

History of Judaism

The Conquest of Canaan to the Davidic Monarchy

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Conquest of Canaan and Judges

- Following death of Moses, led by Joshua
 - Other Hebrew tribes may have already been in Canaan since the Patriarchs – joined in alliance with invading Israelite tribes from Egypt against Canaanites
 - Gradual disunity of tribes
- Period of the Judges follows
 - Oppression by new enemies – biblical record: due to Israel's sin; some scholars – caused by disunity of tribes prior to united monarchy
 - Archaeological record confirms biblical account of adoption of Canaanite cults – although confined to private popular religion
 - New sanctuaries added to old sanctuaries of the patriarchs: Dan, Shiloh, Ramah, Gibeon, etc. – Levites became caretakers of these sites

Canaanite gods and Sanctuaries



The United Monarchy

- Strengths of a monarchy
 - Decentralized tribal league ineffective against raiding Philistines and other tribes – a monarchy would provide central authority to deal with threats
- Two attitudes emerged among Israelites: anti-monarchic, and pro-monarchic – revealed in Judges and Samuel
 - Divinely appointed individuals from Moses through to Samuel (11th century BCE)
 - With coming of Saul (c. 1020), monarchy a gift of God
 - The conflict between anti- and pro-monarchic attitudes exemplified during Saul's reign; resolved in David (10th century BCE)

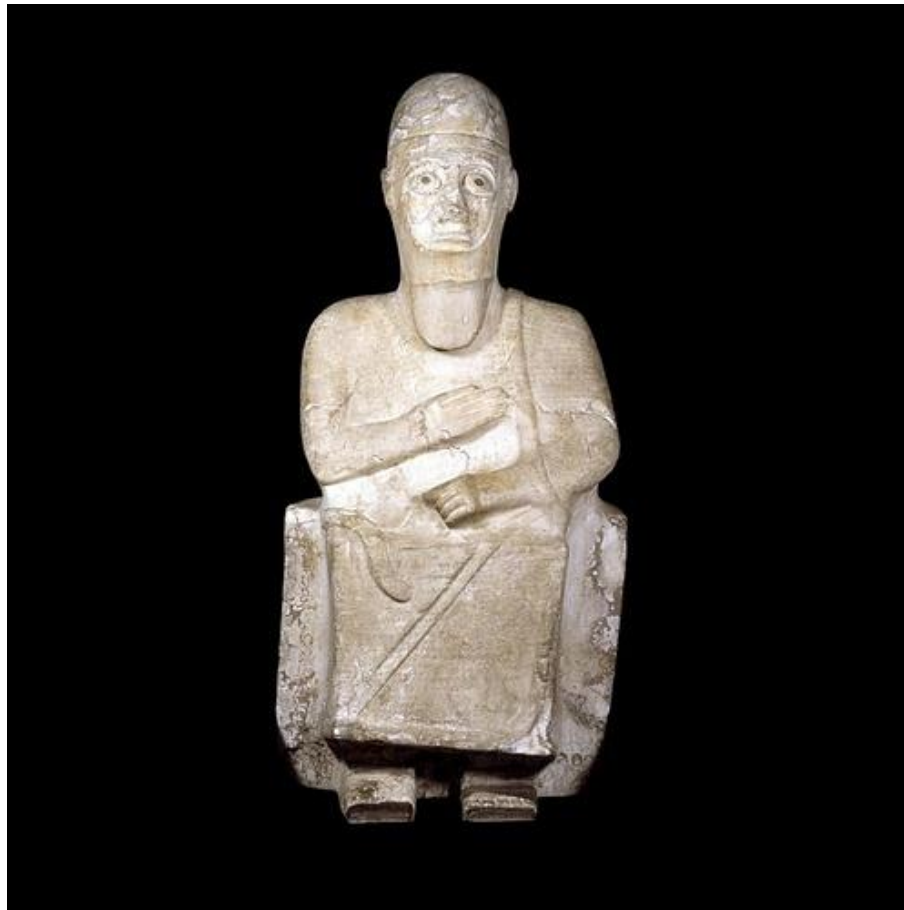
The Davidic Monarchy

- A new covenant
 - A chosen dynasty to be eternally blessed
 - Mirrors pagan models to an extent
 - God's anointed one
 - The '[firstborn] son of God'
 - Intermittent performance of priestly duties
 - Quality of Davidic narrative speaks to a library and school attached to royal court – led to compilation of the Psalms
 - David purchased Jebusite threshing floor near Jerusalem for Temple – temple built by son Solomon based on Syrian and Phoenician sanctuary models
 - Key differences from pagan models
 - David never deified like pagan kings; weaknesses and mortality stressed
 - The Temple contained no images of YHWH; unlike pagan temples, depicted as a vehicle through which YHWH provided for needs of people, not the other way around

The United Monarchy in the Torah

- Torah literature reflects both pre- and post-monarchic Israelite society
 - Polity represented in pre monarchy tribal and decentralized; agricultural and pastoral economy; lack of class distinctions; commerce and urbanization not well developed
 - Polity represented in united monarchic periods, particularly under Solomon: absorption of Amorites; trade and alliances with foreigners; diplomatic marriages; forced labor of common people (under Solomon)

The Amorites



David: Narrative in Historical Context

- David (c. 1000-c.962 BCE)
 - A political genius
 - Fled a jealous Saul and lived in the desert of Judah – led other outlaws and refugees; this group protected local populations from bandits and raiders
 - Formed alliances with Judean elders and even Philistine kings
 - With death of Saul and Jonathan at Mount Gilboa at the hands of the Philistines, he emerged as the ‘natural’ successor

Mt Gilboa - site of slaying of King Saul and son Jonathan by the Philistines



Beit She'an - The body of King Saul and his three sons hung here



David: Narrative in Historical Context

- David's kingship
 - Established capital at Jerusalem, home to the Jebusite god (perhaps Salem); moved the ark of the Covenant here
 - Defeated Philistines; subjected Edom, Moab, and Ammon
 - Sealed political alliances by taking foreign wives
 - Created disunity among royal family – e.g. murder of Amnon by Absalom for rape of Tamar; rebellion of Absalom against David – killed by Joab and the subsequent rise of Solomon, born through Bathsheba
 - Despite departure from institution of family outlined in covenant law, deeply respected divinely established institutions
 - Refusal to assassinate Saul when he had the chance (the 'Lord's anointed')
 - Put to death Amalekite who took part in slaying of Saul and Jonathan rather than rewarding him; organized mourning rites for the king and his son

Jebusite Wall of Jerusalem - remains



King Solomon's Wall - Jerusalem



Layers in Western Wall showing subsequent kingdoms/empires



David: Narrative in Historical Context

- David's kingship
 - First to unite all tribes and institute hereditary monarchy
 - Established Jerusalem as 'city of David'
 - The city of the 'messiah' – the anointed one, title of kings of the line of David; later Israel would wait for *the* messiah to redeem them
 - Took over Jebusite cult on Zion, replacing Jebusite ruler as both king and high priest – unprecedented in Israelite religion; in premonarchic religion, tribal heads maintained the Covenant between God and the people
 - Brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem – bridged the ark and its ancient associations with newly incorporated ceremonies

Solomon: Narrative in Historical Context

- Solomon's kingship
 - Established Israelite colonies outside father's borders – used in inherited Phoenician allegiance in naval and merchant-marine activities
 - Eliminated enemies and loyalists in key military, government and religious institutions
 - Formed alliances through marriages with foreign wives – 1 Kings, 700 wives and 300 concubines – strengthened arms and trade alliances
 - Strong chariotry and cavalry
 - Israelite colonies established on overland trade routes, combining mercantile and military personnel
 - E.g. 2 Chronicles 8 – Solomon targets Tadmor-Palmyra, between Syria and Mesopotamia
 - These colonial outposts later formed centres of first Jewish Diaspora
 - Position of Palestine between Asia and Africa – excellent strategic location economically
 - Solomon granted the port of Ezion-geber near Elath to Phoenician king of Hiram; links to Red Sea and Indian Ocean led to massive increase in wealth for Solomon's empire
 - Queen of Sheba – Solomon's link to her Arabian kingdom and gold, frankincense, and myrrh

Megiddo



Solomon's Copper Mines



Shrines to Solomon's Wives' gods, Jerusalem - Kidron Valley



Solomon: Narrative in Historical Context

- Solomon's kingship
 - The Temple and the Palace
 - Oppressive building program reliant on enforced labour – 1 out of 3 months required for this labour among Israelite men
 - 12 tribes reorganized into 12 administrative districts – governors appointed for each district with chief as overlord of 12 governors – each administrative district required to provide taxes and forced labour
 - Extraction of wealth and labour from tribes and favouritism of his own tribe of Judah over northern tribes – factors in the succession of northern tribes forming the Kingdom of Israel and Solomon's descendants the Kingdom of Judah
 - Wisdom Literature
 - Composed 1,005 songs – including in Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon; in keeping with Middle Eastern tradition of wisdom literature of kings

Kingdoms of Israel and Judah



