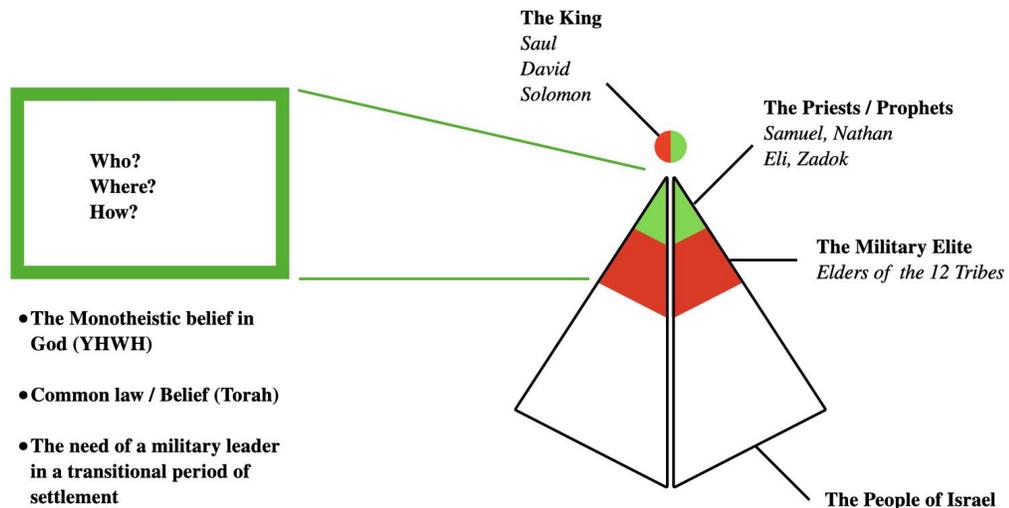


# The Pyramid of the Kingdom of Israel

*The transition from Theocratic Rule to Monarchy*



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## INTRODUCTION

As the Israelites settle in the hill country of Canaan, external and internal crises arise from a disunified tribal rule, hostile relations with the Philistines, and the lack of central military leadership, which urged for change. Israel shifts from theocratic rule to a monarchy. This report is an attempt to frame the hierarchical pyramid of the early period of the Kingdom of Israel based on the records from the Book of 1 Samuel.

## HYPOTHESIS

Evidence of a shift from theocratic rule to a monarchy is clearly recorded in 1 Samuel.

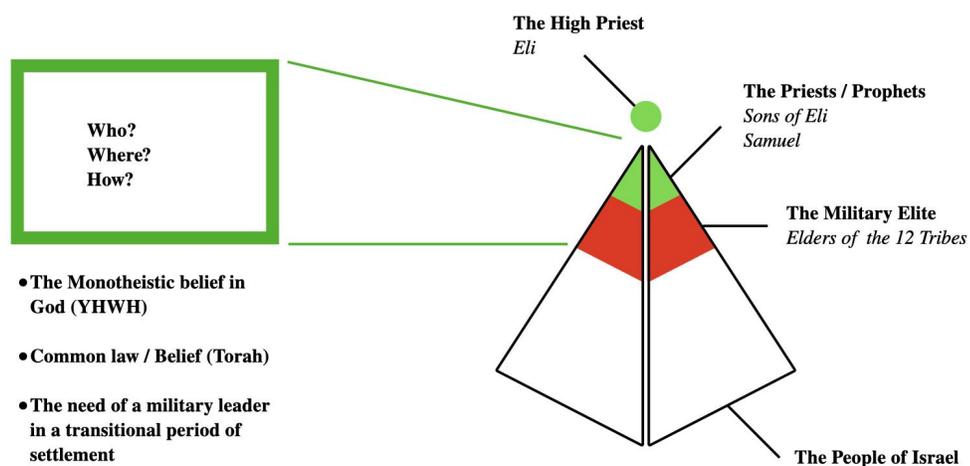
## CULTURAL FRAMES

1. Monotheistic belief in YHWH.
2. From Mt. Sinai onward, Israel develops a monotheistic religion, based on a common set of values present by Moses, known as the Torah.
3. The urge for a militaristic leader was desired due to external factors (The hostile neighbouring Philistines).

## CULTURAL SCREENS

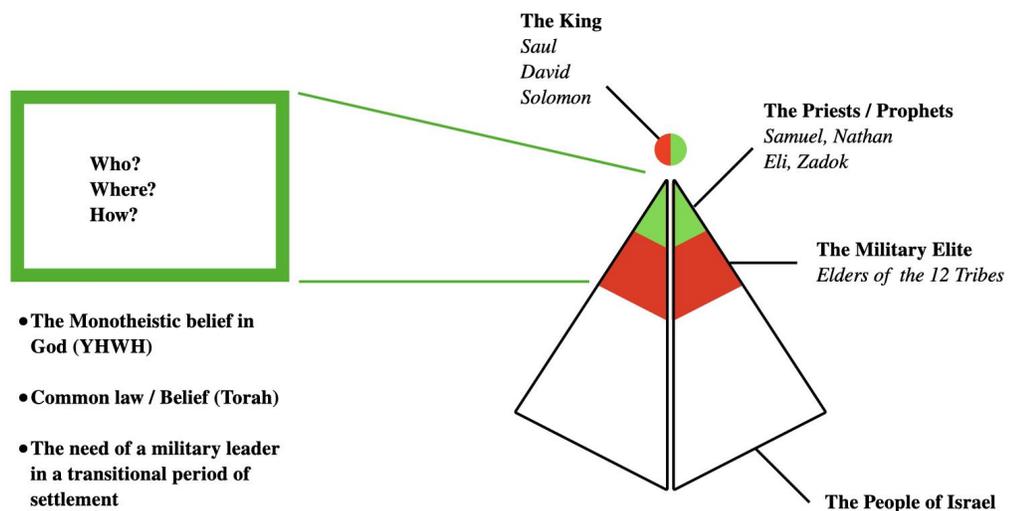
1. Who was to be the leader of the nation?
2. How was the nation to be ruled?
3. Where was to be the location of worship?

## PRE-MONARCHY RULE (Theocratic)



The High Priest became the leader of the early theocratic rule of Israelite tribes. With access to the divine presence at the Tabernacle in Shiloh, the elites of the tribes of Israel enquired the High Priest on all matters, including military action (1 Sam 4). An early battle with the Philistines saw Eli's sons leading the tribes in war, yet these religious leaders were clearly not ready for the job. A humiliating defeat saw the Israelites lose their prized possession: The Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam 4:11). The Sons of Eli fell in battle, and a shocked Eli also fell to his death (literally) (1 Sam 4:18). Obviously, changes were needed and the Israelites asked for a King.

## PRE-THEOCRATIC RULE (Monarchy)



The Prophet Samuel took up the vacancy that was left behind by the death of Eli and his sons and governed over Israel for a short period (1 Sam 7:15). Yet, during the later years of the life of Samuel, the tribes demanded a militaristic monarch to lead them (1 Sam 8:5). Saul was chosen for his stature and might (1 Sam 9:2). Saul's reign was one of combined leadership between the King and the Priest, it wasn't until David where the Monarchy gained much more power over the priestly system. Clearly a divine choice, as opposed to Saul who was chosen by the leaders of the tribes, David was able to centralize political and religious rule under his regency in Jerusalem. The Priest and Prophet became advisers to the King under David's rule, and David was presented as the divinely chosen

ruler of the nation. The Military, the leaders of the 12 tribes, submitted their authority under the sole monarchy, and this king was able to lead them in both religious and militaristic matters.

## **CONCLUSION**

The tribes of Israel originated with a theocratic rule under the high priest, yet this was clearly not desirable. The high priesthood gave way to monarchic rule, and the transition took 2 generations to complete. Yet the fragile balance was hard to maintain, just a generation after David, the kingdom was again divided.