method of tradition criticism he sees that the references in Hosea 12, 1 Sam. 3:21, Deu. 34:10, and Deu. 18, which label Samuel and Moses as *nebiim* are "later tradition" (ibid. p. 104). He then goes on to argue for Samuel's priestly position, and Moses priestly position. He believes the tradition of Samuel becoming an assistant to Eli and then his first revelation "is abbreviated for the sake of later legends that make him into a judge over all Israel" (ibid p. 104). Rather he is assumed to have taken over the priesthood of Eli, after his death (ibid p.104). In all this he is contrasting the role of priesthood and seer with *nabi* which is an oracle style rather than a "priestly-torah style".

According to Mowinckel (2002), both Samuel and Moses are high above *nabi*. He draws parallels with Moses and Samuel: (1) they train for the priesthood (Ex. 18:14-27); (2) they mediate a covenant (Ex 24:18); (3) they are custodians of the holy tent of revelation and present cases of the people to Yahuah (Ex 33:7-11); (4) Make legal and cultic decisions in Yahuah's name; and (5) their descendants becomes priests after them (Judg. 18:30). In a later period the priests continue to mediate revelation through the ephod (1 Sam 14:3, 18-19, 37, 41-42; 22:18). According to Mowinckel (ibid.), seers were "officially appointed". "Someone officially appointed had little to do with free inspiration his activity is of a priestly sort" (ibid, p. 105). However both Moses the priest and the *nebiim* were wonder workers (Ex.4:1-5, 1 King 17:7). Mowinckel argues that after Samuel the cult priests (for example Jeremiah and Ezekiel) remained revealers of the deity and the function of seer (*roeh*) was taken over by the *nebiim*.

According to Mowinckel (2002), the fact that Moses is higher than the *nabi* in the earlier tradition (Num 12:6) is because he is a different kind of messenger to the *nabi*; he is a priest seer (p. 104). But the fact that he draws a parallel between Moses' position above the *nebiim* and Samuels' position above the *nebiim* shows that this idea could be mistaken. Samuel is the leader of the *nebiim*, he himself being one of them and their organizer (1 Sam 3:20, 1 Sam 9:9, 19). His position as leader is replaced by David (Acts 3:20) and his own descendants and the kings of Judah and Israel (1 Chron. 25; 1 Kg. 22:6, 8, 16). This is the message of the priestly Chronicler in the reorganization of worship because of the building of the temple (1 Chron. 25). Under the authority of the king in the time of David were the three *chozim* (seers), Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman: The sons of Asaph the Levite *chozeh* "prophesied under the king's supervision" (1 Chron. 25). The sons of Jeduthun prophesied under their father's supervision (1 Chron. 25:3). Heman, grandson of Samuel was the king's *chozeh* and must have succeeded Gad (2 Sam. 24:11). The relationships are not only based on charisma but on family ties because he is from the tribe of Levi, like the gatekeepers or security guards who were organized by David and Samuel together and inherited their post from their fathers (1 Chron. 9:22). Thus Samuel was over the *nebiim* as they were prophesying (1 Sam 19:19)³.

³ It is clear that the prophesying here is connected to music and Samuel is head over a group of singers. The fact that

Most of these prophets were still alive in the time of David. The people complained to Samuel that his sons Joel and Abijah did not walk as he did, so they refused to have them as judges. But they could not lose their jobs as Levites, because to be a Levite was a family inheritance (1 Sam. 12:2; 1 Chron. 6:28). Although some scholars have mistakenly understood that Samuel was not a Levite in the narrower sense of the word where the sons of Aaron are excluded (Boadt, 1984). "Samuel was not himself a Levite nor a descendant of Aaron" (ibid. p. 277), it is clear that the Chronicler's genealogical documents gave a genealogy of Samuel going back to Kohath the son of Levi, father of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel (1 Chron. 6:2). The prophetic writer of 1 Samuel describes the ancestor of Samuel, Zuph, as an Ephraimite. Since the Levites were spread out among the tribes of Israel this description would not preclude him from being a Levite for there were Levites who lived in the north and in land of Ephraim (Davis, 1944), and they were Kohathites (Josh.21) as was Samuel (1 Chron. 8), just as Joseph was perceived as an Egyptian by his brothers (Gen. 42), so Samuel could be perceived as a descendant of an Ephraimite⁴. The priestly Chronicler when writing his report had many biblical books as sources. Thus when he wrote the variant genealogy explaining Samuel's Levitical roots he was giving the genealogy in terms less likely to lead to misunderstanding.

Samuel as Prophetic Disciple of Eli

Samuel came as prophetic disciple to Eli. This was in the heart of his mother because she herself is presented as a psalmist/singer (1 Sam 2) who developed prayers and her prayer is one of the earliest psalms in the biblical tradition. She is also considered a prophetess in later Jewish tradition (Ganz, 1995, p. 27). It is possible for a biblical character to have more than one genealogy since biblical characters often have more than one name by which they are called for example Jacob/Israel, Uziah/Azariah or it is possible a brother would raise up a child in the name of his dead and childless brother (Ruth 4:5). In addition, the priestly Chronicler would have read in the Pentateuch that the sons of Levi had been brought to Aaron the priest to assist him (Num 3:5), even as Hannah brings Samuel to assist Eli (1 Sam 1:24-28). Eli is a descendant of Aaron and Samuel of Kohath, a Levite (1 Chron. 6). Yahuah says to Moses "The Levites are mine" (Num 3:11) and he took them in place of the first male offspring of an Israelite woman (Num 3:12) and Hannah presents Samuel to Yahuah. He is her first born and he is a Levite. It is clear that the Chronicler in presenting Samuel's genealogy intended to make these connections clear by way of explaining who Heman (1 Chron. 6:33, 15:17), who had risen to prominence among David's musicians, was (Davies, 1944, p. 236). In the Jewish tradition, Hannah was a prophetess (Ganz, 1995).

In line with this paper's thesis, a daughter of Levi, a prophetess, handed her son over to Eli, a seer/prophet and priest who knew the voice of Yahuah when he heard it (1 Sam 3:8), for service of Yahuah which included the prophetic ministry (1 Sam 3:10). The high priest Zadok from the line of Eleazar, son of Aaron, is also a seer-roeh (2 Sam 15:27). However, there is a problem which would need explaining if we accept that Samuel is a son of Levi but not of Aaron. The Chronicler would read in *Numbers* that the Kohathite clans to which Samuel is assigned (1 Chron. 6:22-25, 33-46), were responsible for the care of the holy place, the ark, the table, the lamp stand, the altars and many more things (Num 3:30-35). The leader of the Kohathites in this respect was Elizaphan, son of Uzziel however the main head of the Levites was Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest. He was responsible for those responsible for the sanctuary (Num 3:32). The main work of the Kohathites was performed when they were between 30 and 50 (Num 4:1-2), but Samuel joined Eli as a child. Samuel came when the tabernacle had been standing in Shiloh for hundreds of years, since at least 1400 BC (Faulstich).

The Kohathites' work was in relation to the movement of the tabernacle; they carried the tabernacle after the sons of Aaron had prepared it. They were not permitted to touch the holy things or they would die (Num 4:15). Indeed it was not permitted for them to go into and even look at the holy things or they would die (Num 4:20). The priestly Chronicler was clearly aware of this when he was writing the genealogical records of Samuel, having *Numbers* and *1 Samuel* before him. This means that Samuel, contrary to the position of Mowinckel (2002, p. 104), was a Levite but not a descendant of Aaron. As Smith states, "He represents the independence of the moral law of the divine Will as distinct from regal and sacerdotal enactments, which is so characteristic of all the later prophets. He was if a Levite, yet certainly not a priest" (Smith, 1986). This is even clearer because the Chronicler through his sources knew the Torah, on the surface of it banned Levites (as opposed to *kohanim*) from entering and operating in the sanctuary, but he still presents Samuel as one not from the sons of Aaron (1 Chron. 6:26).

Saul and his servants come into the presence of the prophets and begin to prophesy, suggests they joined the song and the dance. The dance is suggested by the fact that they take off their clothes and lay down. This is dancing until they were sweating so much they lay down and took off their clothes to cool down.

⁴ There is probably a parallel here with Elijah the Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead but clearly of the Levite family with his expertise in sacrifice (1 Kings 18).

Another indicator that Samuel was a Levite seer/prophet and not a priest seer is the contrast drawn to what Mowinckel (2002) proposes. Mowinckel proposes that "Like Samuel, Moses is also a priest seer...Like Samuel, Moses entered into training for the priesthood, with his father in law Jethro (Exod. 18:14-27)...his descendants become priests after him" (Judges 18:30) (ibid. p. 105). Firstly if Moses enters training in Exodus 18:14, it is certainly not as a priest, it is as a supreme judge. It is clear that he knew about offerings when he spoke to Pharaoh earlier on in Exodus 10:24. Nor was he in training in hearing the voice of Yahuah because Moses had already established the seat of justice where people would come to hear the oracle of Yahuah regarding their problems (18:13-15). He knew how to hear Yahuah's voice. It is clear that when Moses met his father in law, it was the father in law who had learnt through Moses ministry. "Now I know that Yahuah is greater than all other gods" (Ex. 18:6). He was learning from the ministry of Moses. The advice Jethro gives Moses in the administration of the justice of Israel is exactly that: advice from a father in law to a son in law regarding a particular issue. This is clear from the way he responds to what Moses was doing and the helpful solution he suggests (Ex 18:13-15). He also admits that the most important thing for Moses to do is to listen to God (Ex.18:23). This is the first evidence that on this point Mowinckel is incorrect. If there is any training here it is as judge (*shafat*) and not as *kohen*.

This point is confirmed by the mistake in Mowinckel's last parallel between the descendants of Moses and Samuel. He argues that, like Samuel, Moses' descendants became priests after him and he points to Judges 18:30. The sad story of Judges 18:30 is that Moses' grandson became the priest of idols for the tribe of Dan. The prophetic author tells us that the Danites set up for themselves idols, and Jonathan son of Gershom son of Moses and his sons were *kohenim* for the tribe Dan. The covenant was then being transgressed in that Dan made idols (*phesel*) to themselves. "You shall not make for yourself *phesel*" said the second word of the covenant (Exod. 20:4). This practice of serving *phesel* was far more likely to come from Jethro to his daughter Zipporah, to Gershom to Jonathan than through Moses. This means that Moses lost his grandson to idolatry. Jonathan was a Levite from the Kohath clan not from the sons of Aaron (1 Chron. 23:14). It is possible that the prophetic writer of *Judges* knew he should not have been serving as a priest even if that is what he did (Num 3:2, 1 Chron. 23:14). Indeed it appears the priestly Chronicler wrote Jonathan out of the reckoning of the descendants of Moses. He lists only one son to Gershom, "The descendants of Gershom: Shubael the first". No second son is mentioned.

However, contrary to Mowinckel's (2002) idea that Moses descendants were priests they are classified as a part of the tribe of Levi, they were actually Midianites by Zipporah (Exodus 2:21). And in the tribe of Levi they were according to the Chronicler Levites not *kohenim* (1 Chron. 26:20-24). Shubael son of Gershom was a treasurer, as were his brother Eliezer's children Rahabiah and his descendants (1 Chron. 26:24-28). The tradition related by the Chronicler regarding Samuel's grandson, Heman, contrary to the idea of Mowinckel (2002) does not indicate he became a *kohen* but a Levite (1 Chron. 6:33) and the lead singer in the temple ministry (1 Chron. 15:17). This fact supports the impression given that when Samuel was leading the prophets in Naioth, Ramah, they were prophesying in singing (1 Sam 19). Although musical instruments are not mentioned in this episode of prophesying, they were present in the prophesying in the days of Samuel, when Saul first comes across the prophets. Heman is called a *chozeh*-seer (1 Chron. 25:5).

The fact that Heman was appointed singer (*mashir*) and his ministry ran alongside the ministry of the priests not as a priest is another confirmation of the intention of the Chronicler. The Chronicler's interest was to explain who Heman the *chozeh* head of the musicians or singers was. To do this, he refers to his father Joel son of Samuel the prophet. Heman used to play the cymbal (1 Chron. 15:19) while the trumpets were blown by the *kohenim*. Those who followed Samuel were Levites from the Kohathite branch.⁵ The Chronicler and the author of Genesis, Exodus and Numbers make it clear that Levi had three sons; Gershon Kohath and Merari. Of the sixteen camps in the wilderness, these three clans had three which were based around the tabernacle (Num 3:29). The author of Numbers gives them the responsibility to assemble and take down the tent of meeting (*ohel moed*). Aaron was selected out of the sons of Kohath (Both Moses and Samuel came from this clan, Num 3:29) to operate the *ohel moed*. In the camps in the wilderness, the Kohathites were located to the south of the *mishkan*. Because of the temporary nature of the *ohel moed* the jobs of the Levites had to change over time. Historically, the career of the Levites can be analyzed into 8 periods. These are period of: (1) Elders (Gen 34-Ex. 40); (2) Moses and Aaron, and the Elders(Ex.40-Joshua 1); (3) Judges, the Elders and the Sons of Aaron (Joshua 1-1Sam. 1); (4) Samuel, the Elders, David and the sons of Aaron 1 Sam. 1- 1 Kings 8; (5) Solomon, the Elders, and the sons of Levi (1 Kings 8-1 Kings 12); (6) The Kings of Judah, Israel, Elders, sons of Levi 1 Kings 12- 2 Kings 25; (7)

⁵ The fact that Samuel line is said to have come from Amminadab which would appear either as another name for Izhar father of Korah in one area which could make things a little unclear but the Chronicler calls the ancestor son of Kohath, Izhar in 1 Chron. 6:38 and Amminadab in 1 Chron. 6:22. It would appear to be one of the many cases of a character having more than one name.

Nebuchadnezzar, the Elders the Sons of Levi; and (8) Nehemiah, the Elders, Eliashib son of Aaron. This study is mainly interested in the fourth, fifth, and sixth periods in testing its hypothesis.

Samuel the Prophet and his Prophetic Lines (*chebel*)

Before Samuel, *nabiism* was rare in Israel. From Genesis to 1 Samuel the mention of the word *nebiim*, that is prophets in the plural, is when Moses expresses his desire that all of Israel were *nebiim* (Num 11:29). That reference coincided with the giving of the spirit which was on Moses to the 70 elders of Israel so that they began to prophesy. From the record of the prophesying of Joshua, Joshua says “koh amar Yahuah” (thus saith Yahuah), like Aaron and Moses did before him (Ex 4:22)⁶. As Yahuah was with Moses’ and Aaron’s mouth he was now with Joshua’s mouth (Josh 7:13, Josh 24:2). Before the time of Samuel, the word *nabi* was rarely used of individuals. It is used of Abraham (Gen 20:7) and Aaron (Ex. 7:1) in defining what happened when a *nabi* was present in the community of Israel (Num 13:6). Apart from the Deuteronomist’s 10 uses, whose dates are subject to dispute some scholars apply those uses to a later period (Mowinckel 2002), there is only one use of *nabi* in Judges 6:8. The later prophets Hosea (12:13) and Jeremiah (7:25) also hold to a tradition that there were *nebiim* from Moses onwards. As Yahuah says through Jeremiah: “Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them*” (Jer. 7:25).

Although the term *nebiim* or *nabi* may have been rare, there was a continuous stream of messengers to Israel. For example a man of God (*eish ha elohim*) came to Eli the teacher of Samuel saying “koh amar Yahuah” (1 Sam 2:27), thus speaking like a *nabi*. According to the same author, the prophetic writer, there was a terminology change in the time of Samuel. “Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is now called a Prophet* was beforetime called a Seer” (1 Sam 9:9). Thus the term *seer/roeh* according to the prophetic writer was used in Israel in the old days. The term *roeh* as seer is first used in 1 Sam 9:9. The three terms then *nabi*, *eish ha elohim* and *roeh* were all used for people who could declare “koh amar Yahuah”. The writer of the end of Deuteronomy and the writer Joshua (probably Joshua because he was probably Moses amanuensis [Ellicot 1971, p. 169]) both call Moses a *eish ha elohim*. This can all only be seen as preparation for the coming of Samuel.

With Samuel’s arrival in Israel, *chebel nebiim* or companies, lines or groups of *nebiim* (1 Sam 10:10-11) begin to be seen. Samuel tells Saul, after anointing him, to go and that he will meet a *cheleb nebiim* or company or line of *nebiim* coming down from a high place (*bamah*). These are a part of the plan of Samuel to get Saul anointed with the Spirit. He would meet them on the way down from Gibeath haelohim which could either mean the Hill of God or refer to a village of that name (Bergen, 2007). It is shortened to Gibeah and is Saul’s hometown (Payne, 1971; Wevers, 1971). These *nebiim* would have four instruments with them: lyres (*nebel*), tambourines (*tof*), flutes (*chalil*) and harps (*kinor*) and they would be prophesying (*mitnabiim*). Samuel says that three things would happen to Saul on encountering the *nebiim*. (1) *Vetzlacha aleika ruach yahuah* (That the Spirit of Yahuah would prosper on him or come mightily on him or come upon him with power or control him). (2) *vehitnabita imam* (and you will prophesy with them). (3) *venepakta le eish acher* (And you will be changed into another man). From these three things, how quickly the lines of prophets might grow is seen. For Saul to come in the sound of their music and prophesying would be enough to change him into one of them. This experience indicated that from that time, God would be with him. This group of *nebiim* connected to Gibeath haelohim was spreading the presence of the Spirit of Yahuah. They did not give a prophetic word to Saul or counsel him nor is it known from the report what they were singing or prophesying about. Why did Samuel have to send Saul to the *nebiim* to receive the Spirit? Who were they? The prophetic author of Samuel does not give this information. Wevers (1971, p. 160) in regard to these prophets notes that, “In early times, prophets were ecstatics, spirit filled men, who used music...to bring on a state of ecstasy during which they prophesied”.

The fact that in verse 11 people who knew Saul are surprised that perhaps Saul, a man of Kish and a Benjamite might be among the *nebiim* indicates that this looked strange. For some scholars, this was “intended to cast aspersions on the prophets as a class whose parentage is unknown, whereas that of Saul is well known” (ibid. p. 160). Wevers (1971) suggests “What is meant is Saul as a farmer has no business being a prophet”. Payne (1971, p. 292) agreeing that the sayings are discourteous to Saul says, “What was he, a respectable local citizen, doing in these roaming madmen of unknown origin and dubious antecedents?” The question regarding, “Who is their father?” refers to the leader of the school of the prophets who were called fathers (2Kg. 2:12; 6:21). Faulstich (1986) dates this anointing to 1031 BC. And Elisha took over from Elisha around 871BC. Ellicot (1971), on the identification of the *cheleb nebiim*, says: “These

⁶ This is the first time this statement is used by anyone. Here Moses although actually Aaron in the end speaks a word on behalf of Yahuah and on his authority.

evidently belonged to one of those seminaries termed “schools of the prophets,” founded by Samuel for the training of young men” (p. 236).

The fact that people who knew Saul saw him as he came across the prophetic procession suggests that this was indeed Saul's home town, Gibeah (Payne, 1971) and secondly that there was a public procession going on with instruments and praise. Another indicator that this was a time of a feast or celebration is the fact that the girls who meet Saul on his way to Samuel say that the man of God has just arrived in town and the people were going to have a sacrifice at the high place but they would wait for Samuel to come to bless the sacrifice (1 Sam. 9:12-13). The word *chebel* can mean a line not just a company of prophets which can also suggest a procession. When Saul got there and *im nebiim niba*-with the prophets he prophesied, his acquaintances and neighbors saw him prophesying but knew that was not his place; he should rather have been with the public watching the procession. This led to a conversation among those who knew Saul

Person 1 *mah zeh hayah* What was this
 leben qish to the son of Kish
 Person 2 *Shaul benebiim.* Saul with the prophets?
 Person 3 *Umi avihem* And who is their father?
 Proverb *Hagam shaul banebiim.* Is Saul with the prophets?

Perhaps we can read it as: “What this was to the son of Kish?” We may perhaps paraphrase: “What's happened to the son of the successful businessman Kish? He is not one of the prophets how then did he come to prophesy with them? How is it they let him join in? Who is their father? That is who is responsible for these prophets? These prophets were not people who could have come from any tribe but were connected to the Levite tribe and thus were an exclusive group who belonged to Yahuah and so had permission to prophesy. But Saul did not belong to the Levite group; he belonged to the Benjamites.

Saul was well known because his father was a man of standing; Kish the son of Abiel the son of Zeror (1Sam 9:1). The author knows his genealogy going back five generations. His father was an *eish gebor chayil* a mighty man of honour. He was a mighty man of honor among the Benjamites but they were as Saul rightly points out to Samuel the smallest of the tribes in Israel due to the civil war in Judges 20, where Benjamin was almost wiped out. Since Saul's father was an *eish chayil* he had the first qualification which in the Torah Jethro lays down for a man who would be a judge in Israel to help Moses (Ex. 18:21). He was one of the *anshei chayil* (able men). The prophetic author argues that Saul came from a good and honorable family. The intention probably being to address the complaints of the people of Israel that Joel and Abijah sons of Samuel had turned aside to dishonest gain, bribes and the perversion of justice (1 Sam. 8:2) whereas Saul and his family had a good reputation going back generations. Now Saul had been sent, by providence, to the Levite Samuel for anointing and training in judging Israel. Even as the Moses the Levite chose *anshei chayil* out of all Israel (Ex. 18:25) and made the heads over the people and they judged the people on all occasions. No doubt Kish's wife was an *eshet chayil* (Prov. 31:10) sung about in Proverbs 31 whose husband “is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land” (Prov. 31:23), that is the gate as the place of justice, in Israelite culture the place of ruling, the place where legal transactions ensued (Ruth 4:1, Deu 17:5). The example of Boaz gathering the ten elders of the city and telling them to sit there as witnesses to his legal transaction with the kinsman redeemer is pertinent (Ruth 4:1-5). Thus Saul is perhaps used to the ways of the justice, among the elders having seen his father in action; it was only when there were difficult cases they were supposed to consult the Levites (Deu 17:8). In that same chapter of Deuteronomy, which talks of the judges going to the *kohen* or the judge who was in office at that time, it notes that when Israel should ask for a king, they were to be sure to appoint the king Yahuah their God would choose. Thus, in Ramah, Saul, being chosen of Yahuah, comes to Samuel. That king, according to the tradition of the Deuteronomist is to go to the *kohanim leviim* and write a copy of the Torah. Thus he is perhaps to receive some education among the *kohenim leviim*. Saul then comes to Samuel and he is anointed by the Levite prophet. Samuel had been recognized as a *nabi Yahuah* by all Israel many years before these activities with Saul (Sam. 3:20) (Saul however did not know about it but his servant did). The text says he was known as a confirmed prophet of Yahuah from Dan to Beersheba that is from the north to the south of Israel. This reputation as *nabi Yahuah* was gained because his words always came to pass (1 Sa. 3:19). This was thus a respectable position as *nabi Yahuah* was one whose words came to pass or did not fall to the ground. Samuel was at that time in Shiloh the central sanctuary of the alliance of tribes. If Israel were listening to the Torah, the males would visit that shrine three times a year and so Samuel's name would have spread out over all Israel (Lev. 23, Ex. 23)⁷.

⁷ It is more likely that during this period the tribes would have taken their tithes and first-fruits to the various clans of Levites living in their local area. There were supposed to be 48 cities set apart for the Levites throughout Israel and

Samuel then as Levite, that is as one who belonged to Yahuah whose portion or inheritance was Yahuah and who lived on the tithes and offerings of the people of Israel (1 Sam 9:7; Num.18:24) received gifts from Saul, the best of the Israelites. As a man of God and a seer, Samuel did not charge set fees but received whatever offering the person coming to him to enquire of Yahuah gave (1 Sam 9:8-9). Since Samuel was a *nabi* and well respected, he sent Saul to the *nebiim* to complete his anointing and perhaps to confirm to him that what the man of God says comes true (1 Sam 9:6, 1 Sam. 3:19). Since Samuel sent Saul to *nebiim* to confirm his call and to equip him for his service, it can be concluded that he approved of the ministry of the *nebiim*. If Samuel was so highly respected as a *nabi* and these *nebiim* are respected by him, the idea of the comments of the people which were designed to cast aspersion on the *nebiim* is questionable. It is unlikely the man of God who is greatly respected would respect them so much as to send the future king of Israel to receive the spirit of prophecy from them if they had a questionable character. It is more likely that these *nebiim* were respected musicians and prophets. The fact that Samuel sent Saul to them again suggests they were connected to the ministry of Samuel and thus probably Levites as he was, *nebiim* as he was *nabi* and *leviim* as he was *levite*.

The fact that Samuel sent Saul to them would clearly indicate they were *nebei* Yahuah not from any *el nekar*. Nor would they be Philistines or Moabites. The process of deduction can perhaps be fruitful. Samuel would not send Saul to the *goyim* to be anointed by the spirit. He would not send Saul to an Israelite woman to be anointed. Samuel would send Saul to the spiritual branch Israel to be anointed and the spiritual branch of Israel were the Levites and out of the Levites some were called to be *nebiim*, even as Miriam and Aaron and Moses had earlier been called. Thus the question: *Mi aviheim?* Who is their father, can refer to who is responsible for this group of prophets? To get the answer to what the question refers to we need to turn to Saul's successor, David and the records of his ministry.

David and Samuel and naming the Anonymous Prophets

Samuel had anointed Saul secretly in the first instance (1 Sam. 10:1). Samuel even told Saul to send his attendant away. Then he revealed his message privately and secretly. Samuel does the same thing in the first instance to David (1 Sam. 16). This time however Samuel went looking for David. David's family were permitted to witness the anointing (1 Sam 16:13). In this case, the Spirit of Yahuah came directly upon David, he did not need to be sent to the *nebiim* as a sign (1 Sam 16:13). With mention of the Spirit of Yahuah coming upon David the next verse indicates that the Spirit of Yahuah left Saul (1 Sam 16:14). It would be seen that the Spirit of Yahuah followed the outward anointing by the Levite prophet Samuel. David then connects with Saul (1 Sam 16ff, defeats Goliath (1 Sam. 17) and gets very popular (1 Sam 18) Saul then gets jealous and attempts to kill him (1 Sam. 18:10ff). Saul commands his family and servants to kill David (1 Sam 19:21ff), but David escapes to Samuel in Ramah (1 Sam 19:19). Having told the story of Saul's assassination attempts on him, David and Samuel went to Naioth where Saul had many *nebiim* who were prophesying. Samuel is leading the prophets in the prophesying (1 Sam 19:20). David spent some time in Ramah with Samuel and his anonymous prophets. However whilst they were together it is clear that even as Samuel had taken Saul under his wing and tried to train him (1 Sam 10:7) so he took David under his wing. When Samuel poured the *qeren* (horn) of oil on David the Spirit of Yahuah came on David and he never forgot the experience (2 Sam 23:2). This movement of the spirit upon David and Saul indicates that if in general those who prophesied were *nebiim* the leaders of Israel were also given of the spirit of Yahuah.

The Chronicler in 1 Samuel 9:22 indicates that David and Samuel were the ones who ordained the gatekeepers to their positions. According to 1Ch 9:22, the gatekeepers in the gates were two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office. One important gatekeeper was Obed Edom. It is clear from this report that in the Chronicler's tradition, David and Samuel had worked together in assigning the security for the *mishkan* whilst it was standing at Shiloh. The gatekeepers were Levites and the four chief security personnel were responsible for the treasuries and the rooms of God's temple. This text makes it clear how close the two reigns were, the reign of David and the reign of Samuel.

The relatives or extended family came from villages every seven days. The four senior security personnel slept in the temple area and opened it every morning. Some were responsible to account for the utensils some of which were made of gold. They counted them when taken into the temple and when they were taken out after use. With the high value of the gold and silver utensils and furniture in the *mishkan*, this security regime had to be maintained throughout the period of the Judges and into the time when the Temple was established. Although the personnel were not named in the books of Joshua, Judges and 1 Samuel they were there and they were known. The importance of the father/son connections is also highlighted. The jobs that centre on the cult were the responsibility of families or father's houses. Thus, although the

this is perhaps where the tithes were paid.

names of the families were anonymous in 1 Samuel 9 regarding who the father of those prophetic musicians was, by the time of David they were organized and the names of the families are found in 1 Chronicles. Even as David and Samuel worked together on security, it is reasonable to expect that they worked together on the organization of the other Levites. Thus when David was with Samuel in that powerful prophetic service at Naioth the anonymous prophets and their sons were not anonymous to David and he took it upon himself along with Gad and Nathan and certainly in the case of Samuel to record the function of each father's house. The result of their work is recorded in 1 Samuel 22-26. The regime of the prophets some of which was no doubt inherited from Samuel, even as that of the security personnel was not just an organizing but a recording of the families that were already in operation.

The witness of the prophetic writer of 2 Kings in relation to the revival of Josiah is as follows:

...the king went up into the house of Yahuah, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of Yahuah (2Ki. 23:2).

Israel had just gone through two generations of idolatry since Hezekiah's great revival (2Kg 20:2). Hezekiah, like his father David had done what is right in the sight of Yahuah. According to the prophetic writer there was no one like him. When he fell sick at the age of about 39 after ruling fourteen years it was prophesied he would die (1 Kings 20:1), but he prayed and wept and Yahuah heard his voice. He was given 15 years more. In the third year he bore the son Manasseh. He began to reign at 12 years old. He did much evil in the sight of Yahuah. Yahuah prophesied judgement over Jerusalem on the same level as that which had happened to Samaria and the house of Ahab. (2 Kg 21:10). Manasseh's son Amon reigned for two years. He was also an idolater, like Manasseh. He reigned but two years in Jerusalem and was assassinated (2 Kg 21:3). Then came Josiah who turned his heart to Yahuah. He assembled all Judah and Jerusalem to a covenant renewal ceremony. Present at this covenant renewal ceremony, according to the prophetic author, are seven groups of people including one group called *nebiim*. The Chronicler writing some time later, with 2 kings as a source, copied this section but made one very significant change in the text in terms of the groups of people. Instead of writing *nebiim*, he wrote Levites. His text read:

And the king went up into the house of Yahuah, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of Yahuah (2Ch. 34:30). Society is made up of 7 groups as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Groups in Society

Societal groups in Josiah's meeting	2 Kings 23:2	2 Chronicles 34:30
1	The King	The king
2	Men of Judah	Men of Judah
3	Inhabitants of Jerusalem	Inhabitants of Jerusalem
4	The priests	The priests
5	The prophets	The levites
6	People small	People small
7	People great	People great

Payne (1971, p. 393) elucidating something the Chronicler appears to have maintained two thousand five hundred years ago notes that the change is deliberate. Not only that but he actually understands that the *nebiim* have been omitted. Rendtorff (1986) seeing the prophets in the Kings' passages brush it off as hardly being original. On the other hand, Fritsch (1971) does pick up on part of the significance of the substitution. He notes "This seems to indicate that in the days of the Chronicler prophetic inspiration had been transferred to the Levitical singers" (p. 213). But the evidence indicates that it was not just in the days of the Chronicler but he is just clarifying something that may have been there for many generations (1 Sam 10, 19). This reticence to accept or notice what the Chronicler has done in replacing *nebiim* with *leviim* is evidence that a great historical problem exists.

The attitude of the Chronicler can be observed in his uses of the word *Leviim*. Could he be implying that when he sees a *nabi* he sees a *levi*? If this is the case then the question asked at the beginning of the paper Mi avihem? Who is their father would take on more significance. The term Levite is used 3 times in the singular. The first refers to Jahaziel ben Zechariah ben Benaiah ben Jeiel ben Mattaniah, a Levite of benei Asaph.

It was during the reign of Jehoshaphat that the episode involving Jahaziel occurred. All of Judah and Jerusalem were standing together in front of the new court when Jehoshaphat got up and prayed. It was a serious time as the nation was under threat from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir and the nation needed to hear the voice of Yahuah. Jehoshaphat prayed a passionate prayer: “Oh our God will you not judge them? For we do not have power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you”. We imagine the prayer came to an end, the Chronicler adds to the suspense engendered by this Psalm like prayer of Jehoshaphat by explaining “All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and babies were standing there in the new court before Yahuah. Then the tension is broken when the Spirit of Yahuah came on Jahaziel of beni Asaph. “Prick up your ears...koh amar Yahuah”. He prophesied there in the midst of Israel “in the same manner as the prophets of old” (Fritsch, 1971, p. 213). But who are these prophets of old Fritsch is referring to?

Jehoshaphat ruled from 886 BC. to 862 BC (Faulstich, 1986, p. 61). This Levite prophecy came before Amos and Hosea. If one had then turned and looked at the group of people with whom he was standing and asked the question as the local asked the question of the *nebiim* in the commissioning of Saul (1 Sam 10). *Mi avihem?* The Chronicler gives a clear answer: Asaph is their father and they are *benei Asaph*. If one continued to ask *Is Asaph a nabi?* Then, the Chronicler's writings needed to be observed further. The name Asaph is mentioned at least 17 times by the Chronicler as a man from the Gershon clan of the sons of Levi. He was the son of Berekiah and the grandson of Shimea (1Chron 6.39). One of his sons was Zicri and his grandson was Mica (1 Chr. 9:15).

When David was bringing the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem, Asaph was one of 3 musicians appointed to play the bronze cymbals (1 Chr. 15:17). At that time he ministered alongside Heman, the grandson of Samuel from the Kohath clan and tribe of Levi and next to Ethan. Whilst he was playing the cymbal, others were playing harps and the talented Kenaniah was the head Levite responsible for the singing. When the ark of Yahuah was settled in Jerusalem by David in the tent of David, Asaph was the Levite in charge of the ministering before the ark in making petitions, giving thanks, and praising Yahuah. Under Asaph were a number of other Levites at the tent of David, Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattitiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel. The other musicians were to play harp and lyres whilst Asaph played the cymbal. Two priests, Banaiah and Jahaziel, ministered alongside the praise team blowing trumpets (1 Chron 16:4-6). At that time, David gave specifically to Asaph the Psalm *Hodu le Yahuah Qeri beshmo*- Give thanks to Yahuah Call on his name⁸. Asaph and his *achio* (*brothers*), or relatives were left at the tent of David with the ark of the covenant to minister regularly (1 Chr. 16.37). This arrangement was temporary because David was preparing for the building of the temple which would house the ark. He was planning how the Temple personnel, the priests and the Levites would be organized. David together with the commanders of his military decided to set apart some of the sons of Asaph, along with the sons of Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying. Or more literally: They were set apart

leabda libnei asaph, veHeman veydutun to the work of the sons of asaph of Heman and of Jeduthun as

hanebiim bekinorot benebelim ve bimtztim the prophets with the harps, lyres and cymbals

The Levite sons of Asaph are noted here by the same Chronicler who wrote *leviim* when he read *nebiim*(in 2 Kings 23:2). He makes clear that the Levite sons of Asaph were *nebiim*. When then he points to Jahaziel in the time of Jehoshaphat and indicates not only his immediate ancestry but his line right back to Asaph it was to emphasise that this man was prophesying because he was from the sons of the *nebiim*. That is Asaphs' sons here are called *nebiim* (1 chr.25) and Jahaziel was one of their descendants. In Gibeath haelohim, the place where Saul began to prophesy, the question, “Shaul benebiim?”, makes sense in that the *nebiim* stand and worship and prophesy in one place and that is because they are sons of Levi, but the rest of Israel watch them from another. “What is Saul doing over there with the *Leviim*?” The second part of the discussion also makes some sense. “*Mi avihem?*” Who is their father? In the time of Jahaziel, the answer might be, “His father Asaph”. He is from the sons of Asaph as the Chronicler indicated (2 Chron. 20.14). But if this group were from the time of Saul it is possible the *nebiim* were not so organized but nevertheless they must have been organized to some degree because the ministry went on and Samuel is David's teacher, and was in David's leadership position in the earlier generations. The father of the anonymous prophets from the time of Saul would likely be from the great grandfathers or grandfather of Heman, Jeduthun or Asaph. Thus, Heman's grandfather was Samuel and Asaph's grandfather was Shimea. For the Chronicler prophecy was expected to come from among the Levites. Thus perhaps they were asking who is responsible for these *nebiim* who are allowing an ordinary Israelite to prophesy with them? Even in the Torah, in the one example where we see a group prophesy in Numbers 11:29, Joshua quickly told Moses to forbid two of them he felt were prophesying out of place (Num 11:28). Just as it was not free for Uziah to

⁸ This Psalm parallels Psalm 105:1-15, then Psalm 96:1-13, then finally, Psalm 106:1, 47-48

offer incense because he was a king and not a priest it was not free for just anybody to get up and prophesy. The Chronicler now begins to give us the names of these Levite *nebiim*. The sons of Asaph included Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asarelah. Then the Chronicler makes another pertinent point. He says that Asaph's sons were *al yad asaph hanaba al yadai hamelek*. They were upon the hand (under direction) of Asaph who was upon the hand of the King. This can again be seen to tie in with the prophecy of *beni Asaph Jahaziel*.

The King prayed a most passionate prayer and then came Jahaziel from the sons of Asaph who were under the direction of the king and prophesied. We can be sure that if an ordinary Israelite had got up and began to shout he would have been silenced. Jahaziel was known and as he prophesied his words were noted for the record and the legitimacy of him speaking out confirmed by his genealogical connections. The fathers of the musicians were the supervisors of the musicians (1 Chr 25:6) So the question two generations or one generation before in Gibeath Elohim was: Who is supervising these prophets? *Mi avihem*. Whereas in the time of Samuel he was supervising the prophets in Naioth (1 Sam 19:20), it was not clear who was supervising those in Gibeath Elohim, and in this third generation Samuel's grandson Heman his supervising his sons but he is being supervised by David (1 Chr. 25:6).

The Levitical organization in the time of David included a training program for musicians for it says that the Asaph and Jeduthun and Heman along with their relatives were all trained and skilled in music. Someone, in the past had had to teach their fathers and their grandfather and that bring us back to the training methods back in the time of Samuel. The system of Yahuah is clearly built around father's houses and clan. The father then passing on the skill to his son, for example Samuel was a judge. He obviously trained Joel and Ahijah in the vocation because when he grew old, he appointed his sons as Judges (1 Sam 8:1). Craftsmen (1 Chr. 4:14), linen workers (1 Chr. 4:21), potters (1 Chr. 4:23), shepherds (1 Chr.38) all lived in their individual clan areas. The Levites had their own cities also. Samuel's sons were obviously trained under his hand to be judges and intercessors. In a similar way Samuel was himself trained initially in prophecy by Eli, although they were not father and son they were both from Levi (1 Samuel 8:1). The Chronicler makes clear that there were enough qualified musical personnel to activate that system David had planned (1 Sam 25). Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun each contributed teams to the *nebiim* service for the temple of Solomon. Fritsch (1971) is close to the point when he says "That these singers prophesy with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals, seems to indicate that they are closely related to prophetic circles" (p. 213).

The Roster of the Prophets

In the Bible, we read that Samuel was sent to find and anoint David who produced a dynasty that lasted 20 generations. The longest dynasty in the north was four generations. Thus, before Samuel, there were many judges from different tribes. After Samuel the only dynasty which produced any kings which did right in the sight of Yahuah was the one Samuel established through the spirit of Yahuah. Even as narrowing down of the rulers to one main family took place, it appeared that there was a narrowing down in the focus of the prophetic ministry to one main tribe, although as in all cases Yahuah is free to make exceptions. When David was handing over the kingdom to Solomon the Levites were counted. Those over 30 numbered 38, 000 (1 Chron. 23:1). The fathers and grandfathers of these must have been present in the time of Samuel, 40 years earlier. Yet in the record of 1 Samuel most of them remained anonymous. It is however clear from the work of the Chronicler that records had been kept.

According to the Chronicler, even as the *kohanim* were divided into 24 watches (*mishmaroth*) for the service of the temple, so the *nebiim bekinorot* were divided into 24 *mishmarot* (Payne, 1971, p.381). The priests had representatives from the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (1 Chron 24), the *nebiim* had representatives from the three sons of Levi, Asaph from Gershon, Heman from Kohath and Jeduthun from Merari. The focus of the *nebiim* as in the time of Samuel, was music. Payne (1971) recognises that in this passage "there is probably a reference to 1 Sam 10:5" (1971 p. 381). He also points out that, the *nebiim bekinorot* were "being given an honour higher than that of the ordinary Levite" (ibid. p. 381).

The *nebiim* teams were 24 with 12 members each making up a total of 288 personnel. Even though some were students or *talmidim* and some were skillful or experts or *mebin* they were entirely of the necessary standard to minister in the weekly cycles at the temple. It is also important to note that they were selected from a much larger number of musicians (1 Chron 23:5). According to the Chronicler, there were 4000 Levites who praised Yahuah with instruments David had made (1 Chr. 23:5), this suggests that the very best were selected for ministry in the Temple. This is from a total number of 38, 000 Levites who had different jobs, for example 24, 000 temple work supervisors, 6, 000 officials and judges and 4, 000 gatekeepers/security guards⁹. The fact that there were so many more Levites than *nebiim* who were Levites can

⁹ Some scholars have objected to the size of these numbers but this does not affect our argument and Payne (1971)

explain why the Chronicler changed the *nebiim* for *Leviim*. In recognising the presence of the *Leviim* the *nebiim* were included, but in just mentioning the *nebiim*, the presence of many *leviim* was in the mind of the Chronicler overlooked. It is likely that the rest of the 4, 000 Levites who praised Yahuah were distributed at the various shrines around the country such as Shiloh, Gibeon, Bethel, Gibeath haElohim and other centres (2 Kg. 23:8; Jdg 17:7-13). Specialists selected for the temple only had a watch for two weeks in a year plus the festivals. There was an age restriction as well. The Chronicler says that David numbered the Levites from 20 years and upwards (1 Chr. 27.33). This may have been as a result of the fact he discussed the personnel issue with his military officers whose soldiers had to be twenty years or more. Asaph's sons were given weeks one (1 Chr. 25:9), Joseph, three, Zaccur, five, Nethaniah and eleven, Asarelah/Azareel. It should also be noted that each watch consists of a named son his sons and his brothers. In other words, these were prophets organized to prophesy as brothers and sons.

Mi avihem is then a perfectly pertinent question. If Zaccur and his sons and brothers were on duty, then the answer to "Who is their father?" would be Asaph is his father. These were *hanebiim bekinorot* (*lyres/psaltery*), *binebalim*(*harps*), *ubimtziltayim* (1 Chron 25:1). The Chronicler does not explain which of the four Asaph watches Jahaziel belongs to. The *nebiim* Samuel sent Saul to had four kinds of instruments *nebel*, *tof*, *chalil* and *kinor*. Thus they have *nebel* and *kinor* in common.

If David and the organisers carried through the plan of 24 courses in the order they appear, it would indicate that Asaph teams would minister as follows:

Joseph with the priestly family Johoiarib, Zaccur with Harim (1 Chr. 24.8), Nethaniyah with Malikiyah, and Asarelah with Eliashib. The priestly names are the heads of families from the sons of Aaron. The leadership position was called *sarei qodesh* and *sarai haelohim*, Princes of the Holy and Princes of God among the sons of Eleazar and Ithamar sons of Aaron. According to Faulstich (1990), these cycles began operating in 986 BC, when Solomon was first anointed King that is on the 16 Nisan (April) 986B.C. It started with Jehoiarib watch and thus of course with Joseph from the sons of Asaph his sons and brothers (Faulstich, 1990, p.186)¹⁰. In 2 Chronicles we find that at the dedication of the temple the House of Yahuah (or Temple of Solomon) the Levite musicians, who we know from the above are either *nebiim* or have *nebiim* among them, were stood at the east side of the altar. They were dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals harps and lyres. The Levites stood together in one area, distinct from the rest of the assembly. This event occurred on the feast of tabernacles in 974B.C (Faulstich, 1990).

CONCLUSION

The question "Who is there father?" asked by one of Saul's contemporaries who knew him can have many more meanings than a despising of fatherless prophets. It can mean: who is responsible for these *nebiim* who allow an Israelite to prophesy among them? This is because the prophetic system established in the time of Samuel's grandson Heman or the time of David, Samuel's prophetic son, was organized completely around fathers' houses. Hundreds of years later the connection between a prophet and his "father" was considered important enough for the Chronicler to give the genealogy of Jahaziel to the four previous generations with the clarification as to which of the house of the Levites he belonged. This can be said to be a genealogy of a prophet comparable to that of the king or a priest. The father of the prophet had significance for the Chronicler. The father of the prophets had significance to Saul's contemporary also. The organization of the prophets into watches which paralleled the priests is another important aspect in our understanding of the prophets. It is clear more research is needed in this field to see if the father's houses of the classical reform prophets, Amos to Malachi can be identified.

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¹⁰ gives some suggestions.
The priestly cycles are one of the elements Faulstich uses in the model he has developed in order to scientifically test Biblical chronology.

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