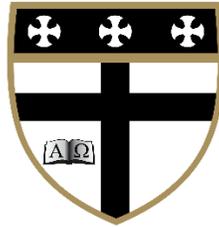


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A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

**“Prophetic Leadership of the *Shofet* (“Judge”) of Ancient Israel:
A Prologue to the New Testament”¹**

by

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² Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). www.roderickford.org.

Introduction

The Book of Judges encapsulates orthodox Reformed Christian political theory which holds that all civil magistrates have a duty to administer civil governments in accord with the eternal and moral laws that implement God's divine Providence.

Notably, the Book of Judges describes 400 years of the political life of ancient Israel *when there were no kings*.

Just as Moses and Joshua were not kings, none of the shophetim were kings, but rather all of them were non-hereditary prime ministers or military leaders or governors who ruled over the twelve tribes of ancient Israel.

Hence, during the first five centuries of the existence of ancient Israel, the LORD God Yahweh was Himself the only king of Israel.

And from this historical and political fact, the Reformed theologians have deduced that the monarchical form of civil government was not God's intended or preferred form of civil polity for the children of Israel.

This fact is evidenced in the Book Samuel, where the children of Israel demanded that the prophet Samuel anoint a king to reign over them. 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

This means that Moses, Joshua, and all the leaders of ancient Israel, up to the prophet Samuel's anointing of Saul as king, were prime ministers of God (i.e., *shophets* or *shofets*)—not kings.

Here, we find in the civil theology of ancient Israel the belief that the civil magistrate—including even their kings-- was really God's vicegerent—a political-

theological idea which the Roman Catholics and the Protestant Reformers (e.g., Luther, Calvin, and the Puritans of colonial New England) never rejected.³

The Book of Judges is thus fundamentally a political science discourse on divine Providence (i.e., Abrahamic or Mosaic political theory), and the duty of mankind to formulate just government in compliance with the eternal mandates of

³ 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”); p. 699 (“a republic cannot be administered without justice”); pp. 158, 319, and 476, (“[T]hat God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominions and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence”); and, p. 682 (“[W]ill a **wise judge** take his seat on the bench or no? Beyond question he will. For human society, which he thinks it a wickedness to abandon, constrains him and compels him to this duty.”)

See, e.g., 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), pp. 376-377 (stating that the great English jurist and cleric Henry de Bracton, “in his exposition of Romans xiii., had said: ‘He is called a king for ruling righteously, and not because he reigns. Wherefore he is a king when he governs with justice, but a tyrant when he oppresses the people committed to his charge.’”)

See, e.g., Martin Luther, *Temporal Authority: To What Extent it should be Obeyed* (1523)(“ [W]e must provide a sound basis for the civil law and sword so no one will doubt that it is in the world by God’s will and ordinance.... The law of this temporal sword has existed from the beginning of the world.... 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., founder of the first Baptist Church in North America, Roger Williams (1603 - 1683), who published *The Bloudy Tenet of Persecution* (Miami, Fla.: Hardpress, 2019), p. 332 (stating, 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.”)

Finally, see Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 23. “Of the Civil Magistrate,” citing Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14, to wit:

God, the Supreme Lord and King of all the world, **hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the people, for his own glory and the public good**, and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil-doers....

It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, [a] to honor their persons, [b] to pay them tribute and other dues, [c] to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience’ sake. [d] Infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the magistrate’s just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him:e from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; [f] much less hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretense whatsoever.

divine Providence (e.g., the American Declaration of Independence)—i.e., *to take dominion over the earth*⁴ and *to judge righteously and justly*.⁵

In Reformed theology, the Book of Judges is therefore a discourse in social, political, and constitutional morality whose target is fundamentally twofold:

(1). First, its target is the application of Torah in the nation of ancient Israel; and,

(2). Second, its target is all the nations of the earth who may become blessed through Abraham’s seed. (Indeed, in Reformed theology, the belief that all nations of the earth would be blessed in following the example of the Patriarch Abraham,⁶ that is, “**to do justice and judgment**”⁷ (i.e., general equity) is *sine qua non*.⁸)

⁴ See Genesis 1:26-28 (“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”) See, also, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Larger Catechism #20, citing Genesis 2:8, 15-16 (“God providentially put Adam and Eve in paradise and assigned them the job of taking care of it. He gave them permission to eat everything that grew, put them in authority over all the creatures, and established marriage as a help for Adam. God allowed them to have fellowship with him, instituted the Sabbath, and made a covenant of life with them on the condition of their personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience....”)

⁵ Genesis 18:18-19 (“...to do justice and judgment....”); John 7:24 (“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”)

⁶ This paper holds that the leadership and ministries of Moses, Joshua, and the several judges all prophetically fulfilled God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:8 (“And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”). And, significantly, this leadership and ministries prophetically symbolized the future fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham that “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3) and that Abraham would “be a father of many nations” (Gen. 17:4).

⁷ Genesis 18: 18-19 (“Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”)

⁸ See, e.g., John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Books I through IV (Unabridged) (United States of America: Panteios Press, 2017), p. 20 (“[Calvin wrote that] “equity, because it is natural, cannot but be the same for all, and therefore, this same purpose ought to apply to all laws, whatever their object. Constitutions have certain circumstances upon which they in part depend. It therefore does not matter that they are different, provided all equally press toward the same goal of equity.”)

Hence, the word “judges” (i.e., shophet or shofet) within the Book of Judges, actually denotes the equivalent of modern-day governors.

In several ancient Semitic-speaking cultures and associated historical regions, the shophet or shofet (plural shophetim or shofetim; Hebrew: שופֵט, romanized: shōpēt, Phoenician... romanized: šōfēt, Punic..., romanized: šūfet, the last loaned into Latin as sūfes; see also Ugaritic: 𐎗𐎍𐎕, romanized: tāpit) was **a community leader of significant civic stature, often functioning as a chief magistrate with authority roughly equivalent to Roman consular powers....**

In Hebrew and several other Semitic languages, shophet literally means ‘Judge,’ from the Semitic root Š-P-Ṭ, ‘to pass judgment’....

In the Book of Judges in the Hebrew Bible, the shoṭim were chieftains who united various Israelite tribes in time of mutual danger to defeat foreign enemies....

By the time of the Punic Wars, the government of Ancient Carthage was headed by a pair of annually elected sufetes. Livy's account of the Punic Wars affords a list of the procedural responsibilities of the Carthaginian sufet, including the convocation and presidency of the senate, the submission of business to the People's Assembly, and service as trial judges. Their number, term, and powers are therefore similar to those of the Roman consuls, with the notable difference that Roman consuls were also commanders-in-chief of the Roman military, a power apparently denied to the sufetes....⁹

For example, in the United States of America, the following high-ranking officials would be deemed shophetim (i.e., “judges” of ancient Israel):

⁹ “Shophet,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shophet#:~:text=In%20Hebrew%20and%20several%20other,other%20Semitic%20cultures%2C%20notably%20Phoenicia.>

Supreme Civil and Military Authority	Ancient Israel	United States
1. Executive Civil Authority	<i>Shophet</i>	President, U.S.A.
2. Supreme Military Authority	<i>Shophet</i>	Chairman, Joint Chief of Staff (U.S. Military)
3. Supreme Judicial Authority	<i>Shophet</i>	Chief Justice, U.S. Supreme Court

In ancient Israel, the shophet (i.e., the judge) exercised all three of these powers or functions—executive, military, and judicial.

This paper holds that “the Son of Man” who is described in the Book of Daniel,¹⁰ the Gospel of Matthew,¹¹ and in the Book of Revelation,¹² is, or shall be, the last Great Shophet of a restored Israel.

For this reason, the shophetim (i.e., judges) within the Book of Judges prefigure the second coming of Jesus Christ, who shall administer the Last Judgment and exercise God’s ultimate jurisdiction and judgment upon every nation upon earth.¹³

¹⁰ Daniel 7:13-14

¹¹ Matthew 25: 31-32.

¹² Revelation 22:12-16.

¹³ Ibid.

Chapter One:

“The *Shophetim* inherited the ‘Book of the Law’ of Ancient Israel”

The shophetim (i.e., judges) of ancient Israel inherited both the “book of the law”¹⁴ and the Hebrew civil polity which Moses had bequeathed to Joshua.

Now from Joshua up to 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.

After the death of Joshua, these several judges, who are listed within the Book of Judges, include the following:

Othniel;

Ehud;

Shamgar;

Deborah;

Barak;

Gideon;

Tola;

Jair;

Jephthah;

Izban;

Elon;

¹⁴ Joshua 1:8 (“**This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein....**”)

Abdon; and
Sampson.

Like Josha who inherited the “book of the law”¹⁵ from Moses, together with the Hebrew civil polity of ancient Israel, so too did these several judges inherit those same institutions from Joshua, who passed the proverbial baton of leadership to these judges.

This meant that these judges would have assumed leadership over a well-organized (at least constitutionally on paper and theoretically speaking) ancient Hebrew civil polity, with the strict objective of carrying out the “book of the law,”¹⁶ to wit:

The Three Crowns of the Constitution of Israel

CROWN The <i>Keter Torah</i>	CROWN The <i>Keter Kehunah</i>	CROWN The <i>Keter Malkhut</i>
The <i>Prophetic function</i> : to interpret the <i>Torah</i> ; “the domain of constitutional interpretation.”	The <i>Priestly function</i> : “the domain of the priesthood”; connecting people to God; the ritual and sacerdotal function.	The <i>Kingly function</i> : “the domain—literally crown—of civil rule.”
Men and Women with a Special call directly from God to speak His Word.	Kohen Gadol (Chief Priest) Priests Levites	Prime Minister (Moses, Joshua, Samuel, etc.) or the Kings of Judah/ Israel (David/Solomon, etc.) 12 Princes 70 Elders Judges/ Officers

Of course, the *role of the prophet* and the *role and function of the king* had not yet fully formed or developed during the 400-year period of the judges.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

But, otherwise, the basic structure of ancient Hebrew civil polity was fully developed (or at least written in the “book of the law”)¹⁷ during the period of the judges.

In fact, when Joshua took over from Moses and assumed leadership over the twelve tribes of Israel, a sophisticated system of law—i.e., the “book of the law”¹⁸ - had already been adopted and these tribes were heavily regulated by custom and law:

Exodus 21:1-2	Slavery; Bondservants; Sabbath Year (7 th year)
Exodus 21:1-11, 20, 27	Master and Servant relations
Exodus 21:10-15	Murder and Homicide
Exodus 21:16	Men-stealing and Slavery
Exodus 21: 18-27	Assault and Battery
Exodus 21: 29-36	Oxen, Cows; Negligent Supervision
Exodus 22: 1	Property Damage; Fire; Restitution
Exodus 22: 2-4; 7-8	Thieves, Theft; Restitution
Exodus 22: 5-6	Property Damage; Fire; Restitution
Exodus 22: 9	Trespass, Theft; Restitution
Exodus 22: 10-15	Bailment, Safekeeping, Loss; Restitution
Exodus 22: 16-17	Fornication, Unwed Sexual Relations
Exodus 22: 18	Witches
Exodus 22: 19	Bestiality
Exodus 22: 21-24	Foreigners; Widows; and Orphans
Exodus 22: 25	Usury, Lending
Exodus 23: 1	Perjury, False Oaths

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Exodus 23: 6-9	Judging Cases; Equality before the Law; Protection against Oppression of the Poor and Strangers
Leviticus 11:1-47	Dietary Laws; Healthy, Unhealthy Meats or Foods
Leviticus 12: 1-8	Health and Sanitation: childbirth
Leviticus 13: 1-59	Health and Sanitation: leprosy
Leviticus 14: 1-32	Health and Sanitation: leprosy
Leviticus 14: 33-57	Health and Sanitation: buildings and houses
Leviticus 15:1-33	Health and Sanitation: sexual relations, bodily fluids, and cleanliness
Leviticus 18:1-30	Consanguinity, marriage regulations; restrictions on sexual relations
Leviticus 19:9-10;	Harvest, Farms; Charitable Assistance for the Poor (Gleaners)
Leviticus 19:15, 35-37	Judges; Duty to Honestly and Fairly Judging Cases; Equality before the Law; Protect against Oppression of the Poor, Strangers
Leviticus 23:22	Harvest, Farms; Charitable Assistance for the Poor (Gleaners)
Leviticus 25: 1-40	Sabbath Year (7 th Year) of the land; Jubilee Year (50 th Year); Release from Debt, Bondage
Leviticus 25:36-37	Usury, Lending.
Leviticus 19:11, 13	Business; Contracts; Duty of Good Faith and Fair Dealing
Leviticus 25:44-55	Slavery; Bondservants; Hired servants
Deuteronomy 15:11	Charitable Assistance for the Poor
Deuteronomy 5:16-21	Second Table of the Decalogue; Prohibition Against Murder; Adultery; Theft; Perjury or Bearing False Witness; Covetousness.

Deuteronomy 15:12-15	Slavery; Bondservants; Sabbath Year (7 th Year)
Deuteronomy 16:18-20	Judges; Duty to Honestly and Fairly Judging Cases; Equality before the Law; Protect against Oppression of the Poor, Strangers
Deuteronomy 19:15	Two Witnesses Required to Convict for “any iniquity, or for any sin”
Deuteronomy 21:15	Polygamy authorized
Deuteronomy 21:18-21	Juvenile Justice
Deuteronomy 22:1-4	Civility; Good Samaritan Rule
Deuteronomy 22:5	Anti-Transvestite Rule
Deuteronomy 22:8-12	Houses; Vineyards; Plowing; Garments
Deuteronomy 22:13-30	Marriage; Divorce; Adultery; Fornication
Deuteronomy 23:17	Prostitution; Homosexuality; Sodomy
Deuteronomy 23:19	Usury
Deuteronomy 24:1-5	Marriage; Divorce; Re-marriage; Duty of Honeymoon in First Year of Marriage
Deuteronomy 24:10-13	Pledges
Deuteronomy 24:14-15	Labor and Employment
Deuteronomy 24:17-18	Judges; Duty to Honestly and Fairly Judging Cases; Equality before the Law; Protect against Oppression of the Poor, Strangers
Deuteronomy 24:20-24	Harvest, Farms; Charitable Assistance for the Poor (Gleaners)
Deuteronomy 25:1-3	Judges; Duty to Honestly and Fairly Judging Cases; Corporal Punishment
Deuteronomy 25:4	Oxen; Negligent Supervision
Deuteronomy 25:5-10	Death of Husband; Husband’s Brother’s

	Duty to Impregnate the Widow so that His Brother will have an Heir
Deuteronomy 25:13-19	Fraud; Oppression; Unjust Weights and Measurements
Deuteronomy 27:19	Judges; Duty to Honestly and Fairly Judging Cases
Deuteronomy 27:20-23	Consanguinity, marriage regulations; restrictions on sexual relations
Deuteronomy 27:24-25	Murder; Conspiracy to commit murder

Regarding the implementation of the “book of the law,” there are also several scriptural references to the duty of judges to serve nobly, honorably, and justly when discharging their duties and functions, such as:

Exodus 23: 6-9	Judges; Duty to Honestly and Fairly Judge Cases; Duty to Provide Equality before the Law and to Protect against Oppression of the Poor, Strangers
Leviticus 19:15, 35-37	Judges; Duty to Honestly and Fairly Judge Cases; Duty to Provide Equality before the Law and to Protect against Oppression of the Poor, Strangers
Deuteronomy 16:18-20	Judges; Duty to Honestly and Fairly Judge Cases; Duty to Provide Equality before the Law and to Protect against Oppression of the Poor, Strangers

Therefore, we must not assume that the period of the Book of Judges contains a history of a disorganized, uncivilized mob, although the general descriptions of their national sins often given that appearance.

To the contrary, the children of Israel had, during the 400-year period of the judges, already long ago inherited a sophisticated system of laws—i.e., the “book of the law”¹⁹-- from the days of Moses and Joshua.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Chapter Two:

A Summary of the History of the *Shophetim*

Fundamentally, the duty of the shophet was to re-establish and to maintain and enforce ancient Israel’s compliance with the “book of the law,”²⁰ or the ceremonial, judicial, moral laws of God.

For this reason, in Reformed theology, the shophetim “point to us to Christ”²¹ and thus they are a “type of Christ.”²²

This “Messianic” symbolism is contained within each individual account of the several thirteen judges of Israel, to wit:

“The Judges of Israel as Listed in the Book of Judges”²³

Judge and Tribe	Significant Events in the life of the Judge	Enemies of Israel	Period of Oppression	Period of "Rest"	Scripture reference
1. Othniel (Judah) Son of Kenza, a Gentile	Othniel was the nephew	Cushan-Rishathaim,	8 Years	40 years	Josh 15:13-17 ;

²⁰ Joshua 1:8 (“**This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein....**”)

²¹ See, e.g., “The Book of Judges and the People of God,” Reformed Theological Seminary, pod cast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2Bh1la1p2w>. (“Drs. Ligon Duncan and Miles Van Pelt dialogue about how the book of Judges fits into the redemptive story and how its message warns those within the covenant community.” [In this lecture, Dr. Miles Van Pelt states, “**the judges point us to Christ.**”])

²² See, e.g., Frank Alonge, “The Footprints of Jesus Christ in the Book of Judges,” (June 3, 2023), <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/footprints-jesus-christ-book-judges-frank-alonge/>, stating, “The Book of Judges is a captivating account of Israel's tumultuous journey through a cycle of disobedience, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. While the book primarily focuses on the judges whom God raised up to lead His people, it also contains subtle yet profound foreshadowings of Jesus Christ”; Stephanie Solberg, “Finding Jesus in the Book of Judges: Sampson,” (January 8, 2021), <https://makinghimknown.tv/finding-jesus-in-the-book-of-judges/>, stating, “[t]he Judges of early Israel were not judges in the way we think of judges, that is, law deciders. Instead, they were deliverers, chosen by the LORD to protect and deliver the Israelites. There were thirteen Judges, including Deborah, Gideon, and Samson. We see pictures of the coming Christ through the story of one of the Judges, Samson”; Steve Matthewson, “Preaching the Gospel in Judges,” (February 27, 2011), <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/preaching-the-gospel-in-judges/>, stating “I am convinced that preachers can and must preach the gospel from the book of Judges. It is a book about God delivering his people from the mess they create. Yes, the gospel appears in Judges, although it is there in latent form.”

²³ This information is taken from the Agape Bible Study, <https://www.agapebiblestudy.com/charts/Chart%20of%20Judges%20of%20Israel.htm>

Kenizzite convert of the Exodus generation and younger brother of Caleb	and son-in-law of Caleb, and the son of Kenaz, Gentile Kenizzite converts who joined the tribe of Judah. In the conquest of Canaan, Othniel captured Debir. He became the first warrior-Judge of Israel and delivered Israel from the oppression of the Edomites. His family is listed among the clans of Judah.	King of Mesopotamia			Judg 1:9-21 ; 3:1-11 ; 1Chron 4:13
2. Ehud (Benjamin) Son of Gera	Ehud was a left-handed Benjaminite who personally killed Eglon king of Moab and ended Moabite domination of Israel.	Eglon king of Moab, Ammonites and Amalekites	18 years	80 years	Judg 3:12-30
3. Shamgar (tribe ?) His name is not Hebrew. Son of Anath	He killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad. A contemporary of the Judge Deborah: the "Song of Deborah	Philistines	Not given	Not given	Judg 3:31-5:6

	refers to "in the days of Shamgar ben Anath" (Judg 5:6); possibly the son of a mixed marriage.				
4. Deborah/Barak (Deborah = Ephraim and Barak = Naphtali)	Deborah the wife of Lappidoth was a prophetess and a judge. Deborah and her general, Barak (Naphtali), defeated Sisera, the general of the army of Canaanite King Jabin of Hazor at the Battle of Kishon near Mt Tabor. The Song of Deborah (Judg chapter 15) recounts the great victory. Barak is listed among the "Heroes of the Faith" in Heb 11:32 .	Jabin, Canaanite king of Hazor Sisera, general and vassal of Jabin; may have been a Hittite	20 years	40 years	Judg 4:1-5:31 ; 1 Sam 12:11 ; Heb 11:32
5. Gideon (Manasseh) Son of Joash of Abiezer	The Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon at Ophrah. Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal. Seeking	Midianites Amalekites "People of the East"	7 years	40 years	Jud 6:1-8:32 Heb 11:32

	<p>confirmation of God's will, Gideon put out a fleece twice for a sign. On God's command he reduced the size of his army from 32,000 to 300 and successfully routed the Midianite army. He took revenge on the men of Succoth and Penuel for not giving his army bread. He killed the Midianite kings Zebah and Zalmunna in revenge for the killing of his brothers at the battle of Mt. Tabor. Later, he made a gold ephod that led the people into idolatry. Mentioned among the "heroes of the faith" in Heb 11:32.</p>				
<p>6. Tola (Issachar) Son of Puah; grandson of Dodo</p>	<p>Tola was probably from one of the leading clans of Issachar (Gen</p>			<p>He judged Israel 23 years</p>	<p>Judg 10:1, 2</p>

	46:13 ; Num 26:23) but lived at Shamir in the territory of Ephraim.				
7. Jair (Gilead-Manasseh)	Jair may have been a descendant of the same Jair who distinguished himself during the days of Moses and Joshua (see Num 32:41 ; Dt 3:14 ; Josh 13:30 ; 1 Kng 4:13 ; 1Chr 2:21). He had 30 sons who were itinerant judges.			22 years	Judg 10:3-5
8. Jephthah (Gilead-Manasseh in Transjordan) Son of Gilead by a harlot (Judges 11:1)	Jephthah was the son of Gilead by a harlot and was driven away by his half-brothers. The elders of Gilead brought him back and made him their chief at Mizpah. Jephthah refused to give up Gilead to the Ammonites. He fought the Ammonites and conquered	Philistines Ammonites Civil war with the tribe of Ephraim	18 years (Judges 10:8)	6 years	Judg 10:6-12:7 ; Heb 11:32

	<p>some 20 cities. The swearing of a foolish vow cost him his daughter's life. He initiated a civil war with the Israelite tribe of Ephraim. Mentioned among the "heroes of the faith" in Heb 11:32.</p>				
9. Ibzan (Judah)	<p>Ibzan was a socially prominent man who had 30 sons and 30 daughters for whom he arranged marriages. Jewish tradition identifies him with Boaz of Bethlehem-Judah.</p>			7 years	Josh 19:15 Judg 12:8-10
10. Elon (Zebulun)	<p>He was buried at Aijalon in Zebulun.</p>			10 years	Judg 12:11, 12
11. Abdon (Ephraim) Son of Hillel	<p>Abdon, the son of Hillel was a man of wealth and prominence. He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons. He was a native of Pirathon</p>			8 years	Judg 12:13-15

	(near Shechem) and was buried there.				
12. Samson (Dan) Son of Manoah	An angel announced Samson's birth. He was consecrated as a Nazarite from birth (Num chapter 6). He had a fatal fondness for Philistine women. Samson was a man of immense strength: he killed a lion with his hands; he killed 30 Philistines at Ashkelon, and a "thousand" with a jawbone of an ass. Other amazing deeds included using 300 foxes to burn the grain fields of the Philistines and carrying off the city gate of Gaza. Samson was conquered by a Philistine girl, Delilah, who discovered that his uncut	Philistines	40 years	20 years	Judg 13:1-16:31 ; Heb 11:32

	hair was the source of his strength. He was blinded and imprisoned at Gaza. He called out to God who allowed his strength to return. He pulled down the Temple of Dagon killing himself and about 3,000 Philistines. Mentioned among the "heroes of the faith" in Heb 11:32 .				
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Chapter Three:

The *Shophetim* prefigure the Spirit of Messianism within Judaism²⁴

The shophetim (i.e., the judges) within the Book of Judges prefigure the Messiah and the spirit of messianism (“justice and judgment”)²⁵ that later evolved within the ancient Hebrew religion.

Now the anointed House of David, through which the Messiah would come, was generated through hands of a humble Moabite handmaiden named Ruth “**in the days when the judges ruled.**”²⁶

According to the Thomas Nelson King James Bible:

Ruth is a cameo story of love, devotion, and redemption set in the dark context of the days of the judges. It is the story of a Moabite woman who forsakes her pagan heritage in order to cling to the people of Israel and to the God of Israel. Because of her faithfulness in a time of national faithlessness, God rewards her by giving her a new

²⁴ Chapter five is an addendum added February 8, 2024.

²⁵ See 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.

²⁶ Ruth 1:1.

husband (Boaz), a son (Obed), and a privileged position in the lineage of David and Christ (she is the great-grandmother of David).²⁷

The Book of Ruth thus states, “[n]ow these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.”²⁸

The Gospel of Matthew traces this same lineage as follows: “Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; and Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; and Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naason begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; ad Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king....”²⁹ This gospel concludes this lineage as follows: “And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”³⁰

Hence, the theological and political idea of “raising up of a deliverer” to lead the tribes of Israel—as in the days of the Judges of ancient Israel—laid the foundation of the theological idea of *Messianism* within Hebrew religion and political theory.

During the time when King Herod (an Edomite) had usurped the throne of ancient Judea, through Roman sponsorship and intrigue, and when Caesar Augustus reigned, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

In the spirit of the Book of Judges, the Gospel of Matthew carries forward the fundamental messianic theme that God had again raised up a deliver for Israel—Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Christ.

²⁷ *King James Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Pub., 2017), p. 380.

²⁸ Ruth 4: 18-22.

²⁹ Matthew 1: 2-6.

³⁰ Matthew 1:16.

Chapter Four:

The *Shophetim* prefigure the *First Coming* of Christ and the Christian Church

The shophetim (i.e., the judges) within the Book of Judges prefigure the “First Coming” of Jesus Christ and His *present-day reign* through the Christian Church on earth today.

According to Augustine of Hippo, and in Reformed theology, the saints (i.e., the universal visible and invisible Church proper) reigns with Christ even now.³¹

“[E]ven now,” wrote Augustine, “His saints reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter.... It is then of this kingdom militant, in which conflict with the enemy is still maintained, and war carried on with warring lusts, or government laid upon them as they yield, until we come to that most peaceful kingdom in which we shall reign without an enemy.... The Church, then, begins its reign with Christ now in the living and in the dead.”³²

During this present reign with Christ, Augustine says that the Church sits in the seats of rulers and issues judgment, to wit:

For, after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to **give a sketch of what the church does** or of **what is done in the Church** in those days, the words, ‘And I saw seats and them that **sat upon them and judgment was given.**’ It is not to be supposed that this refers to the last judgment, but to seats of the rulers and to the rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed....³³

For just as God anointed the *shophetim*, and ruled ancient Israel through them, so too has He anointed his saints and the Church, even now, at this very hour, and currently rules the entire earth through them.³⁴

³¹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 725-728 (“What the reign of the saints with Christ for a thousand years is, and how it differs from the eternal kingdom”).

³² Ibid., p. 726.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 725- 728. See, also, Matthew 25: 19-20.

Hence, according to Augustine of Hippo, the Christian Church proper, as it now exists, is called the “*kingdom militant*,”³⁵ because of its present-day “*military duty*.”³⁶ Of course, the Christian methods of warfare are distinct and radically different—but it is nevertheless warfare.³⁷

Indeed, in the Book of Judges, we find many military campaigns of the several shophetims, against many surrounding oppressive nations.

These judges’ military prowess and vengeance reflect a sort of “biblical virtue” in exercising the civil sword to achieve and effectuate divine justice—as in the nature of the patriarch Abraham who avenged the captivity of his nephew Lot, through the civil sword,³⁸ and was subsequently visited by the Melchizedek, a priest of the most high God and king of Salem, and who “brought forth bread and wine” (Genesis 14: 18-20).

Notably, the House of Abraham and its seed (i.e., “his children and his household after him”) shall “do justice and judgment” (Genesis 18: 18-19), and this theme is reflected in the Book of Judges.

In other words, the judges in ancient Israel were like the patriarch Abraham who has a special divine *anointing*. So, too, the Christian *saints*—who are themselves judges—have received this same anointing. This divine anointing makes them “like Christ” or as “a type of Christ.”³⁹

³⁵ Ibid., p. 726.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 730 (“And consequently wherever the Church shall be... there also shall be the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the savage persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it in all nations—that is, it shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and shut up in the straits of tribulation, but shall not desert its military duty, which is signified by the word ‘camp.’”).

³⁷ See, e.g., Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1905), pp. 78-99 (“Jesus’ Method of Government”... “The doctrine of Jesus is not the doctrine of passive obedience; it is the doctrine of passive resistance. And it is this doctrine of passive resistance that is the great original doctrine that Jesus has contributed to moral science.... His whole life was not a life of obedience, but of rebellion against existing conditions and established authorities.... And it is with His method of warfare that this saying, ‘Resist not evil,’ has to do—do not resist evil with evil... but overcome evil with good....”)

See, also, Matthew 20: 25-28 (servant leadership).

See, also, Revelation 1: 6 (royal and priestly nature of all Christian believers).

³⁸ Genesis 14: 17 (“...the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh....”).

³⁹ See, e.g., Frank Alonge, “The Footprints of Jesus Christ in the Book of Judges,” (June 3, 2023), <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/footprints-jesus-christ-book-judges-frank-alonge/>, stating, “The Book of Judges is a captivating account of Israel’s tumultuous journey through a cycle of disobedience, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. While the book primarily focuses on the judges whom God raised up to lead His people, it also contains

In Reformed or Augustinian theology, this same analogy is made with respect to the universal, catholic Church of Jesus Christ—like the shophetim, the saints of Christ *currently reigns* with the primary objective “to do justice and judgment” in the earth.⁴⁰

For this reason, this paper holds that the judges of ancient Israel symbolize the divine nature of civil polity as well as the divine function of governance.⁴¹

subtle yet profound foreshadowings of Jesus Christ”; Stephanie Solberg, “Finding Jesus in the Book of Judges: Sampson,” (January 8, 2021), <https://makinghimknown.tv/finding-jesus-in-the-book-of-judges/>, stating, “[t]he Judges of early Israel were not judges in the way we think of judges, that is, law deciders. Instead, they were deliverers, chosen by the LORD to protect and deliver the Israelites. There were thirteen Judges, including Deborah, Gideon, and Samson. We see pictures of the coming Christ through the story of one of the Judges, Samson”; Steve Matthewson, “Preaching the Gospel in Judges,” (February 27, 2011), <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/preaching-the-gospel-in-judges/>, stating “I am convinced that preachers can and must preach the gospel from the book of Judges. It is a book about God delivering his people from the mess they create. Yes, the gospel appears in Judges, although it is there in latent form.”

⁴⁰ 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 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.

⁴¹ 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”); p. 699 (“a republic cannot be administered without justice”); pp. 158, 319, and 476, (“[T]hat God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominions and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence”); and, p. 682 (“[W]ill **a wise judge** take his seat on the bench or no? Beyond question he will. For human society, which he thinks it a wickedness to abandon, constrains him and compels him to this duty.”)

See, e.g., 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), pp. 376-377 (stating that the great English jurist and cleric Henry de Bracton, “in his exposition of Romans xiii., had said: ‘He is called a king for ruling righteously, and not because he reigns. Wherefore he is a king when he governs with justice, but a tyrant when he oppresses the people committed to his charge.’”)

See, e.g., Martin Luther, *Temporal Authority: To What Extent it should be Obeyed* (1523)(“ [W]e must provide a sound basis for the civil law and sword so no one will doubt that it is in the world by God's will and ordinance.... The law of this temporal sword has existed from the beginning of the world.... 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.”).

Chapter Five:

The *Shophetim* prefigure the *Second Coming* of Christ

In Reformed theology, the shophetim also prefigure the “Second Coming” of Jesus Christ, who shall administer the Last Judgment and exercise God’s ultimate jurisdiction and judgment upon every nation upon earth.⁴²

As described in the Book of Revelation, all the nations of the earth⁴³-- like ancient Israel had done throughout the 400-year period within the Book of Judges— have “*set aside God’s law and in its place substituted ‘that which was right in his own eyes’*” (Judges 21:25).⁴⁴

See, e.g., founder of the first Baptist Church in North America, Roger Williams (1603 - 1683), who published *The Bloudy Tenet of Persecution* (Miami, Fla.: Hardpress, 2019), p. 332 (stating, 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.”)

Finally, see Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 23. “Of the Civil Magistrate,” citing Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14, to wit:

God, the Supreme Lord and King of all the world, **hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the people, for his own glory and the public good**, and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil-doers....

It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, [a] to honor their persons, [b] to pay them tribute and other dues, [c] to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience’ sake. [d] Infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the magistrate’s just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him:e from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; [f] much less hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretense whatsoever.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Revelation 17:1-18 (“The Mystery of the Woman and the Beast”). This subtitle is found within The King James Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Pub., 2017), pp. 1614-1615.

⁴⁴ This paraphrase was taken from introductory section to the Book of Judges that is within The King James Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Pub., 2017), p. 343.

Stated differently, like ancient Israel which failed to keep the “book of the law,”⁴⁵ the nations of the earth, as recounted in the Book of Revelation, have failed to keep the eternal, natural, and moral laws of the most High God.

Therefore, in Reformed theology,⁴⁶ just as God raised up judges to lead, guide, and liberate the children of ancient Israel, **so, too, shall God raise up his Christ, who shall reign through his body the Church,**⁴⁷ to liberate a restored Israel whose citizens are disbursed throughout the nations.⁴⁸

Thus, in Reformed eschatology, Jesus of Nazareth will be the last great Shophet of a restored Israel, as “the Son of Man” who is described in the Book of Daniel,⁴⁹ the Gospel of Matthew,⁵⁰ and in the Book of Revelation,⁵¹ as typified in the persons of the thirteen judges within the *Book of Judges*.

⁴⁵ Joshua 1:8 (“**This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein....**”)

⁴⁶ See, e.g., “The Book of Judges and the People of God,” Reformed Theological Seminary, pod cast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2Bh1la1p2w>. (“Drs. Ligon Duncan and Miles Van Pelt dialogue about how the book of Judges fits into the redemptive story and how its message warns those within the covenant community.” [In this lecture, Dr. Miles Van Pelt states, “**the judges point us to Christ.**”])

⁴⁷ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 725 – 728.

⁴⁸ See, e.g., Frank Alonge, “The Footprints of Jesus Christ in the Book of Judges,” (June 3, 2023), <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/footprints-jesus-christ-book-judges-frank-alonge/>, stating, “The Book of Judges is a captivating account of Israel’s tumultuous journey through a cycle of disobedience, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. While the book primarily focuses on the judges whom God raised up to lead His people, it also contains subtle yet profound foreshadowings of Jesus Christ”; Stephanie Solberg, “Finding Jesus in the Book of Judges: Sampson,” (January 8, 2021), <https://makinghimknown.tv/finding-jesus-in-the-book-of-judges/>, stating, “[t]he Judges of early Israel were not judges in the way we think of judges, that is, law deciders. Instead, they were deliverers, chosen by the LORD to protect and deliver the Israelites. There were thirteen Judges, including Deborah, Gideon, and Samson. We see pictures of the coming Christ through the story of one of the Judges, Samson”; Steve Matthewson, “Preaching the Gospel in Judges,” (February 27, 2011), <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/preaching-the-gospel-in-judges/>, stating “I am convinced that preachers can and must preach the gospel from the book of Judges. It is a book about God delivering his people from the mess they create. Yes, the gospel appears in Judges, although it is there in latent form.”

⁴⁹ Daniel 7:13-14

⁵⁰ Matthew 25: 31-32.

⁵¹ Revelation 22:12-16.

Chapter Six:

“The Shophetim prefigure Present-day Civil Magistrates”

Finally, in Reformed theology, the shophetim in the Book of Judges represent all civil magistrates upon the earth who are “the minister of God” and “God’s minister.”⁵²

The Book of the Judges teach us that the duty of all civil magistrates of the world is to rule and to judge in accordance with divine Providence⁵³ — otherwise, there will be negative political, social, and constitutional consequences.

According to Augustine of Hippo, Christians have a duty to judge, and to participate in the administration of the civil polity. (“[W]ill **a wise judge** take his seat on the bench or no?” asked Augustine. “Beyond question he will. For human society, which he thinks it a wickedness to abandon, constrains him and compels him to this duty.”)⁵⁴

According to Augustine, the human act of “judging” was part and parcel of the divine mandate to exercise dominion upon the earth (i.e., the dominion covenant given to Adam and Noah), to wit:

This is why the statement in the plural, ‘Let us make man,’ is also connected with the statement in the singular, ‘and god made man. Thus it is said in the plural, ‘after our likeness,’ and then in the singular, ‘after the image of God.’ Man is thus transformed into the knowledge of God, according to the image of him who created him. And now, having been made spiritual, he judges all things—that is, all things that are appropriate to be judged... **Now this phrase, ‘he judges all things,’ means that man has dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all cattle and wild**

⁵² Romans 13: 4, 6. See, also, R.C. Sproul, “Learning from the Judges” (October 25, 2016) <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/learning-judges> (“Certain periods of history stand out to me as particularly instructive for the course of all of history. That is, sometimes we can zero in on one period of time in the past, observe how the entire span of human history recapitulates that particular period, and then learn from that period what we should do today. One of these instructive periods is the period of the judges of Israel.”)

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ See, also, St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 682; see, also, p. 678 (“justice, whose office it is to render every man his due”); p. 699 (“a republic cannot be administered without justice”); pp. 158, 319, and 476, (“[T]hat God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominions and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence”).

beasts, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. And he does this **by the power of reason in his mind...**⁵⁵

Augustine held that the duty given to Abraham and his Household to keep the way of the LORD, which is “to do justice and judgment” was clearly a universal duty that had been imposed upon all nations, to wit:

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.⁵⁶

Augustine certainly felt this duty to do judgment and justice was an extension of divine Providence over all nations.

In *The City of God*, Augustine attempted to provide a comprehensive answer to the seminal and perennial question: How should earthly civil governments prevent vice and tyranny from proliferating?⁵⁷ According to Augustine, the Roman empire had fallen because of its own unchecked vices and wickedness.⁵⁸ Given Rome’s example, Augustine felt that the churches of Jesus Christ could co-exist with all the different forms of human government in the earth, but that they should also catechize (or encourage) civil magistrates in every nation “to do justice and judgment” (i.e., general equity).⁵⁹ Augustine also felt that individual Christians,

⁵⁵ Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Nobles Classics, 2007), pp. 248 – 249.

⁵⁶ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 572-573,

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 60-73 (“That the Christian religion is health-giving” “An exhortation to the Romans to renounce paganism”).

⁵⁸ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 126-132.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 178 (“What was the happiness of the Christian emperors, and how far it was true happiness”; “Concerning the prosperity which God granted to the Christian emperor Constantine.”).

whenever possible, should also participate in the civil government and hold responsible positions of authority.

Hence, while commenting on the rise and fall of the Roman empire, Augustine of Hippo wrote “that the truth is, that [a republic] cannot be governed without the most absolute justice.”⁶⁰ General equity is coterminous with the “laws of Nature,” which Augustine had described as being a law of “peace.”⁶¹ Augustine wrote that “the universal peace which the law of nature preserves through all disturbances, and by which everyone reaches his desert in a way regulated by the just Judge.”⁶²

In other words, “[t]he peace of all things is the tranquility of order.”⁶³ The “law of nature,” Augustine wrote, is “universal peace” and “the natural order of things.”⁶⁴ For instance, civil discord denotes the absence of peace between citizens within a body politic. Private disputation and conflict reflect the absence of concord between man and man. Domestic discord reflects the absence of “domestic peace” between family members. Augustine felt that civil discord was often caused by various vices, which, if left unchecked, could lead to catastrophic forms of bad government.

In his *Commentaries on the Bible*, the Reformed theologian John Calvin describes the duty and function of judging in Genesis 18:19 (“to do justice and judgment”) as being very broadly applicable to the heads families, civil magistrates, and to all those persons who are in authority, stating:

When Moses adds, **to do justice and judgment**, he briefly shows the nature of the way of the Lord, which he had before mentioned. This, however, is not a complete definition; but from the duties of the Second Table, he briefly shows, by the figure synecdoche, **what God chiefly requires of us**. And it is not unusual in Scripture, to seek a description of a pious and holy life, from the Second Table of the Law; not because charity is of more account than the worship of God,

60 St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 61.

61 Ibid., p. 690.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

but because **they who live uprightly and innocently with their neighbors, give evidence of their piety towards God. In the names of justice and judgment he comprehends that equity**, by which to every one is given what is his own. If we would make a distinction, **justice is the name given to the rectitude and humanity which we cultivate with our brethren, when we endeavor to do good to all, and when we abstain from all wrong, fraud, and violence. But judgment is to stretch forth the hand to the miserable and the oppressed, to vindicate righteous causes, and to guard the weak from being unjustly injured.** These are the **lawful exercises** in which the Lord commands his people to be employed.⁶⁵

Like the several judges in the Book of Judges, both Augustine of Hippo concluded that the New Testament Church of today now reigns with Christ in the present world as “judges.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Calvin’s Commentaries on the Bible (Genesis 18:19), https://www.studydrive.net/commentaries/eng/cal/genesis-18.html#google_vignette

⁶⁶ Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 725-728, citing Revelation 20:4). And since the Reformed theologian John Calvin did not write a commentary on the Book of Revelation, but yet considered himself to be an “Augustinian” theologian, we shall close this discussion with a fair assumption that Calvinism is not opposed to Augustine’s interpretation.

Chapter Seven:

“The Shophetim prefigure Puritan Political Theory and American Democracy”⁶⁷

In Reformed theology and political ideology, **true Christian civil polity and ecclesiastical polity are fundamentally constitutional, republican and democratic in nature**⁶⁸—not monarchical.

Now from Joshua up to 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 rulership of these judges of ancient Israel had occurred when there were not kings in Isarel, and to the Puritan-Congregationalists and Presbyterians of the American Revolutionary War period (1775 – 1783), the constitutional example of the ancient Hebrew polity—prior to times of the kings of Israel and Judah—was the proper Christian model for the new American civil polity.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ This chapter was added on February 8, 2024.

⁶⁸ 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).

⁶⁹ 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 serve the 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, 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).

This *constitutional conception* of Puritan and American democracy, and *ecclesiological conception* of the Christian church, are certainly reinforced in the Book of Revelation, where the Scripture says, “Jesus Christ ... hath made us **kings** and **priests** unto God and his Father...”⁷⁰

To Protestant Reformers like Luther and Calvin, this meant that the common man had every right to the sacraments, to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves, and to have a voice and a vote in the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of both Church and State.

⁷⁰ Revelation 1: 5-6.

CONCLUSION

In Reformed theology, the ministry of Joshua, the subsequent *the conquest of ancient Canaan*, and the subsequent ministries of the several shophetim (i.e., judges) of ancient Israel—when there were no kings in Israel— prefigured the prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ and of the Christian religion’s ultimate *conquest of the entire earth*.

These prophetic ministries fulfilled the same promise which God had made to Abraham, namely, that his seed would inherit the land of Canaan forever and bless all the nations upon the earth.

The wars which Moses, Joshua, and the several shophetim fought against the ungodly nations in ancient Canaan, in order to establish the Hebrew Promised Land, *prefigured* the on-going “**spiritual**” **warfare** which the saints and the churches of Jesus Christ continue to fight today against ungodly peoples, nations, and nation states—this is, as Augustine of Hippo says, the “**kingdom militant**.”⁷¹

Significantly, the Promised Land is both a physical place for Abraham’s descendants, as well as **political-theological model** for all peoples and for every nation upon earth. And in both instances, the duty “to do justice and judgment” (Gen. 18: 18-19)—which also implies holiness and obedience to God⁷²—is *sine qua non*.

For these reasons, in colonial New England, during the 1600s and early 1700s, the “covenant” theology of the Puritans⁷³ incorporated this political-

⁷¹ 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). See, also, **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).

⁷² See, e.g., St. Augustine, *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.”)

⁷³ 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

theological model of ancient Israel into their fundamental laws (e.g., the Mayflower Compact of 1620) and their written colonial constitutions (e.g., Fundamental Orders of Connecticut of 1639).⁷⁴

These Calvinistic Puritans— including theologians, pastors, and lawyers— adopted the political-theological model from ancient Israel and laid the foundations for the constitutional democracy of British North America and the new United States.⁷⁵

The Book of Joshua and the Book of the Judges— and their civil and military leadership under God’s divine commandments— clearly supports this Reformed theological position that the Christian religion is designed, at least in part, to *heavily influence*,⁷⁶ if not altogether to regulate, the secular laws and the civil affairs of governments and nations.

Here, the both the Puritan and Jewish conception of the sacred and divine nature of all secular law is vindicated.⁷⁷ The Christian Church that disavows any oversight over, or participation in, the administration of justice in the secular courts, have fundamentally misconceived the present-day reign of Christ—the objective of which, inter alia, is “to do justice and judgment.”⁷⁸

THE END

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.”)

⁷⁴ See, e.g., Jerod S. Auerbach, *Rabbis and Lawyers: The Journey From Torah to Constitution* (New Orleans, LA: Quid Pro Books, 2010), pp. 3-27 (“The Hebrew Bible framed the American experience even before the Puritans first sailed from England in 1630.... The First Amendment did nothing to moderate ‘evangelical civic piety,’ the blending of Protestantism and republicanism that sustained ‘the long spell of Christendom’ in the United States. The amendment did not repudiate the principle of a Christian state; rather, it provided an alternative means toward securing it.”)

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ [See, e.g., Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, "Word of Torah: Why Are There So Many Jewish Lawyers?" The Detroit Jewish News (July 16, 2021), describing Deuteronomy 16:20, as stating "Justice, justice shall you pursue."]

