

Israeli monarchy, a weaving of biblical truth and historical accuracy

[Politics](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Although modern Israel is characterized by a parliamentary style of government, Biblical Israel adopted a monarchial system. The ancient Israeli monarchy came into fruition due to the many tribes of the state, which frequently pitted themselves against each other. Israeli citizens clamored for a unified country, which would in turn cause Israel to be less susceptible to invasions. From citizens' wishes, the monarchy was formed. The monarchy witnessed the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, with each ruler wielding great power over the Israeli state. Developed as a response to multiple invasions and meant to promote a more unified Israel, the Biblical Israeli monarchy was able to flourish due to the reigns of David, and Solomon, despite the shortcomings of King Saul.

The Israel monarchy was the product of protection against invaders. Tribes such as the Philistines and the Syrians often attacked the Israelites. The Israeli people often had issues with the shofets. The shofets were often incapable of stabilizing Israel from a political point of view; as a result the weak political leadership continued to fragment Israel¹. Due to these aforementioned issues, the people of Israel decided to establish a monarchy. The citizens of the state summoned Samuel to find a King to lead them¹. Unlike the other established monarchies, the Kings of Israel could not promote their own political and social agendas and were not viewed as "superior figures." ¹ Instead, they were tasked with carrying out the will of God, which was revealed by the prophets¹. The prophets were also charged with selecting the King of the nation; the first King the prophets selected was Saul.

To become King, Saul was required to win the approval of Yahweh, the lead prophet, as well as the Israeli citizens². Samuel, the ruling prophet at the time, stepped down so Saul could become King. Samuel was hesitant to hand over power to Saul and lectured the Israeli citizen's about their new request for a King². Saul's reign often consisted of him clashing with the head prophet at the time. One such instance is a Biblical narrative found in 1 Samuel: 13-15. To seek divine assistance in battle, Samuel says that he will make a sacrifice to God on the seventh day. Feeling impatient and worried about the morale of his troops, Saul elects to make the sacrifice himself. Theologians claim that this a clear violation of Saul's kingship². Since Samuel is acting on behalf of God, by defying the prophet Saul is also defying the will of God. Saul was never aware of his infraction, and as a result he defied God yet again. Instead of wiping out all of the residents of Amalek as God requested, Saul elects to spare the best cattle and men for sacrificial purposes². Saul proceeded to fall out of favor with God due to his failure to heed God's word. In summary, despite Saul's military prowess, his ineptitude at heeding directions paved the way for David to take the crown.

Upon slaying Goliath, David's popularity among the Israelites rose exponentially. David's reign represents the height of Israeli strength and nationalism. David was the first to truly unite the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, although they still held nationalistic tendencies³. David's kingship was characterized by an intense focus on the militaristic aspects of the country³. The King conquered many nations like the Philistines, the people of Edom, as well as residents of Moab⁴. Despite these military victories, the nations

David conquered paled in comparison to the major players in the region like

Babylon, Egypt, and Assyria⁴. Despite criticism, these conquests brought great status and wealth to the country. David also forged various treaties with neighboring countries⁵. Subsequently, David's shrewd diplomacy helped extend the sphere of Israel in the region. King David's reign featured some trivial actions, namely his affair with Bathsheba as well as the slaying of Absalom. However, despite these moral shortcomings, historians, theologians, and Israelis alike remember David's reign fondly. David is credited for being the first to truly unite Israel and Judah. David is also responsible for providing the country with abundant riches and resources due to his many conquests.

Following with the Davidic line that God promised, the next King of Israel was to be Solomon, son of David and Bathsheba. Solomon was known for his sound decision-making and wisdom. However, Solomon was also well versed in politics and economics, traits often overshadowed by his gift of wisdom⁵. Due to David's previous treaties, Solomon's Israel was ripe for expansion in both the political and economic spheres⁵. Solomon is credited with establishing international commerce within the Israeli state⁵. The Jewish people saw the development of intricate roads as well as mercantile fleets for trade⁵. The Jews also took up mining; tapping into would come to be a wealth of natural resources⁵. As a result of foreign trade, Israel's economy began to shift as a new focus was placed on the emerging merchant class⁵.

In summary, a strong ruler was all but required to unite the fragmented tribes of Israel in order to create a nation united in the face of warfare; King David and King Solomon were instrumental in helping to establish Israel

progress politically and economically. Although the monarchy established in ancient Israel had its fair share of issues, the new governmental system was significantly more effective than the shofets. The Israeli successfully united the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, if only for a brief amount of time. King Saul, riddled by jealousy and ignorance, proved to be an ineffective ruler for the Israelites. King David, made popular by his military victories, expanded the scope of Israeli influence and power. Solomon benefitted the nation by improving the political and economic climate of Israel. Solomon is also credited with erecting the temple on Mount Zion, a cornerstone of Jewish faith and culture.