

**Divine Sovereignty & Davidic Monarchy:
Thoughts on *Malchut Shamayim* in a Democratic Age**

פרשת שופטים תשע"ו

Cong. Rinat Yisrael

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רמב"ן פרשת שופטים - י"ז:ט"ו

ועל דרך הפשט אמרו: שום תשים עליך מלך אשר יבחר ה' אלהיך בו, ולא אשר שנה ה' אלהיך, כי הוא בחר בישראל ולהיות המולך מבחוריו ולא מקרב העמים אשר שנה. ודעתי בדרך הפשט, כי טעם "אשר יבחר" שכל מולך על עמים מאת האלהים היא לו, כענין שכתוב (דניאל ד כט): "די שליט עלאה במלכות אנשא ולמאן די יצבא יתננה". וכך אמרו (ב"ב צא) אפילו ריש גרותא מן שמיא מוקמי ליה. יאמר "שום תשים עליך מלך, כל אשר יהיה נגזר מן השמים שימלוך, ואם הוא מקטני שבטי ישראל ומשפחתו הצעירה; אבל איש נכרי לא תמליך עליך לעולם". וכן על דרך הפשט "המקום אשר יבחר ה' אלהיך בו", כל שיבנו שם בית המקדש לה', הכל מרצון ה'.

רמב"ן פרשת ויחי - מ"ט:י

...אבל ענינו, שלא יסור שבט מיהודה אל אחד מאחיו, כי מלכות ישראל המושל עליהם ממנו יהיה, ולא ימשול אחד מאחיו עליו. וכן לא יסור "מחוקק מבין רגליו", שכל מחוקק בישראל אשר בידו טבעת המלך, ממנו יהיה, כי הוא ימשול ויצוה בכל ישראל, ולו חותם המלכות, "עד כי יבא שילה ולו יקתה כל העמים" לעשות בכלם כרצונו, וזהו המשיח, כי: "השבט" ירמוז לדוד שהוא המלך הראשון אשר לו שבט מלכות, ו"שילה" הוא בנו אשר לו יקתה העמים.

...וזה היה עונש החשמונאים, שמלכו בבית שני, כי היו חסידי עליון, ואלמלא הם נשתכחו התורה והמצות מישראל, ואף על פי כן נענשו עונש גדול, כי ארבעת בני חשמונאי הזקן החסידים המולכים זה אחר זה, עם כל גבורתם והצלחתם, נפלו ביד אויביהם בחרב, והגיע העונש בסוף למה שאמרו רז"ל (בבא בתרא ג א): "כל מאן דאמר מבית חשמונאי קאתינא עבדא הוא", שנכרתו כלם בעון הזה. ואף על פי שהיה בזרע שמעון עונש מן הצדוקים, אבל כל זרע מתתיה חשמונאי הצדיק לא עברו אלא בעבור זה שמלכו ולא היו מזרע יהודה ומבית דוד, והסירו השבט והמחוקק לגמרי, והיה עונשם מדה כנגד מדה, שהמשיל הקדוש ברוך הוא עליהם את עבדיהם והם הכריתום.

...הנה, שנו בכאן שאין מושחין מלכים מן הכהנים בני אהרן. ופירש תחלה שהוא לכבוד יהודה, שאין השררה סרה מן השבט ההוא. ולפיכך, אף על פי שישראל מקימים עליהם מלך משאר השבטים כפי צורך השעה, אין מושחים אותן שלא יהיה עליהם הוד מלכות אלא כמו שופטים ושוטרים יהיו. והזכירו הכהנים, שאף על פי

שהן בעצמן ראויים למשיחה, אין מושחין אותן לשם מלכות, וכל שכן שאר השבטים, וכמו שאמרו בגמרא (הוריות יא) שאין מושחין אלא מלכי בית דוד. ורבי חייא בר אבא פירש, שהוא מנוע מן התורה שלא יהיה לכהנים הלויים כל שבט לוי חלק ונחלה במלכות, והוא דבר ראוי והגון.

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים ומלחמות פרק י"א

הלכה א

המלך המשיח עתיד לעמד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד לישנה לממשלה הראשונה. ובונה המקדש ומקבץ נדחי ישראל. וחוזרין כל המשפטים בנימיו כשהיו מקדם. מקריבין קרבנות. ועושין שמטין ויובלות ככל מצותן האמורה בתורה. וכל מי שאינו מאמין בו. או מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו. לא בשאר נביאים בלבד הוא כופר. אלא בתורה ובמשה רבנו. שהרי התורה העידה עליו שנגאמר (דברים ל, ג) "ושב ה' אליהו את שביתך ורחמך ושב וקבצך" וגו' (דברים ל, ד) "אם יהנה נדחה בקצה השמים" וגו' (דברים ל, ה) "וקבצך ה'". ואלו הדברים המפורשים בתורה הם כוללים כל הדברים שנגאמרו על ידי כל הנביאים. אף בפרשת בלעם נאמר ושם נבא בשני המשיחים. במשיח הראשון שהוא דוד שהושיע את ישראל מיד צריהם. ובמשיח האחרון שעומד מבניו שמושיע את ישראל [באחרונה]. ושם הוא אומר (במדבר כד, יז) "אראנו ולא עתה" זה דוד. (במדבר כד, יז) "אשורנו ולא קרוב" זה מלך המשיח. (במדבר כד, יז) "דרה פוכב מיצקב" זה דוד. (במדבר כד, יז) "וקם שבט מישראל" זה מלך המשיח. (במדבר כד, יז) "ומחץ פאתי מואב" זה דוד. וכן הוא אומר (שמואל ב ה, ב) "ויף את מואב וימדדם בתבל" (במדבר כד, יז) "וקרקר כל בני שת" זה המלך המשיח שנגאמר בו (זכריה ט, י) "ומשלו מים עד ים". (במדבר כד, יח) "והנה אדום ירשה" זה דוד. שנגאמר (שמואל ב ה, יד) "ויהי אדום לדוד לעבדים" וגו'. (במדבר כד, יח) "והנה ירשה" וגו' זה המלך המשיח שנגאמר (עובדיה א, כא) "ועלו מושעים בהר ציון" וגו'.

The King the Messiah (lit. the annointed) will stand up and return the Kingdom of the house of David to its old [glory], to the first rule, and build the Temple (lit. holy), and gather the scattered ones of the Israel, and return all of the laws in his days as they were before; bringing sacrifices, and making shmitahs (leaving the land fallow in the seventh year) and jubilees like all of the commandments that it says in the Torah. And anyone who does not believe in him, or does not anticipate his arrival, it is not only in the other prophets that he is denying but in the Torah and in Moses our teacher; because the Torah testifies on him [the Messiah] as it says "and Hashem your Lord will return your captives and your pitied ones, and return and gather . . . if you scattered ones are at the end of the heavens . . . and Hashem will bring them to you. (Deuteronomy 30:5)" And these express words in the Torah they include all of the things that were said by the hand of all of the prophets. Even in the piece about Bilam it is said, and there he prophesied about the two messiahs--about the first messiah who is David who saved Israel from their enemies and from the *last* messiah who will arise from his children who will save Israel [in the end]. And there it says, "I will see him, but not now,(Number 24:17)"--that's David. "I will behold him, but not nearby,"--that's the King Messiah. "A star will come from Jacob"--that's David. "And a

scepter-bearer will arise out of Israel"--that's the King Messiah. "He will strike the corners of Moab"--that's David." And so it says "And he defeated Moab and measured them with a cord (2 Samuel 8:2)." "...and destroy all the sons of Seth (Numbers 24:17)"--that's the King Messiah, as it is said about him "And his reign will be from sea to sea (Zachariah 9:10). "And Edom will be an inheritance (Numbers 24:18)"--that's David, as it is said, "And Edom were slaves to David (2 Samuel 8:14)", etc. "And it will be an inheritance, etc. (Numbers 24:18)" --that's the King Messiah, as it is said, "Saviors will ascend Mount Zion (Ovadia 1:21)", etc

Chazron:

Therefore we put our hope in You, HASHEM, our God, that we may soon see Your mighty splendor,* to remove detestable idolatry from the earth, and false gods will be utterly cut off, to perfect the universe through the Almighty's sovereignty. Then all humanity will call upon Your Name,* to turn all the earth's wicked toward You.* All the world's inhabitants will recognize and know* that to You every knee should bend, every tongue should swear. Before You, HASHEM, our God, they will bend every knee and cast themselves down and to the glory of Your Name they will render homage, and they will all accept upon themselves the yoke of Your kingship that You may reign over them soon and eternally. For the kingdom is Yours and You will reign for all eternity in glory as it is written in Your Torah: HASHEM shall reign for all eternity.* And it is said: He gazes at no

iniquity in Jacob* and sees no evil schemes in Israel; HASHEM his God is with him, and the friendship of the King is in him.* And it is said: And He became King in Jeshurun when the leaders of the people assembled, the tribes of Israel together.*

In Your Holy Writings the following is written: For the sovereignty is HASHEM's and He rules over nations.* And it is said: HASHEM will have reigned, He will have donned grandeur; He will have donned might and girded Himself; even firm the world that it should not falter.* And it is said: Raise up your heads, O gates, and be uplifted, you everlasting entrances,* so that the King of Honor may enter.* Who is this King of Honor? — HASHEM, the mighty and strong, HASHEM, the strong in battle.*

Raise up your heads, O gates, and raise up, you everlasting entrances,* so that the King of Honor may enter. Who then is the King of Honor? HASHEM, Master of hosts, He is the King of Honor.* Selah!

And through Your servants, the Prophets, the following is written: So said HASHEM, the King of Israel and its Redeemer: HASHEM, Master of hosts:* "I am the first and I am the last and aside from Me there is no [other] god."* And it is said: The saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge Esau's mountain and the kingdom will be HASHEM's. And it is said: Then HASHEM will be King over all the world, on that day HASHEM will be One and His Name will be One. And in Your Torah it is written as follows: Hear, O Israel: HASHEM is our God, HASHEM, the One and Only.*

ignity, as opposed to verses that describe His sovereignty over Israel alone (see Rashi there s.v. יתן). In light of this limitation, it is difficult to understand how this

Chazron:

על כן נקנה לך יהוה אלהינו לדמות מהרה בתפארת ענה, להעביר גזולים מן הארץ, והאלילים קרות יקרתנו. לתארן עולם במלכות שדני. וכל בני קשד יקרא בשמחה, להפגות אליו כל רשעי ארץ. יקירו וידעו כל יושבי תבל, כי לך תכרע כל ברה, תשבע כל לשון. למקרה יהוה אלהינו יכרעו ויפלו, ולקבוד שמך יקרו יתנו. ויקבלו כלם את על מלכותך, ותמלך עליהם מהרה לעולם ועד. כי המלכות שלך היא ולעולמי עד תמלוך בקבוד, בכתוב בתורתך: יהוה ימלך לעולם ועד. ונאמר: לא הביט

אנו ביעקב, ולא נאה עמל בישדאל; יהוה אלהיו עמו, ותרועת מלך בו. ונאמר: ניהי בישדון מלך, ביהונאסף ראשי עם, יחד שבטי ישדאל.

וידבר יי קדשך כתוב לאמר: כי ליהוה המלוכה ומושל בגוים. ונאמר: יהוה מלך נאמת לבש, לבש יהוה, עו התאזר, אף תכון תכל כל תמוט. ונאמר: שאו שערים ראשיכם, והנשאו פתחי עולם, ויבא מלך הכבוד. מי זה מלך הכבוד, יהוה עוזו וגבור, יהוה גבור מלחמה.

שאו שערים ראשיכם, ושאו פתחי עולם, ויבא מלך הכבוד. מי הוא זה מלך הכבוד, יהוה צבאות, הוא מלך הכבוד סלה.

ועל יי עבדך הנביאים כתוב לאמר: כה אמר יהוה, מלך ישדאל ונאלו, יהוה צבאות, אני ראשון ואני אחרון, ומבלעני אין אלהים. ונאמר: ועלו מושיעים בחד ציון לשפט את הד עשו, והיתה ליהוה המלוכה. ונאמר: והיה יהוה למלך על כל הארץ, ביום ההוא יהיה יהוה אחד ושמו אחד. ובתורתך כתוב לאמר: שמע ישדאל, יהוה אלהינו, יהוה אחד.

The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology
by Oliver O'Donovan (Cambridge University Press, 1999)

The question is, what does this paradoxical redeployment of political description ... intend to achieve? Is it meant to be the start of a new mode of political thinking? Or is it, on the contrary, a stratagem for overwhelming politics with religion, shrewdly converting the language of politics into a grand religious metaphor? When we call God 'King of kings and Lord of lords and only ruler of princes', does that place the public business of our human communities upon a surer foundation? Or does it cancel it out, turning the language of political power back against itself, so allowing us to conceive of a God above and beyond politics? The name 'political theology' is generally given to proposals of the first kind, which draw out an earthly political discourse from the political language of religious discourse. These proposals understand themselves as part of the 'postmodern' current in theology, in opposition to a traditional 'modernity' (Enlightenment and especially Kantian) to which the second line of interpretation belongs.

To avoid caricature, let us be clear that political theology does not suppose a literal synonymy between the political vocabulary of salvation and the secular use of the same political terms. It postulates an analogy – not a rhetorical metaphor only, or a poetic image, but an analogy grounded in reality – between acts of God and human acts, both of them taking place within the one public history which is the theatre of God's saving purposes and mankind's social undertakings. The Kingdom of God is not a mere kingdom, but it is a real kingdom. The point is not to reduce the semantic range of speech about God's acts to the limits of our commonplace political discussion – *that* would be reductionism indeed! – but to push back the horizon of commonplace politics and open it up to the activity of God. Earthly events of liberation, rule and community-foundation provide us with partial indications of what God is doing in human history; while, correspondingly, we must look to the horizon of God's redemptive purposes if we are to grasp the full meaning of political events that pass before our eyes. Theology needs more than scattered political images; it needs a full political conceptuality. And politics, for its part, needs a theological conceptuality....

Equally, the alternative to political theology does not intend to banish politics from human discourse. It means simply to keep the types of discourse distinct, so that the one does not contaminate the other. Yet politics may, and indeed does, serve as a source of religious imagery, part of that broken glass whose reflections the soul transcends as it moves on and up towards the divine glory. And religion may and does shape politics through carefully guarded channels of influence that preserve a cordon sanitaire. Ethics, especially an ethics of interior motivation, provides a safe mediation, insulated against theocratic misunderstanding, by which religion may make politics more honest without presuming to make it more divine.

The renewed advocacy of political theology in our own time has had as its concern to break out of the cordon sanitaire. When that advocacy had been at its clearest, it has insisted that theology is political simply by responding to the dynamics of its own proper themes. They have turned out to know something about the ends of politics, and perhaps about the means, too, without needing to be told. It is not a question of adapting to alien requirements or subscribing to external agenda, but of letting theology be true to its task and freeing it from a forced and unnatural detachment. Rule out the political questions and you cut short the proclamation of God's saving power; you leave people enslaved where they ought to be set free from sin – their own sin and others'.

"Equality" by C.S. Lewis (1943)

I am democrat because I believe in the Fall of Man. I think most people are democrats for the opposite reason. A great deal of democratic enthusiasm descends from the ideas of people like Rousseau, who believed in democracy because they thought mankind so wise and good that everyone deserved a share in the government. The danger of defending democracy on those grounds is that they're not true. ...I find that they're not true without looking further than myself. I don't deserve a share in governing a hen-roost, much less a nation. Nor do most people—all the people who believe advertisements, and think in catchwords and spread rumours. The real reason for democracy is just the reverse. Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows. Aristotle said that some people were only fit to be slaves. I do not contradict him. But I reject slavery because I see no men fit to be masters.

This introduces a view of equality rather different from that in which we have been trained. I do not think that equality is one of those things (like wisdom or happiness) which are good simply in themselves and for their own sakes. I think it is in the same class as medicine, which is good because we are ill, or clothes which are good because we are no longer innocent. I don't think the old authority in kings, priests, husbands, or fathers, and the old obedience in subjects, laymen, wives, and sons, was in itself a degrading or evil thing at all. I think it was intrinsically as good and beautiful as the nakedness of Adam and Eve. It was rightly taken away because men became bad and abused it. To attempt to restore it now would be the same error as that of the Nudists. Legal and economic equality are absolutely necessary remedies for the Fall, and protection against cruelty.

But medicine is not good. There is no spiritual sustenance in flat equality. It is a dim recognition of this fact which makes much of our political propaganda sound so thin. We are trying to be enraptured by something which is merely the negative condition of the good life. And that is why the imagination of people is so easily captured by appeals to the craving for inequality, whether in a romantic form of films about loyal courtiers or in the brutal form of Nazi ideology. The tempter always works on some real weakness in our own system of values: offers food to some need which we have starved.

When equality is treated not as a medicine or a safety-gadget but as an ideal we begin to breed that stunted and envious sort of mind which hates all superiority. That mind is the special disease of democracy, as cruelty and servility are the special diseases of privileged societies. It

will kill us all if it grows unchecked. The man who cannot conceive a joyful and loyal obedience on the one hand, nor an unembarrassed and noble acceptance of that obedience on the other, the man who has never even wanted to kneel or to bow, is a prosaic barbarian. But it would be wicked folly to restore these old inequalities on the legal or external plane. Their proper place is elsewhere.

We must wear clothes since the Fall. Yes, but inside, under what Milton called "these troublesome disguises," we want the naked body, that is, the real body, to be alive. We want it, on proper occasions, to appear: in the marriage-chamber, in the public privacy of a men's bathing-place, and (of course) when any medical or other emergency demands. In the same way, under the necessary outer covering of legal equality, the whole hierarchical dance and harmony of our deep and joyously accepted spiritual inequalities should be alive. It is there, of course, in our life as Christians: there, as laymen, we can obey—all the more because the priest has no authority over us on the political level. It is there in our relation to parents and teachers—all the more because it is now a willed and wholly spiritual reverence. It should be there also in marriage.

...We Britons should rejoice that we have contrived to reach much legal democracy (we still need more of the economic) without losing our ceremonial Monarchy. For there, right in the midst of our lives, is that which satisfies the craving for inequality, and acts as a permanent reminder that medicine is not food. Hence a man's reaction to Monarchy is a kind of test. Monarchy can easily be "debunked"; but watch the faces, mark well the accents, of the debunkers. These are the men whose tap-root in Eden has been cut: whom no rumour of the polyphony, the dance, can reach—men to whom pebbles laid in a row are more beautiful than an arch. Yet even if they desire mere equality they cannot reach it. Where men are forbidden to honour a king they honour millionaires, athletes, or film-stars instead: even famous prostitutes or gangsters. For spiritual nature, like bodily nature, will be served; deny it food and it will gobble poison.

And that is why this whole question is of practical importance. Every intrusion of the spirit that says "I'm as good as you" into our personal and spiritual life is to be resisted just as jealously as every intrusion of bureaucracy or privilege into our politics. Hierarchy within can alone preserve egalitarianism without. Romantic attacks on democracy will come again. We shall never be safe unless we already understand in our hearts all that the anti-democrats can say, and have provided for it better than they. Human nature will not permanently endure flat equality if it is extended from its proper political field into the more real, more concrete fields within. Let us wear equality; but let us undress every night.

“King Over All the Earth” - *When God Is Near: On the High Holidays* - Rabbi Yehuda Amital (Koren, 2015)

The Holy One, blessed be He, said: "...Say before Me on Rosh HaShana the *Malkhuyot*, *Zikhronot*, and *Shofarot*: *Malkhuyot* – so that you proclaim Me King over you, and *Zikhronot* – so that your remembrance will rise favorably before Me, and how will you say them? With the shofar. (Rosh HaShana 16a).

In our Rosh HaShana prayers we say the verses of *Malkhuyot*, and the blessing concludes, “King over all the earth ...” What is the significance of this theme of kingship on Rosh HaShana? After all, we refer to God as “King of the universe” in every blessing that we say all year round; the halakha even states (Berakhot 40b) that a blessing that does not mention God’s kingship is not considered a blessing at all.

The answer lies in understanding the meaning of the “kingship” that we mention in our blessings. The word blessings (berakha) means an addition – just like someone who bends a vine (havrakha) down to the ground and covers it with dirt with the intention of having it strike roots and grow a new plant. The person who makes a blessing adds to the strength of God’s heavenly retinue. Of course, God does not require this “added strength”; He is Master of all worlds. But in this world He determined that a blessing has an effect in the heavens, and thereby draws down divine abundance onto the entire world. This principle was fixed at the time of Creation: God’s goodness is brought down through the blessing of mankind (see Responsa of the Rashba V:50-51). Thus, every blessing expresses God’s dominion and His kingship over the world.

The verses of *Malkhuyot* on Rosh HaShana emphasize a different aspect of God’s dominion over the world: His control over free will. The course of human history appears, on its face, independent of God’s rule, Heaven forbid. The casual observer sees God’s hand only where He intervenes dramatically in nature, in earthquakes, floods, and so on. But on Rosh HaShana we declare that God’s dominion extends over those events that are dependent on man’s free will. We declare that God’s involvement that began at the creation of the world continues to operate throughout history, even where man is given free will.

“Like water courses is the king’s heart in the hand of the Lord, He directs it wherever He wishes” (Prov. 21:1). Even the heart of the king falls under the absolute dominion of God. The Midrash teaches:

The account of Creation alludes to Israel’s subjugation to the nations, and to the redeemer, the King Mashiah. “In the beginning God created ... and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and a wind from God moved over the surface of the waters” (Gen. 1:1-2). “Without form” refers to the kingdom of Babylonia; “and void” refers to the kingdom of Media; “and darkness” refers to the kingdom of Greece, which issued harsh decrees; “upon the face of the deep” refers to the wicked kingdom of Edom; “and a wind from God moved” refers to the King Mashiah.” (Pesikta Rabbati 33).

Although the rule over every state lies in the hands of human beings, it is God who dictates the course of history, including the rise and fall of empires. God rules the world, and He brings about the removal of false gods from the world and the perfection of the entire world under God’s sovereignty.