

## **The Emergence of Israelite Monarchy: Political or Theological**

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The monarchical form of government in Israel was established roughly around the year 1000 BCE. Thereafter, the people of Israel lived under monarchical rule until the Babylonian exile in 587/6 BCE. However, the exercise of monarchical power created a very strong negative impact on the life of the people in many ways. The political blunders, thirst for power, and religious infidelity on the part of several kings led the entire nation to ruin. The oppressive measures of certain kings created division within a nation which boasted about its unity as the ideal. The prophetic literature abounds in condemning the oppression of the monarchical institution. The text which is being subjected to the present research, namely 1Sam 8 has given rise to centurieslong discussions on the emergence of Israelite monarchy. When dealing with these issues, in the first place one could see that 1Samuel 8 has different compositional layers among which the most visible being the antimonarchical layer. The need for a standing army in the wake of invasions from the neighbouring kingdoms would have been an existential necessity. Hence the ancient Israelite demand for a king around 1000 BEC was probably historical. Hence 1Samuel 8 could be considered as a response to a political crisis in ancient Israel.

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