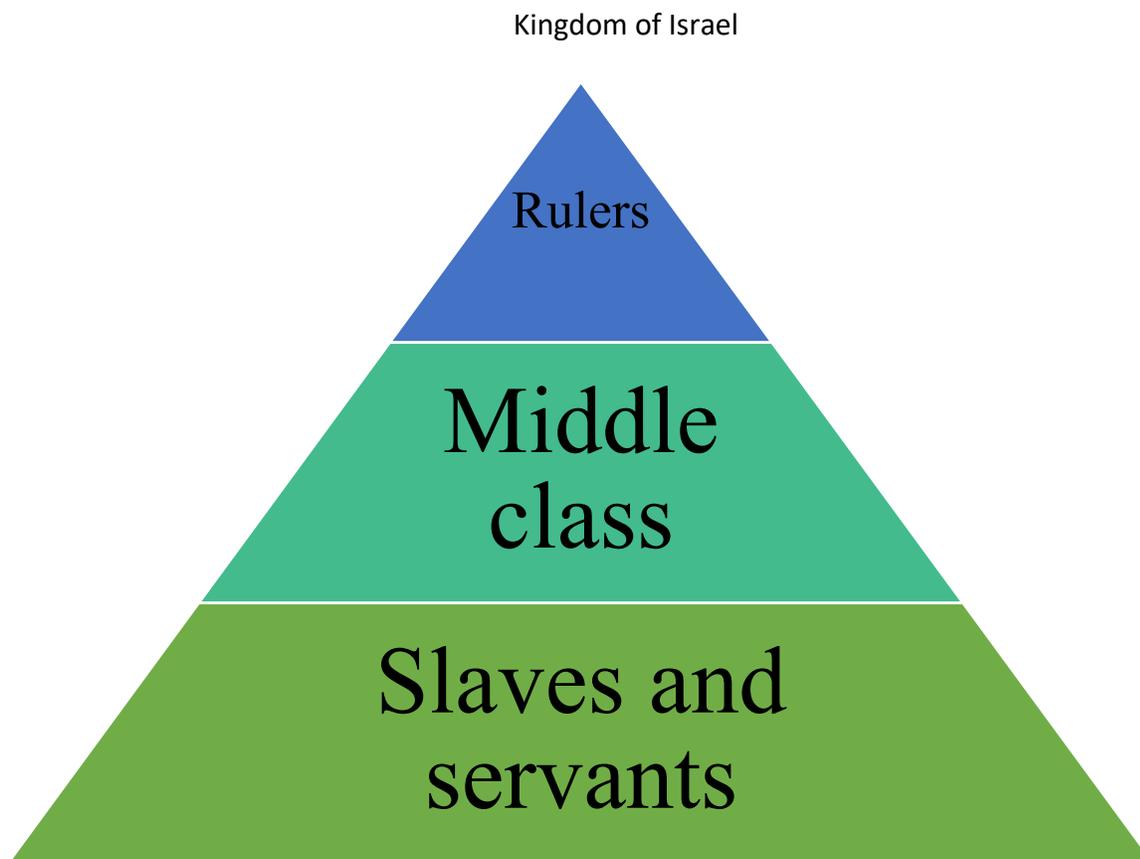


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In the 11th century BCE, between 1030 and 1020 BCE, the Israelite nation established the Kingdom of Israel. This kingdom persisted for over 200 years until the mighty Assyrian empire conquered it in 722 BCE. Before the kingdom's establishment, the Hebrew people were governed by the Patriarchs and later by the Judges, as recorded in the biblical account.

Most Hebrew societies were originally nomadic pastoralists and resisted agricultural assimilation for a while (Morrilo 95). They were pastoral people, living off the land and raising livestock. Israelites also had a strong sense of community and family, valuing the importance of tradition and history. The social hierarchy was defined by power and authority. At the top of the order stood the Pharaoh, or king, who held the highest rank and control in the kingdom. Below him were the upper-class members, wealthy landowners, army officials, and government officials. The middle class – business owners and artisans – held a lower status and fewer rights and powers (Purdue 1). The lowest rung of the social hierarchy was occupied by enslaved people and servants, who were only allowed to serve their masters as their lifetime occupation.

The Kingdom of Israel, like many other states of its time, was ruled by a monarchy system. Kings were the most influential figures in the hierarchy, similar to the pharaohs of the Egyptian kingdom. Religion also played a prominent role in society, a characteristic shared among many ancient empires. According to Morrilo, most rulers of ancient times used religion to justify their authority (82). The worship of one powerful God set Israel apart from the other kingdoms. This belief in monotheism was a stark contrast to the polytheistic religions of the neighboring cultures, such as the Egyptians and the Babylonians.

In conclusion, ancient Israel was a civilization that was distinct in many ways from its neighboring cultures. Its core was a unique monotheistic religion that set it apart and profoundly impacted the development of Western religion. The Israelites also had a distinct way of life and a strong sense of community and family. Though they were often in conflict with their neighbors, they also shared many cultural similarities with them and had a complex relationship with them.

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