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## A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“Hannah’s Prophecy: A Prologue to the New Testament”<sup>1</sup>

by

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<sup>1</sup> Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). [www.roderickford.org](http://www.roderickford.org).

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<sup>2</sup> Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). [www.roderickford.org](http://www.roderickford.org).

## Introduction

To the ministry of the prophet-judge of Israel named Samuel and to the poem-prophecy of his mother Hannah, we owe the spirit of American democracy, which is itself deeply-rooted in Calvinistic covenant theology and in Puritan interpretations of ancient Hebrew civil polity,<sup>3</sup> as it existed from period of the Exodus up to the period of the life and times of the prophet Samuel—*when there were no kings in Israel*.

Hence, the poem-prophecy of Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-10) was uttered when there were no kings in Israel. During this period, there was a system of federated judges with Moses, and then Joshua, and later the prophet Samuel himself, acting as a sort of supreme or chief judge over all of ancient Israel. But there were then *no kings* in Israel, and this important fact about Hebrew civil polity makes Hannah's poem-prophecy's reference to the LORD God's anointed king all the more interesting.

Prior to the reigns of King Saul and King David, there were no kings in ancient Israel—save the sovereign LORD God. Is it therefore theologically reasonable to conclude that God's original intent was that ancient Israel not have earthly, human monarchs?

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<sup>3</sup> See Abraham I. Katsh, "The Biblical Background of the Political System of America," *Hebrew Studies* Vol. 17 (1976), pp. 30-48 (19 pages).

The development of the American polity- that is to say, the evolution of the political system of America, its fundamental principles of government, its constitution, and the spirit behind the formal framework of its society—is one of the most interesting chapters in the annals of the country's history; for it is precisely in this area that the full impact of the Hebrew Bible, the Judaic spirit and the ancient ideal of Israelite Commonwealth on American life is manifest in all its ramifications from colonial times to the present. The Commonwealth of ancient Israel, from the days of the Exodus from Egypt until the anointing of Saul as first king of Israel, was a unique social and political system; that the Puritan settlers of the New World so regarded it, and that the new society which they established in America (as well as the political order of the new Republic a century and a half later) was profoundly influenced by this ancient Israelite model is undeniable. There were, of course, several reasons for this conscious emulation of a socio-political system thousands of years old.

Primarily, the Biblical impulse of Puritanism provided the Puritan settlers with a strong theological or religious motive. The effort to reconstruct the Israelite system in the wilds of the New World naturally received its inspiration and basis justification from the divine sanction of the Scriptures which were the lifeline of these pious Pilgrims

See, also, Angela E. Kamrath, "American Revolution Debate: Ancient Israel's Resistance to Oppression and Divided Kingdom," *American Heritage Foundation*, <https://americanheritage.org/american-revolution-debate-ancient-israels-resistance-to-oppression-and-divided-kingdom/>

During the period of the American Revolution, many of the religious American patriots had reached this very conclusion.<sup>4</sup> Puritan-Congregationalist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and general American political ideology held that the LORD God and his anointed (i.e., Christ) had always been the real king in ancient Israel—not the human kings who held the office of king—and that, accordingly, true Christian civil polity is fundamentally constitutional and democratic in nature—not monarchical.<sup>5</sup>

Now the poem-prophecy of Hannah, which predated the reigns of the kings of Israel, certainly supports this theological conclusion. According to Augustinian theology, the “charity,” “justice and judgment,” and “equity” that were uttered in the poem-prophecy of Hannah, were the future descriptions of the earthly reigns of the kings of ancient Israel.<sup>6</sup>

More to the point, however, this poem-prophecy of Hannah was a description of the future and eternal reign of the LORD God and his anointed (i.e., Jesus Christ).

I believe that Hannah’s poem-prophecy thus describes two fundamental functions: first, the prophetic function of the *body of Christ*, which is the duty of the churches of Jesus Christ to do justice and judgment in the earth (i.e., charity);<sup>7</sup> and, secondly, the political or constitutional function of every civil polity upon earth, as prefigured in King David and his offspring, which is to establish justice and judgment in the earth.<sup>8</sup>

Like the prophet Samuel himself who led and guided the children of ancient Israel, the prophetic function of the churches are, inter alia, to teach, to preach, and

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> See, generally, William Goodell, *The Democracy of Christianity, Or; An Analysis of the Bible and Its Doctrines in Their Relation to the Principles of Democracy* (New York, N.Y.: Cady and Burgess, 1852).

<sup>6</sup> *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 572 – 579 (“Moreover, this ‘charity,’ as the Apostle John testifies, ‘is of God.’ Therefore to do justice and judgment is of God.”)

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 578 (“For we can rightly call all those christs who are anointed with His chrism, forasmuch as the whole body with its head is one Christ.”)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 584 (“‘And the Lord,’ he saith, ‘will seek Him a man,’ meaning either David or the Mediator of the New Testament, who was figured in the chrism with which David also and his offspring was anointed.”).

to instruct in (or to judge), inter alia, the correct political philosophy, the correct constitutional law, and the correct moral or legal theory, so that the political arm of the body politic establishes justice and judgment. The messianic function of Jesus—his sovereignty as Lord over the nations—necessitates that churches carry out this “*high church*” function.

For instance, the specific title or office that Moses held is not clear; for Moses was a Levitical priest and prophet; but Moses’ immediate successor, Joshua, was not himself *a prophet* or a member of the tribe of Levi (i.e. he was not *a Levitical priest* and could not have been eligible to hold that office). Nevertheless, it is safe to conclude that Joshua was a judge over all Israel, and that he stepped into Moses’ shoes in service to Israel as a sort of supreme or chief judge.

Now from Joshua up to the time of the prophet Samuel, the children of Israel were ruled by a system of federated judges, as described in Exodus 18: 25-26, to wit:

And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

The last judge of ancient Israel was the prophet Samuel, to wit:

And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gil-gal, and Mispheh, and judged Israel in all those places...<sup>9</sup>

And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel...<sup>10</sup>

For it was during this period, when no human person was made king in ancient Israel, that the LORD God himself was the acknowledged “King” over the ancient Israelites.

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<sup>9</sup> 1 Samuel 7:15-16.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Samuel 8:1.

Indeed, when the children of Israel requested the prophet Samuel to anoint a human king to reign over them, this request was interpreted as a rejection of, and rebellion against, the sovereign reign of the LORD God. 1 Samuel 8:4-7 thus states:

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel... and said unto him, Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now **make us a king to judge us like all the nations.**

And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: **for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.**

What God had originally intended was a system of federated judges who applied a “fundamental law” or a Higher Law (e.g., God himself). And the Puritans of colonial New England certainly tried to apply that same template to their colonies in British North America.<sup>11</sup>

The “covenant” theology of the Puritans thus served as the foundational basis of their written compacts (e.g., the Mayflower Compact of 1620) and their written colonial constitutions (e.g., Fundamental Orders of Connecticut of 1639).

Though these Puritans were the self-acknowledged loyal subjects of the kings of England, they laid the groundwork for what would eventually become the culmination of their essential political, constitutional, and theological thought: the **American Declaration of Independence (1776)**.<sup>12</sup>

To the Puritan-Congregationalists and Presbyterians of the American Revolutionary War period (1775 – 1783), the constitutional example of the ancient

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11 See, e.g., William Goodell, *The Democracy of Christianity*, supra, p. 484 (“[T]he people of Great Britain are indebted to the Puritans. What is wanting, both in England and America, to the completeness and the security of human freedom, is an undeviating fidelity to those principles of Christian democracy which the Puritans in some measure restored.... If the people desire larger measures of liberty, they have only to become more democratic, more Christian.”) And see Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics*, supra, p. 244 (“It was the belief of the Puritan that was the motive power of the American Revolution. It was the stern conviction of the Puritan that not King George, but God, was the rightful sovereign in America... and it was the conviction of the Puritan that sustained the people of the country through the long years of the Revolutionary War.”)

12 For example, William Goodell states in *The Democracy of Christianity*, p. 376, that the “Puritan and Common Law expositions of Paul, in Romans xiii” became an “echo... in our Declaration of Independence.”

Hebrew polity—prior to times of the kings of Israel and Judah—was the proper Christian model for the new American civil polity.<sup>13</sup>

13 See, e.g., “The Ancient Hebrew Polity,” *The Presbyterian Quarterly* 12.2 (April 1898): 153-169, stating:

We do not here speak of the People’s acceptance of this Constitution, which will be better exhibited in another connexion; but press the simple fact **that Israel was from the beginning under a Constitutional government**, in which the relations and duties of all parties under its protection were accurately defined. Such an instrument becomes not only a regulative code, but also a charter of rights. **After centuries of conflict to obtain it, modern sagacity has discovered no greater safeguard of political and civil freedom....** It would be pleasant just here, to show **the parallelism between the Hebrew Commonwealth and our own [i.e., the United States of America]** : which is so striking that in reciting the history of the one, we seem to be drawing the picture of the other. **The twelve Tribes of Israel almost re-appear in the States of this Republic**; and the weakness in the government from tribal independence was reproduced with us, compelling as in their case a closer Federal union.

All this must, however, be premitted to make room for the statement that, in the changes of time, so much has the danger shifted from disintegration to centralism, as to lodge the only hope of preserving **our American system** in the autonomy of the States, and in the maintenance of their right to local self-government. Can a stronger encomium be pronounced upon that feature of **the Hebrew Constitution**, which so early established a bulwark against Imperialism ? ...God, though unseen, was the acknowledged King. Whatever the outward form of the government—whether democratic, as till the close of Samuel’s regency—or Monarchical, as under the kings—or Oligarchic, as after the Captivity—through all it was Theocratic. Did ever a nation possess such a bond of union before ? Did ever Majesty like this sit upon an earthly throne? Can we conceive extremes brought together, between which all friction shall be so completely removed ? How could such a King encroach upon the liberty of the subject? How could the subject find occasion to be jealous of the prerogatives of such a Monarch ? This is not all. **The Hebrew religion was thus bound up in the Hebrew nationality. The two were so welded into one by the pressure of fifteen centuries and under the discipline of an extraordinary providence, that eighteen centuries of dispersion have not separated the embrace.** So thoroughly was the Theocratic principle wrought into the texture of Hebrew thought that, without a country and without a government, their religion alone makes them a nation still. The Hebrew State is gone ; but the nationality which should have perished with it, survives unbroken in the Hebrew Church. When was such a crystal as this ever produced in the historic outworking of any other political Constitution? ... **The Hebrew government rested upon the consent of the people, formally and constitutionally expressed. This is recognized in modern times as the corner-stone of civil liberty**, which claims for the subject not only the right to determine the character and form of the government, but also a voice in shaping the legislation. **The American Revolution**, for example, which dissolved the bands of British allegiance, turned upon the principle that taxation without the right of representation was only the exaction of tribute. We find the same principle further back as the pivot upon which **English history turns—from the wresting of Magna Charta** by the Barons from the feeble John, to the issue of the long struggle between privilege and prerogative in the expulsion of the treacherous Stuarts from the throne. If then this vital principle shall be found **incorporated in the Hebrew polity, it will justify the assertion that it was designed by the Supreme Lawgiver** to confront the old despotisms, as the working model of a free government. There is room for but a few specifications, and these in the briefest synopsis: (a) **The Constitution itself given by Jehovah** was submitted, in all its details, to the ratification of the people; and He, by public acclamation, was accepted as their Sovereign. When Joshua represented the difficulties of this service, the response was, “Nay, but we will servethe Lord : and Joshua said unto the people, ye are witnesses unto yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord to serve Him : and they said, we are witnesses.” (b) We find some of the Judges, as Jephtha, chosen by the people (Judges 11:5, 10, 11); although this extraordinary office especially reflected the Theocratic principle. (c) The great change wrought in the administration of government by the institution of hereditary Monarchy, was effected by the demand of the people, and against the remonstrances of Samuel: “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us.” (1 Sam. 8:19.) (d) Both Saul and David, after being designated by God and anointed by Samuel,

For it was the prophet Samuel who was set apart by God Himself, as the replacement High Priest for the old House of Eli.

According to Augustine of Hippo, this changing of the guard from the High Priest Eli to the Prophet/High Priest Samuel symbolized the changing of the guard from the ancient Hebrew priesthood of the House of Aaron to *new priesthood of the New Testament* which was instituted by Christ.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, the prophet Samuel—his life, his example, and his career as judge and as prophet—exemplifies the institutional role of the Christian churches within the body politic.

According to Puritan theology, because Christ has arisen from the Dead, there is no need for any more “high priests,” since Christ executes this priestly office perpetually; and there is no need for any earthly “kings,” because Christ himself is the promised Messiah, as described in the Book of Daniel, and he now reigns perpetually.

Hence, the entire political history of 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>-century England and Great Britain revolve around this very theological point: *whether human rulers, kings, bishops, and other governors may abrogate or violate the “fundamental law of God.”* Time and again, since the days of John of Salisbury (1115 – 1180) and Henry de Bracton (1210 – 1268),<sup>15</sup> the Englishmen repeatedly held that such human rulers could not do so—hence, the LORD God is the real king in England

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did not assume the functions of royalty until they were confirmed by the popular choice. (1 Sam. 11:14, 15. 2 Sam. 2:4.) (e) David was seven years king over Judah alone, before his authority was recognised by the other Tribes; who were nevertheless absolved from the charge of rebellion.

See, also, Daniel J. Elazar, “The Polity in Biblical Israel,” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, <http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles3/apl-ch1.htm>; Daniel J. Elazar, “Dealing with Fundamental Regime Change: The Biblical Paradigm of the Transition from Tribal Federation to Federal Monarchy Under David,” *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs* (Elazar Papers Index) <https://www.jcpa.org/dje/index-apc.htm>; Richard Hooker, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Books I- IV (Nashotah, WI: Nashotah House Press, 2012); Roscoe Pound, *Legal Profession in the Middle Ages*, 3 *Notre Dame Law Review* 229, 234 (1944); Frank Zinkeisen, “The Anglo-Saxon Courts of Law,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Mar. 1895), pp. 132-144; Goldwin Smith, *A Constitutional and Legal History of England* (New York, N.Y.: Dorset Press, 1990). Godwin Smith, *A History of England* (New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1957); John Marshall Guest, “The Influence of Biblical Texts Upon English Law” (An address delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi Societies of the University of Pennsylvania on June 14, 1910)(pages 15-34); William Goodell, *The Democracy of Christianity*, Vol. II (New York, N.Y.; Cady and Burgess, 1852).

<sup>14</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 581.

<sup>15</sup> For example, William Goodell states in *The Democracy of Christianity*, p. 376, that the “Puritan and Common Law expositions of Paul, in Romans xiii” became an “echo... in our Declaration of Independence.”



and Great Britain (and colonial British North America), and all the human kings and bishops were merely God’s prime ministers and ministers.<sup>16</sup>

To a great extent, the ministry of the Prophet Samuel helped the Puritans and subsequent generations to realize and to establish this political theory that God alone is the true and sovereign “king,” and that all human rulers must rule justly and do justice, and in accordance with the law of God.

In many respect, the poem-prophecy of Samuel’s own mother Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-10) firmly established this Puritan political theory.

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16 See, e.g., Martin Luther, *Temporal Authority: To What Extent it should be Obeyed* (1523) (“Here you inquire further, whether constables, hangmen, **jurists, lawyers, and others of similar function** can also **be Christians and in a state of salvation**. Answer: If the governing authority and its sword are a divine service, as was proved above, then everything that is essential for the authority's **bearing of the sword must also be divine service.**”); see, e.g., Rev. Roger Williams, *The Bloudy Tenet of Persecution* (Miami, Fla.: Hardpress, 2019), p. 332 (the civil magistrate is “a ministry indeed, magistrates are God’s ministers, Rom. Xiii 4,” whose duty it is to address injustice and oppressions of the weak. “I see not how,” wrote Rev. Williams, “according to the rule of Christ, Rom. Xiii., the magistrate may refuse to hear and help the just complaints of any such petitioners—children, wives, and servants—against oppression, &c.”); see, also, St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 678 (“**justice**, whose office it is to render every man his due”); and p. 699 (“**a republic cannot be administered without justice**”); and see James Madison, Federal Paper No. 51 (“**Justice** is the **end of government**. It is the end of **civil society**”).

## Chapter One

### “The Story of Hannah, Mother of the Prophet Samuel”

In the book of First Samuel, there is an account given of a man named Elkanah and his two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Wife Peninnah “had children, but Hannah had no children.”<sup>17</sup> Although Elkanah greatly loved Hannah, this in and of itself was not adequate consolation for her grief.

And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.<sup>18</sup>

Hannah prayed at the house of the LORD, before the High Priest Eli, who thought that her behavior was so strange that he mistook her for being intoxicated. But when Hannah assured her that she was not intoxicated, but that she had spoken to the Lord, “[t]hen Eli answered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.”<sup>19</sup>

Then Elkanah knew Hannah, and she conceived and bore a man-child, and called his name Samuel.<sup>20</sup>

After Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought and presented the boy to the High Priest Eli for service to God in the house of the Lord at Shiloh.

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<sup>17</sup> 1 Samuel 1:2.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Samuel 1:10-11.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Samuel 1: 17.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Samuel 1: 19-20.

Hannah would later bear several more children: “three sons and two daughters.”<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, the boy Samuel thus grew up in the house of the Lord and trained for the priesthood under the High Priest Eli.

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<sup>21</sup> 1 Samuel 2: 21.

## Chapter Two

### “The Prophecy of Hannah”

The poem-prophecy of Hannah, which is set forth in the first ten verses in chapter two of the book of First Samuel, contains, as Augustine of Hippo has explained, “things [that] Hannah, the mother of Samuel, the holy and much-praised man, prophesied, in which, indeed, the *change of the ancient priesthood* was then figured and is now fulfilled, since she that had many children is waxed feeble, that the barren who hath born seven might have *the new priesthood in Christ*.”<sup>22</sup>

The Scriptures record Hannah’s prophecy as follows:

<sup>1</sup>And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

<sup>2</sup>There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

<sup>3</sup>Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

<sup>4</sup>The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

<sup>5</sup>They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

<sup>6</sup>The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

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<sup>22</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 578-579.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

<sup>8</sup> He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.

<sup>9</sup> He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

<sup>10</sup> The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

The LORD's gift to Hannah, which was the birth of her first child, the man-child named Samuel, resulted in her expression of salvation that is stated in this poem-prophecy.

Hannah received the poem-prophecy from God, and Samuel would in many ways play a great role in carrying out that prophecy of anointing a new priesthood.

Therefore, Hannah's heart rejoiced!

Hannah rejoiced at what appears to have been alleviation of oppression and injustice perpetuated at the hands of her "enemies," stating "my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation."<sup>23</sup>

Hannah impugns human pride and arrogant attitudes of the prideful. She acknowledges God as "a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."<sup>24</sup>

In other words, Hannah acknowledges that the LORD God is a jurisprudential God who applies truth, wisdom, and knowledge to His judgments of human actions and activities.

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<sup>23</sup> 1 Samuel 2:1. For a general theological analysis of Hannah's poem, see St. Augustine, *The City of God*, pp. 572-579.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Samuel 2:3.

Significantly, Hannah’s prophecy describes a divine justice whereby the low are elevated into high positions, and the high and mighty are sentenced to divine servility. She says that the “bows of the mighty men are broken,”<sup>25</sup> and the “full have hired themselves out”<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, Hannah describes the LORD’s ultimate justice and system of divine and social justice in the earth, to wit: raising up “the poor,” “the beggar,”<sup>27</sup> and “his saints,”<sup>28</sup> and shall “set them among princes,” so that they may “inherit the throne of glory.”<sup>29</sup>

As Augustine of Hippo says, **“This is the burden of the entire song of this woman whose name is interpreted ‘His grace.’”**<sup>30</sup>

Now, when there was no king in Israel, this wife and mother Hannah spoke about a king, stating, the LORD “shall give strength unto **his king**.”<sup>31</sup>

We note that the word “king” (singular) and not “kings” (plural) is used here, and hence the word “king” means a singular office—as in those human kings would hold that office—and [or] the word “king” means the messiah, the man Christ Jesus.

For indeed the House of David would be later established, at the hands of the prophet Samuel’s anointing of the shepherd boy David to be king over all of Israel.

But we may rightfully conclude that Hannah’s description of this “king” actually and truthfully describes not a mortal, earthly king, but rather a “super king,” who is in fact commissioned to break to pieces all of the “adversaries of the LORD” and who “shall judge the ends of the earth.”<sup>32</sup> And this same prophetic description of the Messiah is presented in the Book of Daniel and in the Book of Revelation.

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<sup>25</sup> 1 Samuel 2:4.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Samuel 2:5.

<sup>27</sup> 1 Samuel 2:8.

<sup>28</sup> 1 Samuel 2:9

<sup>29</sup> 1 Samuel 2:8.

<sup>30</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 575.

<sup>31</sup> 1 Samuel 2: 10.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

According to Augustine of Hippo, the kingly description given by Hannah fits none other than Jesus Christ himself (and his body the church), who is the promised, anointed messiah, but is also “all those christs who are anointed with His chrism, forasmuch as the whole body with its head is one Christ.”<sup>33</sup>

Thus, Augustine of Hippo concluded that the duty to do “justice and judgment,” which is contained within the *poem-prophecy of Hannah*, was essentially a universal commandment given to the church, to civil magistrates, and to all mankind; and, according to Augustine, this sacred duty to do “justice and judgment” was made the precondition to both earthly peace in this lifetime, as well as to eternal salvation in the world to come.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 578. See, also, 1 Samuel 2: 8-10 (KJV), stating:

8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.

9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt **the horn of his anointed**.

But using a slightly different translation of the Bible, Augustine of Hippo's *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 572-573, quotes these same verses as stating:

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, that He may set him among the mighty of [His] people, and maketh them inherit the throne of glory; giving the vow to him that voweth, and He hath blessed the years of the just: for man is not mighty in strength. The Lord shall make His adversary weak: the Lord is holy. Let not the prudent glory in his prudence; and let not the mighty glory in his might; and let not the rich glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, to understand and know the Lord, and **to do judgment and justice in the midst of the earth**. The Lord hath ascended into the heavens, and hath thundered: He shall judge the ends of the earth, for He is righteous: and He giveth strength to our kings, and shall exalt **the horn of His Christ**.

<sup>34</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 577-578, stating:

Now, he does judgment and justice who live aright. But he live aright who yields obedience to God when He commands. ‘The end of the commandment,’ that is, to which the commandment has reference, ‘is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.’ Moreover, this ‘**charity**,’ as the Apostle John testifies, ‘is of God.’ Therefore to do **justice and judgment** is of God.

But what is ‘in the midst of the earth?’...Therefore, ‘in the midst of the earth,’ that is, while our soul is shut up in this earthly body, **judgment and justice** are to be done, which shall be profitable for us hereafter, when ‘every one shall receive according to that he hat done in the body, whether good or bad.’

In the same way we may suitably understand what we read in the psalm, ‘But God, our King before the worlds, hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth;’ so that the Lord Jesus may be understood to be

Fundamentally, this poem-prophecy of Hannah contains a general description of the LORD God’s fundamental constitutional law, political theory, and political science which revolve around “justice, judgment, and equity.”<sup>35</sup>

On this basis, the federated kingdom of ancient Israel under the leadership of the prophet Samuel—with its constitutional system of federal judges and limited monarchy—suggests a template for the Gentile nations to follow. In colonial British North America, the American revolutionists adopted a version of that template which did not contain the office of king.

## CONCLUSION

The poem-prophecy of Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, was perhaps the first prophecy on the functions of the LORD God’s anointed king of Israel (i.e., Christ) who shall do justice and judgment. According to Augustine of Hippo, this poem-prophecy signified “the change of the ancient priesthood” as well as the “new priesthood in Christ.”<sup>36</sup>

Uttered when there had not yet reigned any kings in Israel, Hannah’s poem-prophecy not only spoke about a king, but she actually described *a super king* who could be none other than the anointed Messiah, whom the prophet Daniel later referenced, many centuries later, in his prophecies.

In addition, Hannah’s poem-prophecy strongly emphasized divine and social justice. Like several of the subsequent ancient Hebrew prophets, notably the prophet Amos, Hannah’s poem-prophecy suggests that social justice was far more important than orthodox religious practice<sup>37</sup>— a theme that Christ himself

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our God who is before the worlds, because by Him the worlds were made, working our salvation in the midst of the earth, for the Word was made flesh and dwelt in an earthly body.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p 579.

<sup>37</sup> See Amos 5:12-24; in the Prophet Amos we see an exemplification of the “Office of the Prophet” as interpreter of divine Providence, which naturally includes the law of general equity, constitutional law, political science, and public policy. And as this prophetic office was to the Prophet Amos, so must it also be to the Christian Church— to forewarn and admonish whole nations and peoples; to speak divine truth to religious, civil, and secular powers; and to advocate for the alleviation of oppression of the weak, the poor, and the marginalized. He was joined in this judgment by his brother prophets **Hosea** (Hosea 6:6-7) and **Isaiah** (Isaiah 1:11-17).



repeatedly reiterated in the Gospels (see, e.g., Luke 10: 25-37).<sup>38</sup> Augustine of Hippo also interprets Hannah’s prophecy as generally requiring “justice and judgment” as a means of grace and an essential Christian function and duty.

Finally, according to Augustine of Hippo, Hannah’s description of Israel’s king points us to no one else save Jesus of Nazareth (i.e., the *anointed one*, the Messiah, the Christ, etc.), and I fully concur with that theological conclusion.

**THE END**



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<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., Robert F. Cochran and Zachary R. Calo, *Agape, Justice and Law: How might Christian Love Shape Law?* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017).