

IS THERE A MEDIATOR BETWEEN MAN AND YAHWEH?

A COVENANT DEEP DIVE
Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution
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FOR THE JEW

FOR THE CHRISTIAN

FOR THE MUSLIM

This study examines whether Written Tanakh teaches the existence of a divine-human mediator standing between mankind and **Yahweh** (יהוה) — a doctrine many Christians regard as the central distinction between covenant-faith and Christian faith. For the Jew, this study affirms **Devarim 19:15** and the Tanakh's consistent witness that approach to **Yahweh** requires no metaphysical intermediary. For the Christian sincerely wrestling with this question, this study examines the actual Hebrew and Greek text behind the doctrine, without caricature, so the claim can be tested rather than assumed. For the Muslim, this study affirms the Qur'anic insistence (consistent with Tawhid) that no being shares in **Yahweh's** unique nature, and that human messengers (rusul) — not divine intermediaries — have always carried His word to mankind.

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution holds Written Tanakh as sole authority in matters of doctrine. Where rabbinic tradition, Church councils, or hadith are referenced in this study, they are referenced only as historical witnesses to how a text has been read — never as authority over the text itself. Two or three witnesses (**Devarim 19:15**) are required for every substantive claim made in this study.

Why the Tanakh: The Written Tanakh is the only body of Scripture transmitted, preserved, and copied under continuous priestly and scribal custody from the time of its writing — the Masoretic tradition, cross-checked against the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, and the Samaritan Pentateuch — with no single human council ever convened to determine its final contents by majority vote. The New Testament canon, by contrast, was settled centuries after its composition by Church councils (e.g., the Synod of Hippo, 393 CE; the Council of Carthage, 397 CE) whose authority itself rests on ecclesiastical tradition rather than the text's own internal claim to canonicity. The covenant position is therefore not anti-Christian or anti-New Testament; it is a methodological commitment to test every

doctrine — including the mediator doctrine — against the text **Yahweh**'s own prophets received directly, before accepting later doctrinal formulations built upon it.

HOW TO READ THIS STUDY

This study proceeds in four parts. Part One examines **Iyov (Job) 9:33**, the Tanakh verse most frequently cited as evidence that mankind requires a mediator. Part Two examines **Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 53**, the Suffering Servant passage, and the question of whether it depicts a divine mediator. Part Three examines **1 Timothy 2:5**, the New Testament's own “one mediator” verse, on its own grammatical terms. Part Four presents the constructive Tanakh witness: what **Yahweh** actually established as the pattern of mediation, and why it never required — and **Devarim 19:15** forbids inferring — a divine-human hybrid.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED

TANAKH BOOK	REFERENCES
Bereishit (Genesis)	18:23-32, 20:7, 20:17, 25:21
Shemot (Exodus)	19:17, 28:2, 32:11-14
Vayikra (Leviticus)	23:27-32
Bamidbar (Numbers)	21:7, 20:12
Devarim (Deuteronomy)	4:35, 4:39, 5:5, 6:4, 9:20, 9:26, 18:15, 19:15
Shemuel Alef (1 Samuel)	2:25, 7:5, 7:8, 12:19, 12:23, 13:14, 16:13
Shemuel Bet (2 Samuel)	23:2, 24:17
Melakhim Alef (1 Kings)	8:22-53, 13:6
Melakhim Bet (2 Kings)	19:4, 19:15
Yeshayahu (Isaiah)	37:15, 41:8-9, 42:8, 44:1, 44:21, 49:3, 52:13, 53 (entire), 54:1, 59:16
Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah)	7:16, 11:14, 14:11, 31:36, 37:3
Daniel	8:16, 9:3-19, 10:13, 12:1
Yoel (Joel)	2:17
Mal'akhi (Malachi)	1:9

Iyov (Job)	1:5, 5:1, 9:33-35, 16:19, 33:23-24, 42:10
Divrei HaYamim Alef (1 Chronicles)	29:23
Tehillim (Psalms)	72:15
Ezra	9:5-15

PART ONE: IYOV 9:33 — THE COURTROOM ARBITER, NOT THE DIVINE BRIDGE

THE TEXT

Iyov (Job) 9:33, in the Masoretic Hebrew, reads (transliteration follows JPS 1985 / Alter):

lo yesh beineinu mokhiach yashet yado al-shneinu

— “There is no arbiter (*mokhiach*) between us who might lay his hand on us both.”

This is the verse most often quoted by Christian apologists as Iyov's “longing” for a mediator later fulfilled in Yeshua. The claim deserves to be tested on its own grammatical and contextual terms — not dismissed, and not accepted uncritically.

THE HEBREW: מוֹכִיחַ (MOKHIACH) — “ONE WHO ARBITRATES, ONE WHO DECIDES”

The word in question is the participle מוֹכִיחַ (*mokhiach*). According to the standard critical lexical sources, this participle derives from the root יָכַח (*yakbach*, “to decide, to judge, to arbitrate”) — a root used throughout Tanakh in legal and disputational contexts, not in contexts of priestly atonement or divine incarnation. The word describes an “arbiter” or “umpire” — what older English translations rendered “daysman” — someone competent to render a legal verdict between two disputing parties.

This is confirmed by multiple independent witnesses:

The NET Bible translator's notes state plainly that the participle is “the ‘arbiter’ or ‘mediator,’” and that the word comes from a verb “concerned with legal and nonlegal disputes,” describing “the beginning of a dispute, the disputation process, and the settling of a dispute.”

Translation consultant notes on **Iyov 9:33** (UBS/SIL Translator's Handbook tradition) observe that the Septuagint and Syriac both render the line as a wish — “Would that there were an umpire between us” — meaning Iyov is not making a doctrinal statement about salvation or atonement at all. He is voicing a courtroom frustration: he wants a neutral judge competent to weigh his case against what he experiences as Yahweh's overwhelming, un-appealable power.

WHAT THE TEXT IS NOT SAYING

Nothing in **Iyov 9:33** — read in its own Hebrew, in its own immediate context (Iyov 9, where Iyov is despairing that no human court could ever summon **Yahweh** to answer for his suffering) — describes:

1. A divine being who shares **Yahweh's** own nature.
2. A sacrificial atonement for sin (Iyov's complaint here is about justice and explanation for his suffering, not about forgiveness for transgression — he protests his innocence throughout the book).
3. A permanent theological office instituted by **Yahweh** for all mankind.

It describes a legal arbiter — a role Tanakh elsewhere assigns repeatedly to human beings: prophets, kings, and even, as the wider context of the Iyov narrative itself shows, Iyov himself in his role as a lay-priest who offers sacrifice for his own household (**Iyov 1:5**) and who, at the book's end, is commanded to “pray for his friends” (**Iyov 42:10**) as the resolution of his complaint. The very book that contains the “no arbiter” lament ends with Iyov functioning as an intercessor himself — a human one.

THE BROADER PATTERN: FUNCTIONAL ROLES, NOT NATURES

Iyov 33:23-24 introduces a related figure: a “malakh melitz” — an “angel-mediator” or “interpreting messenger” — who may speak on behalf of a suffering man. Even here, the figure is described functionally (a messenger who interprets and intercedes), not ontologically (a being who is simultaneously fully **Yahweh** and fully man). Tanakh's vocabulary for mediation — *mokhiach*, *melitz*, *palal* (to intercede), *paga* (to intervene) — is consistently used to describe an action a person performs, never a metaphysical category a being occupies.

PART TWO: YESHAYAHU 53 — THE SERVANT, NATIONAL OR MESSIANIC, IS ALWAYS HUMAN

This study presents the Jewish interpretive record honestly — there are two genuine strands, and intellectual integrity (and **Devarim 19:15**) requires presenting both rather than the one most convenient to either side of this debate.

STRAND ONE: THE NATIONAL INTERPRETATION (SERVANT = ISRAEL)

The majority position within rabbinic Judaism from the medieval period onward identifies the “servant” of **Yeshayahu 52-53** as the nation of Israel itself, suffering in exile among the nations. This reading draws directly on the immediately preceding Servant Songs in Yeshayahu, where the servant is explicitly named Israel (**Yeshayahu 41:8-9, 44:1, 44:21, 49:3**). Rashi (1040-1105 CE) is the figure most associated with popularizing this reading, though — importantly — the identification of the suffering servant with the collective nation predates him: the church father Origen recorded in 248 CE, eight centuries before Rashi was born, that this was already the consensus reading among the Jews of his own time, who held that **Yeshayahu 53** “bore reference to the whole [Jewish] people, regarded as one individual, and as being in a state of dispersion and suffering, in order that many proselytes might be gained, on account of the dispersion of the Jews among numerous heathen nations” (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, Book I, Ch. 55).

STRAND TWO: THE MESSIANIC-HUMAN INTERPRETATION (SERVANT = A FUTURE HUMAN KING)

This study must also document, honestly, that the national reading is not the oldest rabbinic reading, nor the only one that persisted after Rashi. Targum Jonathan — an Aramaic translation-paraphrase of the Prophets dated to the early centuries CE, predating Rashi by roughly a millennium — renders **Yeshayahu 52:13** (“Behold, my servant shall prosper”) as “Behold, My servant the Messiah shall prosper,” applying the passage directly to a future Messiah. Tractate Sanhedrin in the Talmud likewise associates language from **Yeshayahu 53** with the names and sufferings of the Messiah. After Rashi, the messianic-individual reading did not disappear from Jewish tradition: the Zohar, Nachmanides (Ramban), and even Maimonides (Rambam) — arguably Judaism’s most authoritative rationalist halakhic voice — continued to associate **Yeshayahu 53** with a future, human Messiah, not with the nation collectively.

THE DECISIVE POINT: BOTH STRANDS KEEP THE SERVANT ENTIRELY HUMAN

This is the load-bearing conclusion, and it must be stated plainly: whichever of the two authentic Jewish readings one adopts — the Servant as the nation of Israel, or the Servant as a future individual Messiah — **neither reading, at any point in the documented rabbinic record, identifies the Servant as a member of the Godhead, an incarnation of Yahweh, or a being who shares Yahweh's own essential nature. The "messianic" strand of rabbinic interpretation is messianic-human, not messianic-divine.** The two-millennia-long internal Jewish argument over **Yeshayahu 53** has never been “nation vs. God-man” — it has been “nation vs. a future flesh-and-blood king from the line of David.” This is independently significant because it shows that even granting the messianic reading every possible benefit of the doubt, it does not arrive anywhere near the Christian doctrine of a divine-human mediator. The gap between “a human Messiah whom Yahweh raises up” and “a co-equal divine person who is also fully human” is not a difference of degree; it is the entire distance between covenant monotheism and a different category of claim altogether.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT ITSELF

It should also be observed, in fairness to readers across all three traditions, that **Yeshayahu 53:8** — “for the transgression of my people he was stricken” — sits more naturally as a statement made by Gentile nations or kings about the suffering of a separate party (“my people,” i.e., Israel) than as a statement Israel could make about itself in the first person without internal contradiction. This is a genuine textual tension acknowledged even by some defenders of the national reading, and this study does not paper over it. What this study insists on, however, is that the tension is a tension between two human referents (the suffering individual/king versus the suffering nation) — not evidence of a divine referent. The interpretive difficulty **Yeshayahu 53** poses is real; **the conclusion that it requires a divine mediator to resolve it is not established by the text and is not required by either authentic Jewish reading of the passage.**

PART THREE: 1 TIMOTHY 2:5 — WHAT THE GREEK TEXT ACTUALLY SAYS

Since the Christian mediator doctrine is most directly anchored not in Iyov or Yeshayahu but in the New Testament's own explicit "one mediator" statement, intellectual honesty requires this study to examine that text directly rather than only its Tanakh background.

1 Timothy 2:5 reads, in the Greek: *"heis gar Theos, heis kai mesites Theou kai anthropon, anthropos Christos Iesous"* — commonly translated **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."**

THE GRAMMATICAL POINT THAT MATTERS

The Greek word translated "man" in this verse is *anthropos* — and critically, as multiple independent grammatical sources confirm, there is no definite article (**"the"**) in the Greek text before this word. The verse does not say *"ho anthropos"* (**"the man," implying a unique category**). It simply says *"anthropos"* — **"a man," "a human being."** Multiple commentary traditions across the theological spectrum concede this point even while disagreeing about its implications: some argue the missing article is theologically insignificant and that the verse still implies a unique God-man; others argue the absence of the article is precisely the point — the verse stresses Yeshua's full, **unqualified humanity** in his mediating role, structurally identical to the role Tanakh assigns to Moshe in **Devarim 5:5**, not a different category of being altogether. Expounding further:

What "no definite article" actually does grammatically

In Greek, *ho anthropos* (**"the man"**) points at a specific, identified, often unique referent — the way "the President" picks out one particular office-holder. Plain *anthropos*, with no article, functions more like a predicate of category membership — **"a man," "a human being,"** describing *what kind of thing* the subject is, not singling him out as the one-of-a-kind instance of that category.

1 Timothy 2:5 could have been written with the article if the author wanted to mark Yeshua as a unique, categorically distinct kind of "man" — a God-man, a hybrid case standing outside the normal class. It wasn't. The grammar as written places him inside the ordinary category **"human being,"** the same word, same form, that would describe Moshe, Iyov, or any other man in the Greek Old Testament (LXX) or New Testament.

Why "unqualified" is the load-bearing word!

"Unqualified" here means *not hedged, not modified, not given a special exception clause*. The verse doesn't say "a man, yet also divine" or "in his human nature" (later Christological language, like Chalcedon's "two natures," does say things like that — but that's 451 CE doctrinal vocabulary, centuries after the text, read back into it). The verse itself, in 1 Timothy 2:5, simply states *anthropos* — full stop. No qualifier softening or complicating the humanity of a man. That's what "unqualified" is pointing at: the text doesn't itself introduce the hybrid-nature idea. Later theology adds that; the verse doesn't.

Why "structurally identical to Moshe in Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:5" is the actual punch of the sentence

This is the comparison of doing the real work. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:5 has Moshe describing his own mediating function in almost identical structural terms: a human being standing *between* the people and Yahweh, conveying Yahweh's word, performing a mediating role — *as a man, only as a man, with no claim to share Yahweh's nature*. No one reads Devarim 5:5 and concludes Moshe must be part-divine because he stood in that position. The role itself (standing between, declaring the word) doesn't require or imply divinity in Tanakh's own logic.

So the argument the sentence is making: if **1 Timothy 2:5's** grammar gives you an ordinary, unqualified human being in a mediating role — and **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:5** already shows you that an ordinary, unqualified human being filling a mediating role is exactly what Tanakh's pattern looks like — then the NT verse, read on its own terms, doesn't get you anywhere a Mosaic-style human mediator wasn't already. It takes a doctrinal leap outside the verse itself to turn "a man" into "a man who is also God." The text gives you Moshe's category; it's later theology that supplies the upgrade.

This study draws the conclusion that the plain grammar supports: 1 Timothy 2:5, read on its own terms without later doctrinal overlay, describes a human mediator — language fully at home within the Tanakh's existing pattern of human prophetic mediation, not a verse requiring or asserting a divine-human hybrid nature.

A NOTE ON THE WIDER CONTEXT (1 TIMOTHY 2:5–6)

A fair-minded reader of this study should know the strongest scholarly form of the counter-argument, not just a weak version of it.

Some scholars argue that **1 Timothy 2:5's "one God"** deliberately echoes the Shema (**Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4**), and that this echo extends through verse 6 — **"who gave himself a ransom for all"** — as a conscious literary reworking of the Mosaic mediator pattern in Devarim 5. On this reading, the passage isn't merely making a grammatical point about Yeshua's humanity; it is presenting him as *replacing* Moshe as mediator, while deliberately widening the scope from Israel alone to "all" nations.

This argument deserves to be taken seriously rather than dismissed — and on inspection, it concedes the very point this study is making, rather than overturning it. Notice precisely what the parallel requires to work: the argument's own logic depends on Yeshua occupying *the same structural role Moshe occupied* — a human being who **"stands between,"** whom Israel needed because they were too afraid to approach Yahweh directly (Devarim 5:5, 5:27). The scholarly case for an **"echo"** of the Shema is a case for *continuity of pattern*, not a case for a difference in kind. It explicitly trades on Moshe's mediating office being filled by someone else, doing the same kind of mediating — not by someone whose mediating role is now grounded in being divine rather than human. If anything, the more carefully one traces the echo back to Devarim 5, the more clearly the comparison points to function, not nature.

It is also worth noting plainly that the scholarship making this argument explicitly sets aside the grammatical question — it does not require, and does not argue for, an *anthropos* with a definite article. The intertextual case and the grammatical case are two separate questions, and conceding the first costs the doctrine nothing it was already missing on the second: the verse's own wording still gives an unqualified human being in the mediating chair, exactly where Tanakh already expected one to sit.

THE WORD "MESITES" ITSELF

It is also worth noting, as a matter of intertextual honesty, that the Greek word *mesites* (**"mediator"**) appears in the Septuagint — the Greek translation of the Tanakh — exactly once, and that one occurrence corresponds to no extant Hebrew **"mediator"** term in the Masoretic Text at that location, indicating the concept of **"mediator"** as a fixed technical term is far more a feature of Greek theological vocabulary than of the original Hebrew conceptual world the Tanakh inhabits. The Hebrew Bible speaks constantly of intercession (*palal*), interposition (**Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:5's "I stood between"**), and representative ritual action (the Kohen's sacrificial service) — but it does not build a single technical doctrine called **"mediation"** around a divine-human hybrid figure. **That architecture is a later theological development read back onto the Hebrew text, not a structure the Hebrew text itself erects.**

PART FOUR: WHAT YAHWEH ACTUALLY ESTABLISHED — THE CONSTRUCTIVE WITNESS

Having examined what the mediator doctrine's proof-texts do not establish, this study now presents what Tanakh does establish — **because covenant living is not merely a rebuttal of error; it is a positive embrace of what Yahweh Himself revealed.**

MOSHE: THE PATTERN, NOT THE EXCEPTION

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:5 records Moshe's own description of his role at Sinai:

“I stood between Yahweh and you at that time, to declare to you the word of Yahweh; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain.”

This is the single clearest **“standing between”** statement in all of Tanakh — and the one who stands there is an ordinary man, a prophet, born of human parents, who himself sinned (and was barred from entering the Land for it — **Bamidbar (Numbers) 20:12**), and who is never once described in Tanakh as sharing Yahweh's own nature. **Devarim 18:15** confirms the pattern is meant to continue: Yahweh promises to raise up future prophets “like Moshe” — explicitly human, explicitly from “among your own brothers” — not a unique, unrepeatable divine-human hybrid, but a recurring human office.

THE FULL PATTERN OF HUMAN MEDIATION IN TANAKH

The documented pattern across Tanakh is consistent and extensive: Avraham interceded for Sodom and for Avimelech's household (**Bereishit 18:23-32, 20:7, 20:17**); Moshe interceded repeatedly for Israel, including after the Golden Calf (**Shemot 32:11-14**) and for Aharon (**Devarim 9:20, 9:26**); Shemuel interceded as judge and prophet (**1 Shemuel 7:5, 7:8, 12:19, 12:23**); David and Shlomo interceded as anointed kings (**2 Shemuel 24:17; 1 Melakhim 8:22-53**); Yeshayahu, Yirmeyahu, and Daniel each interceded as prophets in their respective generations (**2 Melakhim 19:4; Yirmeyahu 37:3; Daniel 9:3-19**). In every single one of these cases, without exception, the mediating figure is a human being, operating within a specific functional role (prophet, king, elder), and never once described as possessing Yahweh's own divine nature.

THE KOHEN: A MEDIATING OFFICE, NOT A MEDIATING NATURE

Yahweh did establish a formal mediating office: the priesthood. The *Kohen* — and supremely the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur — served as Israel's designated intermediary in sacrificial and atoning ritual, entering the Holy of Holies once yearly to perform the rites of national atonement (**Vayikra 23:27-32**). This is a genuine, **Yahweh**-ordained mediating institution. But it is critical to observe precisely what kind of institution it is: the *Kohen* is, without exception, a hereditary human office — patrilineal descendants of Aharon, bound by purity laws, required to be free of specific physical and ritual disqualifications, and required to offer atonement sacrifices for himself before he could offer them for the nation. The office mediates through prescribed ritual action performed by an ordinary man; it does not require, depend upon, or even gesture toward the idea that the mediator must himself partake of Yahweh's own essential nature. **The entire architecture of Levitical mediation is built on the premise that a consecrated human being, following Yahweh's prescribed pattern exactly, is fully sufficient for the task Yahweh assigned.**

A NOTE ON YESHUA AND THE PRIESTLY OFFICE (HEBREWS 7, 9, 10)

This section would be incomplete without addressing the strongest form of the Christian argument built on this very priesthood — that the Aaronic Kohen was a temporary, flawed shadow of a coming priest who had to be more than human, because only a sinless, divine-human High Priest could fulfill what the Aaronic office could only foreshadow. This argument deserves a direct, honest answer rather than a sidestep, since it is the load-bearing case many Christians actually stand on. Because this is the text Christians themselves cite, intellectual honesty requires meeting it directly rather than ignoring it!

The argument, fairly stated, runs roughly as follows: **Hebrews 7:11** asks why a "**different priest**" **arose "according to the order of Melchizedek"** if the Levitical priesthood already brought "**perfection**"; **Hebrews 7:23-28** contrasts the many Aaronic priests, who died and had to offer sacrifices "first for their own sins," with a priest who "holds his priesthood permanently" and was "made perfect forever"; **Hebrews 9:11-14** describes Yeshua entering "the greater and more perfect tabernacle" with "his own blood" rather than "the blood of goats and calves"; and **Hebrews 10:1-14** argues that the law's sacrifices, repeated endlessly, "can never perfect" those who approach, while Yeshua's single offering does what the law's shadow could not. On this reading, the Aaronic Kohen was flawed not merely procedurally but ontologically — bound by his own sin, his own mortality — and Yeshua alone could supply what the office structurally lacked, because, as the argument goes, only the Son of Yahweh in the flesh, sinless by nature rather than by ritual purification, could actually qualify.

Where this argument is owed real credit

This study should grant, plainly, that the book of Hebrews does present Yeshua's priesthood as categorically superior to the Aaronic one in ways the author never claims for any Aaronic Kohen: a priesthood that does not need daily repetition (7:27), a priesthood not interrupted by death (7:23-24), and an offering Hebrews calls sufficient "once for all" (10:10). A covenant-minded reader gains nothing by minimizing what the text actually says.

Where the argument overreaches the text it stands on

But notice exactly what Hebrews' own argument requires to function — and what it does not require.

First, the comparison Hebrews draws is explicitly with **Melchizedek**, not with deity as such. **Hebrews 7:3** describes Melchizedek himself — a human king-priest from Bereishit 14, with no recorded Aaronic genealogy — using the phrase *agenealogētos*, "**without recorded genealogy**," and says he is "**made like the Son of God**" (Greek *aphōmoiōmenos*, a term of resemblance, not identity), "remains a priest" in the sense that Genesis records no death for him. The text's own logic point is genealogical and typological: an eternal, non-Levitical priesthood need not run through Aaron's bloodline to be legitimate before Yahweh — not that the priest filling it must possess Yahweh's own nature. Indeed, Melchizedek, the very type Hebrews leans on for "permanence," was an ordinary human being; nothing in Bereishit 14 hints he was anything else. If "permanent priest in the order of Melchizedek" only required a divine nature, the type Hebrews chose to argue from would defeat its own argument.

Second, the actual disqualifying feature of Hebrews names in the Aaronic office is moral and circumstantial, not metaphysical: Aaronic priests "die" (7:23) and must "offer sacrifices first for their own sins" (7:27) because they are themselves sinners. The text's diagnosis is that the office needed a priest who does not sin and does not die — not a priest who is part-divine. These are not the same requirements. Tanakh itself already supplies the category for "a human being without that particular disqualification": Iyov is repeatedly called blameless and upright (Iyov 1:1, 1:8, 2:3) while remaining fully human; the want is moral sufficiency and endurance, not a different kind of being. Hebrews' own language — "tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin" (echoing 4:15, consistent with the "made like his brothers" of 2:17) — describes a man who did not sin, not a being incapable of sinning by nature. A human who never once sinned satisfies the very deficiency Hebrews names; nothing in the text requires that such a man also be ontologically Yahweh.

Third, the claim that Yahweh "had to come as a human to understand human suffering" is not what Hebrews 2:17-18 actually argues. The text says Yeshua "had to be made like his brothers in every way" so that he could be "a merciful and faithful high priest" — language of qualification through shared experience, not language asserting that Yahweh Himself, in His own unchanging nature, was previously incapable of mercy or comprehension toward human suffering apart from becoming human. Tanakh's own witness runs the opposite direction: Yahweh is repeatedly described as already merciful, compassionate, and attentive to human affliction — "Yahweh is compassionate and gracious" (**Shemot (Exodus) 34:6**); He "heard their groaning" in Egypt before sending any mediator at all (**Shemot (Exodus) 2:24-25**); the entire exodus narrative presupposes Yahweh's full prior knowledge of and response to human suffering with no incarnation required. The premise that comprehension of suffering required Yahweh to become human is not a claim Tanakh anywhere makes about Yahweh's own nature; it is an inference imported from later theology, not a deficiency Tanakh itself identifies in Yahweh.

THE CONCLUSION THIS SECTION DRAWS

Hebrews 7, 9, and 10 make a real and serious case that the office needed permanence, moral sufficiency, and a sacrifice that did not require endless repetition. None of that case, examined on its own terms, requires the priest filling that office to be part-divine. It requires a human priest who does not die and does not sin — categories Tanakh already has room for in its own logic of a perfectly righteous man, without ever needing to cross into a different category of being. The argument that Yeshua "had to be Yahweh in the flesh" to qualify is a theological conclusion laid over the text of Hebrews; it is not a premise the text's own comparisons — Melchizedek's typological permanence, the moral failure of sinning priests — actually establish.

A NOTE ON THE PROPHETIC RESTORATION OF THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD (YIRMEYAHU 33, YECHZEKEL 44, YESHAYAHU 66)

If the Aaronic priesthood were flawed in the sense the Hebrews argument requires — disqualified by its own nature, a shadow now permanently retired because something categorically better has replaced it — Tanakh's own prophets present a direct problem for that reading. The Levitical priesthood is not merely remembered in the prophets as a closed chapter; it is explicitly promised a future, ongoing role, in the very same prophetic books Christians regard as anticipating the Messiah.

Yirmeyahu 33:17-22 sets the Davidic throne and the Levitical priesthood side by side as two parallel, equally enduring covenant promises:

"David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually."

Yahweh then makes the strength of this promise explicit by tying it to the fixed order of creation itself: the covenant with the Levitical priesthood can be broken only if **Yahweh's** covenant with day and night can be broken — that is, never! Whatever this passage means about Israel's future, it places the perpetuity of the sacrificing Levitical priesthood on the same unbreakable footing as the perpetuity of the Davidic line — the very line Christians say culminates in the Messiah. **A reading that has the Messiah permanently retiring the Levitical office is in active tension with a prophecy that binds both promises together as equally everlasting in the same breath.**

Yechezkel 44 describes the priesthood serving in a future, restored sanctuary in striking procedural detail — the sons of Tzadok (Zadok) "**shall come near to Me to minister to Me,**" entering the sanctuary, approaching **Yahweh's** table, keeping His charge (44:15-16), down to the fabric of their garments and the conditions under which they may approach the altar. Tellingly, this future priesthood still requires a sin offering for the priest himself after ritual defilement (44:27) — the very feature Hebrews 7:27 names as proof the Aaronic office was insufficient. If the future, Yahweh-ordained restoration of the priesthood still includes a kohen offering atonement for his own sin before serving, then "a priest who must atone for himself first" cannot be the disqualifying flaw the Hebrews argument requires it to be — Yahweh rebuilds the office with that same feature intact.

Yeshayahu 66:18-21 goes further still, describing Yahweh gathering the nations to His holy mountain and declaring, "**I will also take some of them for priests and Levites**" — extending the priestly office outward to include those gathered from among the nations themselves, in a passage about the eschatological ingathering of "**all flesh**" to worship at Jerusalem (66:23). Whatever else this means, it describes an expansion and continuation of the Levitical priestly function in the very age the prophets associate with the Messiah's reign — not a final replacement that retires animal sacrifice and hereditary priesthood altogether.

THE CONCLUSION THIS SECTION DRAWS

It is worth observing plainly that Christian commentators wrestling with these three passages do not, on the whole, read them at face value; they typically argue the language must be symbolic, or fulfilled "spiritually" through the Church, precisely because the literal sense conflicts with the doctrine that the Levitical priesthood has been permanently superseded. That interpretive strain is itself informative: if these texts straightforwardly said what the doctrine needs them to say, they would not require reinterpretation to fit it. Read on their own terms, Yirmeyahu, Yechezkel, and Yeshayahu present the Levitical priesthood — sacrifices, sin offerings, hereditary office and all — not as a deficient system Yahweh intended to discard, but as an institution He Himself promises to restore and, in Yeshayahu's case, even broaden. An office Yahweh announces He will rebuild is not, by Yahweh's own testimony through His prophets, an office that was irreparably flawed by its merely human nature in the first place.

THE CONCLUSION TANAKH ITSELF DRAWS

Tanakh's consistent witness — through Moshe, the prophets, the kings, and the Kohanim — is that Yahweh repeatedly chose to work mediation through ordinary human beings operating in defined roles, never through a being who shares His own nature. This is not a minor technical point; it is woven into the architecture of Tanakh's monotheism itself. The repeated, explicit, unqualified declarations that Yahweh alone is Elohim, that none is like Him, and that He shares His glory with no other (Yeshayahu 42:8; Devarim 4:35, 4:39; Devarim 6:4) function as the controlling frame within which every "mediator" passage in Tanakh must be read. A human prophet standing between the people and Yahweh, declaring His word, does not violate that frame. A divine-human hybrid sharing in Yahweh's own essential nature would.

CLOSING COVENANT WORD

"Hear, O Yisrael: Yahweh our Elohim, Yahweh is one." — Devarim 6:4

The mediator doctrine is, by the honest admission of its own most careful defenders, built on inference and theological development layered atop Tanakh — not on a plain, unambiguous textual assertion that Yahweh's own essential nature must be shared by the one who stands between Him and mankind. **Iyov 9:33** voices a courtroom longing for a human arbiter, not a doctrine of incarnation. **Yeshayahu**

53, on either authentic Jewish reading, never leaves the category of the human. Even **1 Timothy 2:5**, on its own Greek grammar, names “**a man**” — language Tanakh would recognize from Moshe at Sinai, not a category Tanakh would recognize as compatible with **Yahweh's** own unshared nature. What Tanakh establishes instead is a pattern as old as Avraham and as enduring as the *Kohen's* office: **that Yahweh draws near to His people through chosen human beings, and that mankind, in turn, may draw near to Him — directly, without requiring any being to share in what Yahweh alone is.**

SOURCES CONSULTED (TWO-OR-THREE-WITNESSES STANDARD, DEVARIM 19:15)

Primary Text: Masoretic Hebrew Tanakh; Dead Sea Scrolls (where extant, for Yeshayahu); Septuagint (LXX); Targum Jonathan; Greek New Testament (1 Timothy 2:5)

Lexical: NET Bible translator's notes (Iyov 9:33); UBS/SIL Translator's Handbook tradition notes (Iyov 9:33); standard Koine Greek lexical analysis of mesites/anthropos (1 Timothy 2:5)

Rabbinic/Jewish Sources: Rashi on Yeshayahu 53; Ibn Ezra; Radak (David Kimchi); Targum Jonathan on Yeshayahu 52:13; Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin; Zohar; Nachmanides (Ramban); Maimonides (Rambam); Joseph H. Hertz, The Authorised Daily Prayer Book

Patristic/Historical Witness: Origen, Contra Celsum, Book I, Ch. 55 (248 CE)

Encyclopedic/Reference Corroboration: New World Encyclopedia (Kohen); standard encyclopedic treatments of Jewish priesthood and Yom Kippur Avodah; Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church