Consider I Samuel 8:1-7

There are many ways to tell the story of Israel in the Old Testament. One way is to follow the chronology of some of the key leaders listed in the Bible. The list would have to include Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and Samuel.

Another list could be the Kings of the Old Testament. This list will follow the Children of Israel from their peak to their two destructions, exile, return, and eventual partial rebuilding period. In this series, we are going to delve into a comprehensive study of the Kings and Queen of Israel.

In all, there were 42 kings (and one queen who ruled instead of a king). Saul was the first king, and he ruled over all of the 12 tribes of Israel (we don’t know for sure how long; compare Acts 13:21 / 1 Samuel 13:1). After Saul’s death, the kingdom became temporarily divided, with Saul’s son Ishbosheth ruling 11 of the tribes for two years, while David ruled Judah. After Ishbosheth was assassinated, David became king over all 12 tribes. His son Solomon followed him as king, and also ruled over a unified kingdom of 12 tribes. Both David and Solomon ruled for 40 years each.

     After Solomon’s reign ended, the kingdom divided into what became known as the Southern Kingdom (Judah and Benjamin: but simply called Judah) and the Northern Kingdom (the remaining 10 tribes called Israel). This resulted in a string of 19 kings ruling over Israel and 19 kings (plus one queen) ruling over Judah. I will list them in order, with the number of years they ruled in parenthesis.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Kings of Israel | **Kings of Judah** |
| **1. Jeroboam 1 (22 yrs)** | **1. Rehoboam (17 yrs)** |
| **2. Nadab (2 yrs)** | **2. Abijam (3 yrs)** |
| **3. Baasha (24 yrs)** | **3. Asa (41 yrs)** |
| **4. Elah (2 yrs)** | **4. Jehoshaphat (25 yrs)** |
| **5. Zimri (7 days)** | **5. Jehoram (8 yrs)** |
| **6. Omri (12 yrs) \*\*\*** | **6. Ahaziah (1 yr)** |
| **7. Ahab (22 yrs)** | **7. Athaliah (Queen) (6 yrs)** |
| **8. Ahaziah (2 yrs)** | **8. Joash (40 yrs)** |
| **9. Jehoram (Joram)(12 yrs)** | **9. Amaziah (29 yrs)** |
| **10. Jehu (28 yrs)** | **10. Azariah (Uzziah)(52 yrs)** |
| **11. Jehoahaz (17 yrs)** | **11. Jotham (16 yrs)** |
| **12. Jehoash (16 yrs)** | **12. Ahaz (16 yrs)** |
| **13. Jeroboam 2 (41 yrs)** | **13. Hezekiah (29 yrs)** |
| **14. Zachariah (6 mos)** | **14. Manasseh (55 yrs)** |
| **15. Shallum (1 mo)** | **15. Amon (2 yrs)** |
| **16. Menahem (10 yrs)** | **16. Josiah (31 yrs)** |
| **17. Pekhiah (2 yrs)** | **17. Jehoahaz (3 mos)** |
| **18. Pekah (20 yrs)** | **18. Jehoiakim (11 yrs)** |
| **19. Hoshea (9 yrs)** | **19. Jehoiachin (3 mos)** |
|  | **20. Zedekiah (11 yrs)** |

     Of the kings on this chart, the Bible says ALL of the kings of Israel were evil. Among the kings of Judah, 12 were evil and 8 were good (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah).[[1]](#endnote-1)

A True Theocracy

Of the many underlying unique aspects of the early days of the Children of Israel is the Governance structure of the beginning days of the nation. They were the epitome of what is known as a Theocracy, which according to Britannica.com is a government by divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided. In many theocracies, government leaders are members of the clergy, and the state’s legal system is based on religious law[[2]](#endnote-2).

Technically, there are 31 basic types of Governmental Structures. Every nation has one or a combination of types of governmental structures. The basic list includes the following[[3]](#endnote-3):

1. Absolute monarchy - a form of government where the monarch rules unhindered, i.e., without any laws, constitution, or legally organized opposition.
2. Anarchy - a condition of lawlessness or political disorder brought about by the absence of governmental authority.
3. Authoritarian - a form of government in which state authority is imposed onto many aspects of citizens' lives.
4. Commonwealth - a nation, state, or other political entity founded on law and united by a compact of the people for the common good.
5. Communist - a system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy and a single - often authoritarian - party holds power; state controls are imposed with the elimination of private ownership of property or capital while claiming to make progress toward a higher social order in which all goods are equally shared by the people (i.e., a classless society).
6. Confederacy (Confederation) - a union by compact or treaty between states, provinces, or territories, that creates a central government with limited powers; the constituent entities retain supreme authority over all matters except those delegated to the central government.
7. Constitutional - a government by or operating under an authoritative document (constitution) that sets forth the system of fundamental laws and principles that determines the nature, functions, and limits of that government.
8. Constitutional democracy - a form of government in which the sovereign power of the people is spelled out in a governing constitution.
9. Constitutional monarchy - a system of government in which a monarch is guided by a constitution whereby his/her rights, duties, and responsibilities are spelled out in written law or by custom.
10. Democracy - a form of government in which the supreme power is retained by the people, but which is usually exercised indirectly through a system of representation and delegated authority periodically renewed.
11. Democratic republic - a state in which the supreme power rests in the body of citizens entitled to vote for officers and representatives responsible to them.
12. Dictatorship - a form of government in which a ruler or small clique wield absolute power (not restricted by a constitution or laws).
13. Ecclesiastical - a government administrated by a church.
14. Emirate - similar to a monarchy or sultanate, but a government in which the supreme power is in the hands of an emir (the ruler of a Muslim state); the emir may be an absolute overlord or a sovereign with constitutionally limited authority.
15. Federal (Federation) - a form of government in which sovereign power is formally divided - usually by means of a constitution - between a central authority and a number of constituent regions (states, colonies, or provinces) so that each region retains some management of its internal affairs; differs from a confederacy in that the central government exerts influence directly upon both individuals as well as upon the regional units.
16. Federal republic - a state in which the powers of the central government are restricted and in which the component parts (states, colonies, or provinces) retain a degree of self-government; ultimate sovereign power rests with the voters who chose their governmental representatives.
17. Islamic republic - a particular form of government adopted by some Muslim states; although such a state is, in theory, a theocracy, it remains a republic, but its laws are required to be compatible with the laws of Islam.
18. Maoism - the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism developed in China by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung), which states that a continuous revolution is necessary if the leaders of a communist state are to keep in touch with the people.
19. Marxism - the political, economic, and social principles espoused by 19th century economist Karl Marx; he viewed the struggle of workers as a progression of historical forces that would proceed from a class struggle of the proletariat (workers) exploited by capitalists (business owners), to a socialist “dictatorship of the proletariat," to, finally, a classless society - Communism.
20. Marxism-Leninism - an expanded form of communism developed by Lenin from doctrines of Karl Marx; Lenin saw imperialism as the final stage of capitalism and shifted the focus of workers' struggle from developed to underdeveloped countries.
21. Monarchy - a government in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of a monarch who reigns over a state or territory, usually for life and by hereditary right; the monarch may be either a sole absolute ruler or a sovereign - such as a king, queen, or prince - with constitutionally limited authority.
22. Oligarchy - a government in which control is exercised by a small group of individuals whose authority generally is based on wealth or power.
23. Parliamentary democracy - a political system in which the legislature (parliament) selects the government - a prime minister, premier, or chancellor along with the cabinet ministers - according to party strength as expressed in elections; by this system, the government acquires a dual responsibility: to the people as well as to the parliament.
24. Parliamentary government (Cabinet-Parliamentary government) - a government in which members of an executive branch (the cabinet and its leader - a prime minister, premier, or chancellor) are nominated to their positions by a legislature or parliament, and are directly responsible to it; this type of government can be dissolved at will by the parliament (legislature) by means of a no confidence vote or the leader of the cabinet may dissolve the parliament if it can no longer function.
25. Parliamentary monarchy - a state headed by a monarch who is not actively involved in policy formation or implementation (i.e., the exercise of sovereign powers by a monarch in a ceremonial capacity); true governmental leadership is carried out by a cabinet and its head - a prime minister, premier, or chancellor - who are drawn from a legislature (parliament).
26. Presidential - a system of government where the executive branch exists separately from a legislature (to which it is generally not accountable).
27. Republic - a representative democracy in which the people's elected deputies (representatives), not the people themselves, vote on legislation.
28. Socialism - a government in which the means of planning, producing, and distributing goods is controlled by a central government that theoretically seeks a more just and equitable distribution of property and labor; in actuality, most socialist governments have ended up being no more than dictatorships over workers by a ruling elite.
29. Sultanate - similar to a monarchy, but a government in which the supreme power is in the hands of a sultan (the head of a Muslim state); the sultan may be an absolute ruler or a sovereign with constitutionally limited authority.
30. Theocracy - a form of government in which a Deity is recognized as the supreme civil ruler, but the Deity's laws are interpreted by ecclesiastical authorities (bishops, mullahs, etc.); a government subject to religious authority.
31. Totalitarian - a government that seeks to subordinate the individual to the state by controlling not only all political and economic matters, but also the attitudes, values, and beliefs of its population.

The Miracle of a Leaderless Nation!

It is important that we realize that none of the men listed before, men like Abraham, Moses, or Joshua, were actual “Kings.” They were leaders, but not rulers or kings. Which presents a miracle of cooperation. Think about the number of Israelites that left Egypt. The Book of Numbers derives its name from the two recorded censuses made of the Israelite people, one at the beginning of the 40-year wilderness experience and one at the end.

Consider Numbers 1:1–3. The total number came to 603,550.

Consider Numbers 26:1–4. This time the total numbered 601,730.

These totals are of men only. Many suggest that these numbers could have doubled or tripled if you factor in women and children.

Imagine One Million people who have no King! Imagine a mighty nation of people who have no King! Imagine an army, but no ruler! That was a true miracle.

Consider I Samuel 8:1-7

Notice, the Lord said, in verse 7 that their request was a rejection of Him. God was saying that His desire was that He would reign over them.

At issue, to God, was not just their request for a king, or even their desire to be like others. He was concerned that His reign was deemed insufficient. After all He had done for them, why would they want a person to rule?

Samuel attempted to persuade the people against their request by pointing out 8 reasons why they should not want a King.

Consider I Samuel 8:8-22

The reason God felt disregarded was because of all of the things He had done for them over the years. Think about all God had done for them up to that point. At the point of our text, all 12 Tribes were in possession of their promised/inherited land. God had been faithful.

* Exodus 9:6
* Exodus 14:21
* Exodus 16:4
* Deuteronomy 5:6
* Deuteronomy 8:4
* Deuteronomy 29:5

Life Lesson: When God is our Number One Authority, keep Him as the Number One Authority. Never ask God to settle for Number Two! Let Him Lead!

Life Lesson: The grass is not greener on the other side

Life Lesson: Some folks just don’t realize how blessed they are.

1. [How many kings in Israel and Judah, and length of rule? - JesusAlive.cc](https://jesusalive.cc/kings-israel-judah/) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. [Theocracy | Definition, Examples, & Facts | Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/topic/theocracy) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. [Government type - The World Factbook (cia.gov)](https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/government-type/) [↑](#endnote-ref-3)