

HISTORY AS PROPHECY: THE PENDULUM OF POWER

AGE	Focus of POWER & ORDER, Characteristics	Divine NAME
2000-1500	PATRIARCH — family, headed by father, who serves as both priest & prophet; wisdom NOT exclusive province of male, as Proverbs indicates ('listen to your mother', wisdom personified as female, ch 31); but female gifts usually limited to family; in proto-Israel, wisdom ascends to power in local clans (village elders, judges); patriarchal is also PERSONAL religion, tents not temples	El elyon, El shaddai (God all-sufficient when He is your only 'tower'); for pilgrims wandering in Canaan, without (yet) land, and thus security of walled cities, armies, FAITH is not religion, but LIFE (cf. 'I am your Shield' – Gen 15:1, before the prophecy of the 400 years in Egypt)
1500-1000	PRIEST — with growth of population, principalities & powers inevitable; organized religion replaces personal faith, as impersonal mediation becomes norm; revelation imposes a yoke no one can bear; Why? – the Law, with its axle the Levitical system, was never intended to supplant the patriarchal family, but to supplement it	Yahweh becomes known as national Saviour, even while remoteness replaces personal revelation, personal appearances restricted to tabernacle; as transcendent God replaces immanent Yahweh, Law is rejected, everyone does what is right in own eyes - Judges 21
1000-500	PRINCE — lawlessness and worldliness of increasingly Canaanized Israel lead to 'give us a king like our neighbours'; relative peace of patriarchal age becomes memory, as power struggles, assassinations and international alliances bring the prophets 'whore' metaphor to the fore; though wisdom still is prized (grey hair still synonymous with 'elder' privilege), covetousness is baptized ('good business'), power is worshipped (pagan connections thus desirable, causing prophets to condemn institutions of priesthood AND kingship, not in theory, but practice)	Yahweh, Elohim get roughly equal time in the sacred literature, but share the popular podium with pagan deities; with POWER being the raison d'être of institutions, multiple gods (ie powers) becomes norm, syncretism the religious pattern (ancient equivalent of multiculturalism); El shaddai (God all-sufficient, almighty) no longer – the 10 th commandment and the 1 st are both violated, as Israel rejects the immanent yet invisible King Yahweh, for a visible yet remote king
500-AD	PROPHET — Babylonian exile & Persian, Greek & Roman oppression compel realization that the old institutions are not sufficient to create and sustain living faith, nor to create vital covenant community; need to add to the Law the wisdom of the elders, the priestly function of the patriarch (institutions, however good, are still boxes), and especially the 'outside the box' perspective of the prophet. The 4 strands of Israelite religion & social order are embraced together in the Canon of the OT (ie 1. Torah = priest; 2. history = prince (though written from prophetic & priestly perspective); 3. wisdom = patriarch; 4. prophet)	Yahweh is now remote, the NAME too sacred to utter; El elyon is back, in the post-exilic literature; EL SHADDAI (God Almighty) is all-sufficient in name only, as Israel's 'shepherds' become increasingly politicized, the Sadducees Roman sympathizers, the Pharisees, especially the Zealots, anti-Roman, most Jews 'realists in religion' (ie whichever way the prevailing winds blow – I'm alright Jack (or more likely, Jacob or Joseph)

