

**STATE AND ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITIES IN RIVALRY: A CRITICAL
SURVEY OF THEOLOGICAL ISSUES ON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF
NATIONS A LA THOMAS HOBBS**

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ABSTRACT

State and Ecclesiastical Authorities in Rivalry: A Critical Survey of Theological Issues
on the Sovereignty of Nations à la Thomas Hobbes

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This paper addresses theological as well as philosophical issues concerning the rivalry between state and ecclesiastical authorities. A critical study of the influential book *Leviathan: or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (spelling in the original), by the Christian philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), is undertaken. According to Hobbes, a nation is the power of people by a social contract to a person or a collegial body to protect them from mutual infringement.

While Christianity teaches the absolute sovereignty of God, the nation that has become a sovereign state is, to Hobbes, absolutely “sovereign”: Since we have entrusted our power to one sovereign state by contract, each person must obey whatever that the sovereign state does. This is the theory of social contract, which was first proposed by Hobbes. The will of the nation born by the social contract with its citizens is assumed to be absolute. This paper makes an overview of what Hobbes as the father of “autonomous” secular authority wanted to say about “absolute national sovereignty” with a fresh analysis of his own scriptural references recorded in his *Leviathan*.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that the Scripture teaches only relative, God-derived sovereignty of human kings: that is, while relative sovereignty is granted to Biblical human leaders, most importantly, to Abraham, Moses and King Saul, civil authority of sovereign states is not held to be above the cultic (religious) authority, as recorded in the Bible. As *Leviathan* makes important references to Biblical passages

pertinent to the sovereignty of God in connection to human leaders appointed (anointed) by God, theological investigation is made to clarify how the authority of human national leaders (kingship) in the modern era can be derived and evaluated in line with Hobbes. Biblical theology is employed as the main methodological thrust of this paper, to clarify the point that unlike what Hobbes seems to suggest, God granted his grace of forgiveness and deliverance, not absolute sovereignty, to the Biblical human leaders of Israel. Systematic theology as well as church history is applied in the discussion, since the issue of God's sovereignty and its influence on the society (including the contemporary one in the 21st century) deeply relates to these theological sub-disciplines.

As a conclusion, Hobbes's discussion, while rather ambivalent and unclear as to his religious commitment, was still taken, misguidedly, by modern scholars as well as political leaders to be in favor of the absolute sovereignty of secular states. While Hobbes, albeit being ambivalent and unclear, emphasized the absolute and autonomous sovereignty of the kingship of Israel, the relevant Scriptural passages clearly vindicate that human leadership of the people of Israel was always underpinned by the absolute sovereignty of God; put differently, nation states have relative sovereignty which merely reflects God's absolute sovereignty.

Non-Christian "sovereign" states should therefore be assessed by the pre-suppositional viewpoint that the God of Christianity is the only source of absolute authority. We can, however, be hopeful of the eschatological coming of Jesus as the true king, unifying the offices of prophet, priest and king and exerting absolute and gracious authority to all the citizens of His kingdom, or Christians, who have been delivered from any human kingship including illegitimate "sovereign" states.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Setting of a Research Hypothesis

This thesis addresses theological as well as philosophical issues concerning the rivalry between state and ecclesiastical authorities. A critical study of the influential book

Leviathan: or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill, by the Christian philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), is undertaken.

Thomas Hobbes is a famous political philosopher, whose ideas have led to a major movement that has led to civil revolutions around the world. It is also called the origin of democracy. According to Hobbes, a nation is the power of people by a social contract to a person or a collegial body to protect them from mutual infringement.

The nation that has become one is, to Hobbes, absolutely “sovereign.” Since we have entrusted our power to one sovereign state by contract, each person must obey whatever that the sovereign state does. According to him, it is the theory that a social contract was made by consent; hence the will of the nation born by the social contract is assumed to be absolute. This paper makes an overview of what Hobbes as the father of “autonomous” secular authority wanted to say about "absolute national sovereignty" with a fresh analysis of his own scriptural references recorded in his *Leviathan*.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that the Scripture teaches only relative, God-derived sovereignty of human kings: that is, while relative sovereignty is granted to Biblical human leaders, most importantly, to Abraham, Moses and King Saul, civil authority of

sovereign states is not held to be above the cultic (religious) authority in the Bible.¹ As *Leviathan* makes important references to Biblical passages pertinent to sovereignty of God in connection to human leaders, theological investigation will be made to clarify how the authority of human national leaders (kingship) in the modern era has been derived and evaluated. As *Leviathan* makes references to Scriptural passages concerning sovereignty, biblical theology is employed as the main methodological thrust of this paper; systematic theology as well as church history will also be applied in the discussion, since the issue of God's sovereignty and its influence on the society (including the contemporary one in the 21st century) deeply relates to these theological sub-disciplines.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. The remaining part of this chapter makes a literature review of how *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes as a Christian political philosopher has been discussed; then the meaning of the Hebrew term *Leviathan* is addressed. Chapter 2 compares the nature of Abrahamic Covenant, Mosaic Covenant and the anointing of Saul and David as king, from Biblical-study perspectives. Chapter 3 is dedicated to discussing the nature of human kingship and the theological/secular concept of sovereignty from systematic theology. In Chapter 4, Civil and Ecclesiastical authorities are investigated from Church History perspectives. Chapter 5 makes a Christian assessment of the sovereignty of non-Christian states in the contemporary world. Lastly, Chapter 6 concludes this thesis with a succinct summary and a statement for the hypothesis.

¹Even before Abraham, Moses and Saul, Adam and Eve (in Genesis 2 and 3) were commissioned, as a family (or household), which is an archetype of a clan or a nation, to rule the earth with "sovereignty."

1.2 Literature review of Hobbes' s work as the father of modern democracy

Thomas Hobbes is a medieval person, and he was not the first to have discussed the nature of human society. The issue of sovereignty of human kingdom has a lot to do with St. Augustine's *City of God*². City of Man and the City of God are put in contrast: the former has the innate nature of the love of self, while the latter is characterized by the love of God and love of others. St. Augustine's overall thesis that Rome as an earthly City of God should embrace the revelation of the Bible in addition to the wisdom of Greek philosophy, in order to become a City of God even as an earthly kingdom. Hobbes

The medieval Christian Reformer John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Calvin, 1560) makes a systematic treatment of the role of civil governments, serving as a reference point for assessing Hobbes's theological discussion (a little over 100 years after Calvin) on the sovereignty of secular states.

Hobbes's *Leviathan* (first written in 1651) comes into the picture at the dawn of the English Enlightenment, when things (natural as well as social) started to be explained without reference to Christian God. This is the primary source book used in the thesis. Importantly, while Hobbes's logic on the primacy of civil over ecclesiastical authorities in Part I and Part II has been studied fully, his theological discussions especially in Part III is the focus of discussion in the thesis. This is partly because of the enlightenment spirit after the 17th century onward. Indeed, other works pertinent to the

² Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans* (London: Penguin Books, 1972).

rivalry between ecclesiastical and civil authorities by Hobbes refer both to theological as well as secular logic: his *De Cive*, or “On the citizen” (written in 1651), is one of Hobbes’ s major works on the nature of the human government, arguably with absolute authority; it foreshadows the famous phrase the human natural state of “war of all against all” in *Leviathan*.

Hobbes, in his another work *Behemoth* (written in 1681), uses a biblical creature (Behemoth) as the title of his book³, to feature the disorderly and prolonged Parliament at the time of the civil wars of England in the 17th century; Hobbes’ s theologically inspired view on civil authority is expressed.

Concerning the historical background against which he wrote *Leviathan*, Berman⁴ and address whether Hobbes was a secret atheist or not, from multiple perspectives. Although Hobbes was considered to be a hidden atheist in his time, views on this point are divided. Whereas “depth interpretation”, or the analysis of hidden meaning, was often adopted, the surface meaning of his text is in favor of Christianity is being considered important. From this perspective, Hobbes’ s constant reference to God throughout *Leviathan* is seen to be evidence that he was a true Christian.

³The cover of the book of *Leviathan* is worth a mention. As in the main text above, Hobbes, a British political thinker, published this book in 1651. He regarded the nation as a social contract to break free from the “war of all against all,” and first presented a modern view of the nation. Leviathan is the name of a giant monster living in the sea in the Old Testament, and Hobbes likens the natural power of the people to the delegated state power. The monster is depicted like a giant on the cover of a famous first edition book, but with a closer look, we can see that its body is made up of countless humans, wearing a crown, a sword in the right hand, and a clergy in the left. The sword symbolizes secular (non-religious) power, and the sword symbolizes religious power. A land area and a city are drawn under this giant sea beast (Leviathan), which means that the land and the city are protected by the state power. As the book cover implies, in *Leviathan* Hobbes argued that the monarch, who had been granted the natural rights of the people, monopolized the power of the sacred world and protected the nation. This idea graphically corresponds to the emergence of a sovereign state system in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries.

⁴ Berman, David, *A History of Atheism in Britain: From Hobbes to Russell* (London: Routledge, 1988).

The subtle link among theism, deism and atheism is also discussed in the literature: while a definite conclusion is not available, the atheism was born out of this line of cognitive shift, away from theism, in England during his time. The era in which Hobbes lived had a lot to do with the establishment of a state church system in England. The country established the Anglican Church under the Law of Unification under Elizabeth I. The doctrine of the Anglican Church adopted the justification theory of faith, the biblical principle and the theory of predestination, and thus was similar to Calvinism, yet with the institutional aspect being similar to Catholicism. In 1588, when Hobbes was born, Britain was surrounded by rumors of an invincible Spanish military fleet. His mother is said to have given birth to him with that fear. Britain eventually defeated the invincible fleet and became the hegemonic nation of the world in the 17th century.

In this era, the Puritan Revolution took place, which led to the clash between the privileged class, which promoted state-religion system as well as the absolute royal system, and the parliamentary middle class, which was predominantly Puritans (Calvinists). During this time, the war between England and the Netherlands, and the rebellion in Scotland (by Presbyterian Christians) also broke out. Against this background, it seems that for Hobbes, society and human beings were “dangerous”, and he strongly desired peace. And he chose the “nation” as a clue to attaining that peace. *Leviathan* was the first book to build the social contract theory, which is the basic framework of modern democratic thought. It was a theoretical culmination of the Puritan Revolution, which developed the theory of the nation as an artificial human being created by social contract, comparing the sovereign nation to the Biblical monster Leviathan that appeared in Job and elsewhere.

Leviathan's Part 2, "Of Common-Wealth" discusses how national sovereignty should be established by social contract. Hobbes showed a natural law that "people should carry out the contract", and adds that a promise is just a word without a sword, and it has no power to protect people. Therefore, it becomes necessary to create a sovereign who has the power that far exceeds the power of individuals. The commonwealth is an "artificial human", and it is indeed the great Leviathan. And only this entity is called the sovereign, and all are his (or its) subjects. The sovereign has: (1) the right to collect money and soldiers, (2) the right to peace of war, (3) the right to legislation, (4) the judicial power, (5) the right to judge matters necessary for the peace and defense of the subjects, (6) the power to appoint agents, (7) the power to appoint teachers and examine what doctrines are in contradiction with the defense, peace and interests of the subjects, (8) the power to reward and punish, and (9) the right to grant honor. Overall, the sovereignty shall retain the "power to protect the subjects," which constitutes the core of sovereignty.

And the sovereign transcends civil law, the subject cannot condemn or punish the act of the sovereign (representative), deny his subjection and change his form of governance without his permission. I can't do it either. In this way, absolute and inviolable sovereignty is requested. However, the request is only for the purpose of preserving the people, and it is the crowd (people) who creates the sovereign as an artificial human. Therefore, it would be wrong to immediately understand the absoluteness of Hobbes's sovereignty over the absolute royal system. Hobbes admits that the subject gives the sovereign "freedom to submit" when self-preservation itself is threatened. Also, the authority of the sovereignty to control the spiritual world is related to Hobbes's opposition to the secular power of the Church in the third and fourth parts,

which is rather modern religious freedom. This is because it can be considered to have an aspect that can be applied to the principle.

Hobbes fled to Paris as the “first asylum seeker” when the storm of Puritan Revolution began to rumble in England. During his exile in Paris, he was suspected of his atheistic tendencies while teaching mathematics to the Crown Prince (later Charles II) at the court, and he was even more regarded as atheistic in Paris, by the publication of *Leviathan*. Then he secretly returned to England and expressed sympathy for the new government. During the Charles II era, when the royal era was restored, attacks on Hobbes by the religious circles and right parties of the royal party became severe, and reprinting of this book was also prohibited.

Against this historical background, existing literature focuses on the political and/or historical aspect of the birth of Hobbes’ ss theory of social contract with sovereignty at its core: Crimmins⁵ depicts Hobbes as the first systematic proponent of primacy of secular over religious authority is discussed from political perspectives; Martinich⁶ addresses philosophical viewpoints (including the one on religion) of Hobbes in a comprehensive way; Martinich (2003) stresses the religious aspect of Hobbes’ s *Leviathan*, in that for him, Christian doctrine is not politically destabilizing and is consistent with modern science as the foundation of civil government.

⁵ Crimmins, *Religion, Secularization and Political Thought: Thomas Hobbes to J. S. Mill* (Routledge Library Editions: Philosophy of Religion, London: Routledge, 2013); Hobbes, *The Leviathan*, (New York: Collier, 1962).

⁶ Martinich, *A Hobbes Dictionary: the Blackwell Philosopher Dictionaries* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Blackwell, 1995).

Martinich⁷ covers Hobbes' s philosophy of logic and language, his view on physics and scientific method, ethics, politics, and religion; Sorell⁸ addresses Hobbes' s religious doctrines, including his remark that the church is no the Kingdom of God, from a political-theoretic perspective; State⁹ links the birth of the concept of natural law to Christian theology from religious-philosophical perspectives, yet mainly with political aspects in view; Arima¹⁰ discusses how to interpret the Hobbes' s view on humanity as a rational man; his theological viewpoints are treated as secondary or supplementary; Van Apeldoorn and Douglass¹¹ records the birth of separation of church and state through Hobbes' s discussions from a historical perspective; Wright¹² centers on the historical background of Hobbes' s departure from England for exile in France in 1640 and the publication (in 1668) of the Latin version of *Leviathan*; Chirilă and Varga¹³ stresses that the institution of human monarchy in the Scripture was obliged to stay faithful to the law of God in order for the nation of Israel to remain within God' s favor.

⁷ Martinich and Hoekstra, *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁸ Sorell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁹ State, *Thomas Hobbes and the Debate over Natural Law and Religion* (Routledge Library Editions: Philosophy of Religion, London: Routledge, 2013).

¹⁰ Arima, *Tomasu Hobbuzu "Livaian" no Ningenzou: Riseiteki Ningen no Ime-ji* (in Japanese) (View of Humans in Hobbes' "Leviathan": an Image of a Rational Man, Tokyo: Kindai Bungeisha, 2002).

¹¹ Van Apeldoorn and Douglass (eds.), *Hobbes on Politics and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

¹² Wright, *Religion, Politics and Thomas Hobbes* (New York: Springer, 2005).

¹³ Chirilă and Varga, "Political Theology of Hobbes' s Leviathan and the Thesis of Orthodox Vision of Theocracy" (*Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 18, issue 54 Winter 2019); 33-44.

Thus, while there is a lot more literature on Hobbes' s *Leviathan*, it seems that there is more research need for a theologically driven interpretation of his work. There are of course existing literature with theological consideration in view: Gootjes¹⁴ connects between general revelation and special revelation can be applied to that between natural law and God's law; Kraynak¹⁵ states that Hobbes elaborates on the concept of the Messiah in his political thesis, and it seems to combine Jewish and Christian elements, in that Jesus is taken to be the Messiah in the sense of being the earthly king of the Jews as well as the Son of God and king of heaven. To the best of the author's knowledge, interpretation of Hobbes' s sovereignty concept from a reformed theological perspective seems to be lacking. This paper therefore attempts to make some efforts to assess Hobbes' s sovereignty concept in this regard.

1.3 Scriptural use of the word *Leviathan* (לִיַּוְיָתָן liwjatan, in Hebrew)

It is worthwhile to briefly mention the meaning of the word Leviathan (the title of Hobbes' s book) at this point. The title of the book *Leviathan* comes from a Biblical creature Leviathan (Hebrew: לִיַּוְיָתָן liwjatan, Latin: Leviathan) which is an underwater monster¹⁶ that appears in the Old Testament, i.e., in Job 3:8, Job 40:15–41:26, Psalm 74:14, Psalm 104:26 and Isaiah 27:1. Among these references to Leviathan, Job 41:1-

¹⁴ Gootjes, "General Revelation in its Relation to Special Revelation" (The Westminster Theological Journal, 51, no.2, Fall 1989); 359-368. Hobbes, Thomas, Behemoth, available online (<https://archive.org/details/cu31924028063893/page/n19/mode/2up>), 1681.

¹⁵ Kraynak, "The Idea of the Messiah in the Theology of Thomas Hobbes" (Jewish Political Studies Review, 4:2, Fall 1992); 115-137.

¹⁶Its appearance is detailed in The Book of Job, whose body is covered with scales and whose skin cannot be penetrated firmly.

10¹⁷ emphasizes the all-powerfulness of Leviathan. Importantly, this is in reference to God almighty; in Hobbes's Leviathan, it symbolizes a powerful sovereign state.

Psalm 74:14¹⁸, on the other hand, sees Leviathan as an evil creature. The original word in Hebrew means “twisted” or “swirled” (Kohlenberger¹⁹, Harris²⁰). It lives in the sea and boils the sea like a whirlpool. It is too big to be caught with a hook or a harpoon. It has strong power but a well-balanced appearance, and exhales fire and smoke from its mouth. In the Psalms, it is mentioned that God broke Leviathan's head to feed the people of the desert. Since its appearance is featured as a crocodile in Job, it is presumed that its prototype was in Egypt and it reflects the history of Egyptians oppressing God's people. And “[n]othing on earth is its equal—a creature without fear. It looks down on all that are haughty; it is king over all that are proud.” (Job 41:33-34). In the context of the book of Leviticus, Leviathan is also interpreted to mean the ferocious trial that came before Job, who lived in God's righteousness, which was the trial God gave to Job using Satan. This may be regarded as national power. In sum, Leviathan was used as an illustration by poets and prophets to symbolize the oppressor of the kingdom of God.

¹⁷“Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook or tie down its tongue with a rope? Can you put a cord through its nose or pierce its jaw with a hook? Will it keep begging you for mercy? Will it speak to you with gentle words? Will it make an agreement with you for you to take it as your slave for life? Can you make a pet of it like a bird or put it on a leash for the young women in your house? Will traders barter for it? Will they divide it up among the merchants? Can you fill its hide with harpoon or its head with fishing spears? If you lay a hand on it, you will remember the struggle and never do it again! Any hope of subduing it is false; the mere sight of it is overpowering. No one is fierce enough to rouse it” (Job 41:1-10).

¹⁸It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave it as food to the creatures of the desert (Psalm 74:14).

¹⁹ Kohlenberger III and Swanson, *The Hebrew-English Concordance to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998).

²⁰ Harris, Archer and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Vol.1 (Aleph-Mem), Chicago: Moody Press, 1980).

1.4 Structure of *Leviathan*

Leviathan is divided into four parts: the first part is “Of humans, the second part is “Of Commonwealth”, the third part is “Of Christian commonwealth,” and the fourth part is “Of the Kingdom of Darkness.” Part 1 analyzes human senses and words, and in the second part, the reason for the formation of sovereign states is investigated. The point is that humans give the right to “a third party”, and entrust the right to govern them to the third party, which is indeed “Leviathan”, or a sovereign state. Part 3 strictly distinguishes between the state of the earth and the state of God, and criticizes the Pope's authority for restraining civilian life. Part 4 of the book criticizes the supreme position of the Pope as a misinterpretation of the Bible. In brief, it is commonly said, the medieval view of the state that it was created by God was overturned by Hobbes's *Leviathan*.

The Structure of *Leviathan* by chapter, is as follows. Original Roman numerals are changed into Arabic ones; and the original 17th-century British spellings have been changed to modern American English counterparts.

The Introduction

Part 1. Of Man

Chapter 1. Of Sense

Chapter 2. Of Imagination

Chapter 3. Of the Consequence or Train of Imaginations

Chapter 4. Of Speech

Chapter 5. Of Reason, and Science

Chapter 6. Of the Interior Beginnings of Voluntary Motions, Commonly Called the Passions; and the Speeches by which They are Expressed

Chapter 7. Of the Ends or Resolutions of Discourse

Chapter 8. Of the Virtues Commonly Called Intellectual; and their Contrary Defects

Chapter 9. Of the Several Subjects of Knowledge

- Chapter 10. Of Power, Worth, Dignity, Honor and Worthiness
- Chapter 11. Of the Difference of Manners
- Chapter 12. Of Religion
- Chapter 13. Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning their Felicity and Misery
- Chapter 14. Of the First and Second Natural Laws, and of Contracts
- Chapter 15. Of Other Laws of Nature
- Chapter 16. Of Persons, Authors, and Things Personated

PART 2. Of Common-Wealth

- Chapter 17. Of the Causes, Generation, and Definitions of a Common-Wealth
- Chapter 18. Of the Rights of Sovereigns by Institutions
- Chapter 19. Of the Several Kinds of Common-Wealth by Institution, and of Succession to the Sovereign Power
- Chapter 20. Of Dominion Paternal and Despotick
- Chapter 21. Of the Liberty of Subjects
- Chapter 22. Of Systems Subject, Political, and Private
- Chapter 23. Of the Public Ministers of Sovereign Power
- Chapter 24. OF the Nutrition, and Procreation of a Common-Wealth
- Chapter 25. Of Counsel
- Chapter 26. Of Civil Laws
- Chapter 27. Of Crimes, Excuses, and Extenuations
- Chapter 28. Of Punishments, and Rewards
- Chapter 29. Of Those Things That Weaken, or Tend To the Dissolution of a Commonwealth
- Chapter 30. Of the Office of the Sovereign Representative
- Chapter 31. Of the Kingdom of God by Nature

PART 3. Of a Christian Common-Wealth

- Chapter 32. Of the Principles of Christian Politics
- Chapter 33. Of the Number, Antiquity, Scope, Authority, and Interpreters of the Books of Holy Scripture
- Chapter 34. Of the Signification of Spirit, Angel, and Inspiration in the Books of Holy Scripture
- Chapter 35. Of the Signification in Scripture of Kingdom of God, of Holy, Sacred, and Sacrament
- Chapter 36. Of the Word of God, and of Prophets
- Chapter 37. Of Miracles, and Their Use
- Chapter 38. Of the Signification in Scripture of Eternal Life, Hell, Salvation, the World to Come, and Redemption
- Chapter 39. Of the Signification in Scripture of the Word Church
- Chapter 40. Of the Rights of the Kingdom of God, in Abraham, Moses, the High Priests, and the Kings of Judah
- Chapter 41. Of the Office of our Blessed Savior
- Chapter 42. Of Power Ecclesiastical
- Chapter 43. Of What Is Necessary for a Man's Reception into the Kingdom of Heaven

Part 4. Of the Kingdom of Darkness

- Chapter 44. Of Spiritual Darkness from Misinterpretation of Scripture

Chapter 45. Of Demonology, and Other Relics of the Religion of the Gentiles
Chapter 46. Of Darkness from Vain Philosophy, and Fabulous Traditions
Chapter 47. Of the Benefit That Proceeds from Such Darkness, and to Whom it
Accrues

A Review and Conclusion

It is noticeable that overall, Part 1 and Part 2 are based on the logical discussion of the generation of sovereign states, while Part 3 and Part 4 are based on the theological discussion. To modern readers, Part 3 and Part 4 are particularly difficult to handle in the book, since the role of sovereign states in modern politics is addressed without reference to Scriptures. There is even an idea that Hobbes wrote Part 3 and Part 4 to avoid being labeled as an atheist. Considering the background of his times and the political situation at that time, it seems that this idea is also reasonable.

It is, however, possible to think that Hobbes could not discuss the modern theory of the covenant state without introducing Christian views, because of the domination of Christianity at the time. In other words, it can also be said that Christian logic already exists as the base of the logical discussion developed in Parts 1 and 2, and the theory of social contract is wholly based on the Christian logic, which is made explicit in Parts 3 and 4. This paper will focus on Part 3, which explicitly starts to derive the source of absolute state sovereignty from the Bible.

The logical discussion in Part 1 and Part 2 is as follows.²¹

(1) Men are moved by appetites and aversions.

²¹ This part draws on “Introduction” by C.B. Macpherson in Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (London: Penguin Books, 1985).
”

(1.1) Some appetites are innate, as appetite of food; the rest, which are appetites of particular things, proceed from experience, and trial of their effects.

(1.2) Appetites continually change, and are different in different men: and because the constitution of a man's body is in continual mutation, it is impossible that all the same things should always cause in him the same appetites.

(1.3) Appetites are incessant: they must operate as long as a man is alive.

(1.4) Appetites are of different strengths in different men. Different men have within themselves "more or less Desire of Power, of Riches, of Knowledge, and of Honor"; this difference of Passions, proceeds partly from the different Constitution of the body, and partly from different Education", or, "not obey from the difference of men's complexions; but also from their difference of customs, and education.

From (1.3) and (1.4), it follows that all men must seek incessantly to attain satisfaction of their desires but that, since the strength of appetite differs from one man to another, different men will be satisfied with different levels of power, riches, honor and so on.

(2) The power of a man is his present means, to obtain some future apparent "good."

From (1.3), (1.4) and (2), the following propositions hold.

(3) Every man must always seek to have some power, although not every man is self-impelled to seek as much power as others have, or to seek more than he now has.

(4) Every man's power resists and hinders the effects of other men's power.

(5) All acquired power consists in command over some of the powers of other men.

(6) Some men's desires are without limit.

Given this further assumption (6), Hobbes concludes:

(7) [There is] a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceases only in death. And the cause of this is not always that a

man hopes for a more intensive delight, than he has already attained to; or that he cannot be content with a moderate power: but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he has present, without the acquisition of more. Everyone is necessarily pulled into a constant competitive struggle for power over others, or at least to resist his powers being commanded by others. Man's need for power has now become a necessarily harmful thing.

Thus, a summary logic of Part 1 and Part 2 is as follows. The natural state of humans is anarchy and war. The law that people are led by to avoid that situation is natural law. A commonwealth without sovereign power is nothing more than an intangible word and cannot exist. The nation should simply submit to the sovereign in all respects, as long as its submission does not violate God's law.

As seen in the above seemingly logical discussion, "God" is not explicitly referred to. In Part 3 and Part 4, on the other hand, Hobbes directly refer to God and makes his own theological discussions. The line of discussion will be followed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

NATURE OF ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, MOSAIC COVENANT AND THE ANOINTING OF SAUL AND DAVID AS KING FROM BIBLICAL STUDY PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Hobbes's Theological Discussion on the Sovereignty of Kings and States

In this chapter, Hobbes's theological line of discussion on the sovereignty of kings and states is addressed. Part 3 of the *Leviathan* makes a theologically driven discussion of the source of sovereignty of kings and states. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study focuses on this part, which has been neglected so far in the discussion of the sovereignty of nation states, and consider the logical consistency with the first and second parts from a theological point of view. Consideration of sovereignty is an important research subject not only in politics but also in the theological consideration of the role of the church in the modern sovereign state system in the age of secularization.

The logical contents of the logical structure of *Leviathan* on the whole, to clarify the nature of its Part 3, are as follows. As stated above, Part 1 is on the nature of humans, and the center of it is the theory of human will. Hobbes's theory of human will was created as anthropology by combining his religious consciousness with the consideration of human will action. However, if we take a step further, it can be seen that this theory of intention was created by a fight with the tradition of Anglicanism: Hobbes builds on the inevitable theory of will, relying on the Reformer Martin Luther's theory on the slavery of will, but setting will as a matter of philosophy rather than a theological problem. This is thought to be deeply embedded in the concept of *Leviathan*. The human will in Hobbes is not a freedom to himself, but a movement of

the mind or desire or aversion that is made inevitable by God. Therefore, from this perspective, obeying one's will ultimately obeys the will of God.

The concept of natural law, in general, is a rational directive for self-preservation, but when it comes to its theory on human will, it takes on a legal character. Natural law connects itself with God through human will and obliging one's inner mental or spiritual self. Therefore, the agreement to establish a sovereign nation is strictly binding by self-responsibility and obligation to God. In this way, Hobbes's theory of human will is linked to religious consciousness, but is theorized as a problem in the philosophical domain (which is a human science) rather than in theology. Human will is designed to be the logical basis for political science—a theory of sovereignty and subject rights and obligations—also in the philosophical realm.

Part 2 of *Leviathan*, the theory of state (politics), is structured with the concept of agreement (a promise) derived from Hobbes's unique theory of human will as a logical starting point. There are two types of nations formed by this agreement: one is a "state community by establishment" and the other, a "state community by acquisition". The Puritan Revolution was a civil war against the King to form a new state community by establishment.

In Part 3 of *Leviathan*, on the Christian theory of state, Hobbes's own theory of "Kingdom of God" is developed. Hobbes derives the leaderships of Abraham and Moses as historical archetypes of the "Kingdom of God" from the Bible with the theoretical framework of two types of states, "state community by establishment" and "state community by acquisition". These two historical archetypes have the effect of

justifying the status of the sovereignty of the present world from the history described in the Bible.

At the same time, Hobbes excluded “the Kingdom of God” from his contemporary world by positioning this "Kingdom of God" headed by Abraham and Moses in the historical past and the "Kingdom of God" of Christ in the eschatological future. This was the attempt to dismiss the Roman Catholic, Independence, and Presbyterian interpretations of the National Church, which sees the current Church as the “kingdom of God.” Hobbes then creates the category of "sovereign prophets" to form a national image that unites God, political sovereignty, and the people.

In Hobbes’s view, a sovereign becomes a person representing the state in the capacity of a political sovereign, and also a person representing the church in the capacity of a “sovereign prophet.” The sovereign has the same personality with two capacities, and a sovereign state is politically as well as religiously integrated in the person of the sovereign, and the conflict is thus contained.

In Part 4, “Of the Kingdom of Darkness,” the “Kingdom of God” is referred to as “the present church” and “currently living,” on the premise of Christian political science centered on such “sovereign prophets.” Mainly Roman Catholic churches and Presbyterians (including other millennial theorists and pro-national church proponents including the Lauds) who consider themselves to be “legitimate groups of Christians” and regard themselves as true intermediaries connecting God and people. Hobbes tried to refute their claim in Part 4 of *Leviathan*. Scholasticism, among other things, was the predominant academic discipline of universities in his time, and its claim in favor of immortal souls and spirits that ensure that the spiritual world upon which Catholicism

relies on is spatially present in the invisible present, together with angels, inspirations of the written texts, demons, and the rationale for ideas such as “non-material objects,” non-material entities, essences separated from objects were “stopped” by Hobbes.²²

The idea that the “present church” is regarded as “the kingdom of God” leads to the higher authority of priests and preachers, rather than the authority of human beings (including political sovereignty). As a result, there will be two entities (church and state) that the people should submit to, which leads to a dual structure of rule, that is, a conflict between religion and politics. In fact, England faced, on the one hand, the intervention of the Catholic forces, and, on the other hand, the civil war led by the idea of Puritan’s religious revolution.

Hobbes dismissed Puritans, without denying the “Kingdom of God” itself, in order to bring England out of the state of war caused by the intervention of religious politics. He tried to contain Puritans inside the framework of the state church system. It can be said that his approach was enthusiastic as well as political.

Thus, *Leviathan*, in its entirety, describes the present human condition philosophically in Part 1 and Part 2, and theologically in Part 3 and Part 4. In particular, the social contract theory presented explicitly in Part 2 is constructed as a theoretical basis for creating the theory of “the kingdom of God” in Part 3; indeed, Part 2 and Part 3 are logically linked, with philosophy and theology intersect with each other in the concept of sovereignty, albeit without explicit specification of who (or which) exactly sovereignty is. In the post-modern world, it is assumed anthropocentrically that there is

²²Hobbes argued in Part 4 that these various ideas of scholasticism were pagan and superstitious, and academically “meaningless.” Instead, Hobbes set up, in Part 1 of *Leviathan*, an academic system based on the geometric methodologies—a method of clarifying definition of words, making propositions, and obtaining knowledge by adding and subtracting propositions and arranging them.

no absolute value, including absolute sovereignty of God; in terms of research, there has not been much discussion on the theological parts (Parts 3 and 4) of Hobbes' s *Leviathan*.

As mentioned above, *Leviathan* is supported by Hobbes' s new worldview. Hobbes' s view of the world consists of two areas: philosophy (natural reason) and history (Bible). First of all, the present world seen from the philosophical realm is a world in which God rules by nature, which means the whole universe where all existing entities are objects.

In the theological realm, the "Kingdom of God" is positioned at the extremes of the past (pre-patriarchal period) and future (*eschaton*) on the time axis when the historically established "Kingdom of God" (especially the Kingdom of Israel with king Saul as the first anointed one) did not exist. In the present "middle" age, the sovereign prophet, which is derived from the Bible as a historical fact, is also the political sovereign who is derived by logical reasoning based on natural reason. To put it differently, in *Leviathan*, Hobbes' s philosophy and theology intersect, with the political sovereign and the theological "sovereign prophet" combined.

Thus, the fundamental aspects of Hobbes' s case on sovereignty can be clarified.

Hobbes banished the "Kingdom of God" from this world, shifting away from a religious, ecclesiastical authority to a secular, political authority as the bearer of world order. The state and the church are integrated with the political sovereign at the top, and the professional clergy are subordinated to the political sovereign.

However, this does not logically allow political power to intervene violently in the inner religious belief of the people; rather, on the basis of the principle of non-intervention, faith and ideas are not regulated by political power; it is transferred to the

private sphere, guaranteeing the freedom of people's inner thoughts, and in principle it prevents the clergy from manipulating the inner sphere of people to come out in the public (political) realm. The fundamental confrontation between religious and political authorities, which represented the modernization away from the Middle Ages, was thus fulfilled in Hobbes. This gives all the more reason for theological investigation of the kingdom of God. In the next section, theological interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant and anticipation of human kingship is addressed.

2.2 Abrahamic Covenant and Anticipation of Human Kingship

This section makes a reformed theological interpretation of Hobbes's treatment of Abrahamic covenant and human kingship. Chapter 40 (Of the Rights of the Kingdom of God, in Abraham, Moses, the High Priests, and the Kings of Judah), in Part 3 of *Leviathan*, has the following sections (spellings changed to modern ones):

The Sovereign Rights Of Abraham
Abraham Had The Sole Power Of Ordering The Religion Of His Own People
No Pretense Of Private Spirit Against The Religion Of Abraham
Abraham Sole Judge, And Interpreter Of What God Spoke
The Authority Of Moses Whereon Grounded
Moses Was (Under God) Sovereign Of The Jews, All His Own Time,
All Spirits Were Subordinate To The Spirit Of Moses
After Moses The Sovereignty Was In The High Priest
Of The Sovereign Power Between The Time Of Joshua And Of Saul
Of The Rights Of The Kings Of Israel
The Practice Of Supremacy In Religion, Was Not In The Time Of The Kings,
After The Captivity The Jews Had No Settled Common-wealth

Hobbes starts this theologically oriented chapter concerning God's first covenant (or "contract" in legal terms) with Abraham, with the following paragraph:

The father of the faithful, and first in the kingdom of God by covenant, was Abraham. For with him was the covenant first made; wherein he obliged himself and his seed after him to acknowledge and obey the commands of God; not only such as he could take notice of (as moral laws) by the light of nature; but also such as God

should in special manner deliver to him by dreams and visions. For as to the moral law, they were already obliged, and needed not have been contracted withal, by promise of the land of Canaan. Nor was there any contract that could add to or strengthen the obligation by which both they and all men elsewhere bound naturally to obey God Almighty: and therefore the covenant which Abraham made with God was to take for the commandment of God that which in the name of God was commanded him, in a dream or vision, and to deliver it to his family and cause them to observe the same.

In this contract, or covenant, of God Almighty with Abraham as a human leader, God spoke only to Abraham and this is the source of his relative human sovereignty. God says, “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.” (Genesis 18: 18-19). Concerning this Abrahamic covenant, Pratt²³ points out that God’s righteousness is revealed in His “living in a community in a way that promotes the life and well-being of all its members”. This is a blessing on Abraham’s “common-wealth”, and the common-wealth is to be filled with the presence of God, not self-sustaining on its own.

An important consideration is that modern Biblical scholars acknowledge that there were two kinds of covenants: the parity covenant between two equal parties, and the suzerain²⁴ covenant, between a superior party and an inferior party²⁵. The covenant between God and Abraham was the second type, i.e., a suzerain covenant, under which there is an obligation for the inferior (Abraham) to obey God but there is no obligation for the superior; instead, only the intent, or grace of the superior is expressed. This

²³ Pratt (ed.), *NIV Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan. 2003), 292.

²⁴ The word suzerain precisely refers to “sovereign” or “master” with authority.

²⁵ Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

implies that the authority of God is retained in this covenant. In contrast, the covenant between two equals (i.e., two humans, including between a human king and a human citizen) can only be a parity covenant.

2.3 Mosaic Covenant and God's Approval of Human Kingship

Hobbes continues to discuss, in Chapter 40, that the Abrahamic covenant was renewed with Isaac, and afterwards with Jacob.²⁶ Then there was another renewal of the covenant when the Israelites were freed from the Egyptians and arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai, with the leadership of Moses so that they could form the peculiar kingdom of God, whose lieutenant was Moses for his own time.²⁷ And the succession to that office was settled upon Aaron and his heirs after him. By this constitution, a kingdom is acquired to God.

It was plain for Hobbes that Moses, who was alone called up to God, was the only one who represented to the Israelites the person of God; that is to say, was their sole sovereign under God. And it was his will that Moses be the religious as well as secular leader of the Israelites. Hobbes's theological view here is that the Bible tells us that the nation should have civil power and the church should not intervene in politics. None other than the Bible is the basis for "absoluteness of national sovereignty" and "superiority of the nation over the church."

To Hobbes, importantly, that was God's idea. The ancient communities and kingdoms in the Old Testament were featured as possessing cultic unity and thus theocracy. Political leaders, including Abraham and Moses, were often "prophets", i.e.,

²⁶ Paragraphs 1-2 in Chapter 40.

²⁷ Paragraphs 7-9 in Chapter 40.

people who receive the word and revelation of God, at the same time. Hobbes says, however, that it was legitimate for the leaders to obey the people because they were “political sovereigns” rather than “because they were under divine revelation.”

In Exodus 19:5-6 states: “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” This passage clearly indicates God’s grace and intention of making a nation out of his renewed covenant with Moses. It is not that Moses was righteous enough to receive God’s blessing, but that God, out of his loving nature, sovereignly granted His covenant of blessing to Moses.

2.4 Anointing of Saul as King of Israel in I Samuel

Hobbes notes, in Chapter 40 of Leviathan²⁸, that:

“[a]fter the death of Joshua, till the time of Saul, the time between is noted frequently in the Book of Judges, ‘that there was in those days no king in Israel’; and sometimes with this addition, that “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.’ The phrase “there was no king” means that “there was no sovereign power” in Israel.

Then the Israelites they said to Samuel as a prophet and judge, “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have” (I Samuel 8:5). They hoped that they would no more be governed by the commands that should be laid upon them by the priest, in the name of God; but by one that should command them in the same manner that all other nations were commanded; and consequently in deposing the high priest of royal authority, they

²⁸ Paragraph 11.

deposed that peculiar government of God. It seemed the whole process was against the will of God.

God, however, consented to it, saying to Samuel, “And the Lord told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.”(I Samuel 8:7) After the Israelites’ rejection of God, in whose right the priests governed, there was no authority left to the priests. Hobbes comments on the government of civil affairs that it was now all in the hands of the secular king. That is, the king shall have the whole authority, both in peace and war.

I Samuel 8-12 is dedicated to the account of the foundation of Israelites’ first monarchy. What follows is the flow of events described in these chapters.²⁹ Chapter 8:1-22 describes the Israelites’ request for a king. This narrative is concerned with the advantages and disadvantages of the monarchy. The Israelites desired a strong, centralized government, whereas Samuel warns against the king’s violation of individual human rights (in modern terms) and liberty. God, though seemingly disapproving, accepts the wish of the Israelites out of His grace (not out of lack of His negotiation capacity). The first part of the narrative recounts the Israelites’ request to have their own human king, Samuel’s appeal to God (indicating that it was important for the prophet to always consult with God), and the people’s negative, stubborn reply. Verse 7 (And the LORD told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king...”) indicates that God’s kingship is presumed to be conflicting with human kingship.³⁰

²⁹ Berlin, *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Pratt (ed.), *NIV Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003).

³⁰ Exodus 15:18 states: “The Lord reigns for ever and ever.” Also, Judges 8:23 reads: “But Gideon told them, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you.”

Verses 11-17 (Chapter 8) enumerates the king's practice, possibly based on the reality of the contemporary ancient Near East, in accordance with the people's request to have a king "like all other nations" in verse 5. Verse 7 "it is not you they have rejected" means that since the elders couched their request in terms of a "king to lead [or judge] us", Samuel initially interpreted their overture as a personal insult to his own leadership. As the Lord pointed out, however, the insult was far greater than that: they have rejected the Lord as their king. The offense of the elders' request was not in their desire for human kingship *per se*, for kingship in Israel had long been anticipated. As the Lord himself disclosed in this verse and in the next, it was the elders' desire to displace God as their king and to replace him with a human monarch that constituted their sin.³¹

Verse 9 "Now listen to them" indicates that the Lord instructed Samuel to accede to the elders' request, but not without first sternly warning them about "what the king...[would] do." The focus in this verse is on what could be anticipated regarding the king's behavior or misbehavior (in verses 11-17). This part is not meant to objectively list up the rights of the king in Israel, but to deter the Israelites from craving for one. The king will load a heavy burden on all individuals, unlike the existing regime which rarely interfered with personal life. The king will "take³²" their sons to the army, impose forced labor on their sons and daughters, confiscate their lands, levy taxes, and use their property.

³¹In this connection, Westminster Larger Catechism 128 states: "Q. What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors? A. The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government."

³² Samuel repeats this verb several times in this text.

Chapter 9:1-Chapter 10:16 features the anointing of Saul as the first king of Israel. The story of a young man who went to search for lost assets and found a kingdom is recorded in depth. This part implies that every event happens in a natural, but God-designed way. Thanks to his persevering servant (and against his own intention), Saul “happened” to get to Samuel’s town, and thanks to “chance encounter” with some girls, he entered the town at the right timing when Samuel comes out, thus being able to meet the prophet who would anoint him as king.

Verses 15 and 16 (Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed this to Samuel: “About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people Israel; he will deliver them from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked on my people, for their cry has reached me.”) shows that the seemingly accidental events were guided by God. The term “ruler” (*nagid*) refers to a governor who is appointed by God, whereas “king” (*melekh*) has the nuance of nomination by the people.

Chapter 10:17-27 describes the election of the king Saul. The Israelites now openly acclaim the king chosen by the Lord. Samuel again expressed his objection to the monarchy, but he did not dismiss Saul as a person, considering him most suitable for the office of kingship.

Chapter 11:1-13 demonstrates king Saul’s ability to exert leadership and govern his citizens. Saul is depicted after the model of the judges: the spirit of God grips him; he then gathers the people, leads them to victory. Chapter 11:14-Chapter 12:25 records the prophet Samuel’s address: at the inception of the monarchy, Samuel addresses the people, denouncing their request for a king and urging them to obey the Lord, yet also trying to secure his position under the new regime as spiritual authority.

11:14-15 mentions that after Saul's great achievement, the time is fit to inaugurate him as king. In 12:2-5, Samuel asserts that he never abused his office for his own profit (at the time when corruption among leaders was widespread), which implies that his rejection is unjustified.

Verses 7-12 emphasizes that the Lord always delivered Israel from the enemies even when their difficulty was caused by their own guilt, so there was no need to ask for a king in order to be delivered. Verse 18 ("Then Samuel called on the LORD, and that same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. So all the people stood in awe of the LORD and of Samuel.") point to a God-given miracle, which demonstrates the power and sovereignty of the Lord. Verse 23 ("As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right.") indicates that Samuel's authority is confirmed by the miracle and he will continue to represent the people of Israel before God by means of prayer, and represent God before the people by means of giving instruction.

Then I Samuel 13:1- 14:52 depicts the king Saul's failure as king. This implies that the monarchy, when separate spiritually from God, will surely fail. Thus, the whole passage indicates that the appointment of a human king was, while planned by God, was out of his divine grace to deliver Israelites from their plights. The sovereignty of the king is, therefore, not anything prideful of by the king himself. In sum, the absolute authority of a human king, which is often claimed to be Hobbes's assertion, is theologically not supported.

2.5 Anointing of David and Solomon as Kings of Israel

Hobbes continues to discuss the anointment of secular kings, David and Solomon. In this section, the anointing of David as king is addressed, with I Samuel 15-16 as a focus of attention. 15:1-35 depicts the clash between Saul and Samuel concerning the king's insubordination to the prophet, and Samuel told Saul that his kingship will not be maintained. However, the rejection here is addressed to Saul himself, not to the kingship.

I Samuel 16:1-13 records the renewed anointing of kingship: David is to be chosen as the new king, while he still takes on a passive role in this part. 17:1-18:5 depicts David as a shepherd boy confronting Goliath the giant; this part demonstrates the triumph of faith over physical strength. Thus, Hobbes's overall tone of the kingship being positively affirmed by God needs to be revised by these theological caveats.

Concerning king's officers, Hobbes mentions in *Leviathan*³³ that king David made Hashabiah and his brother, Hebronites, officers of Israel among them westward, "in all business of the Lord, and in the service of the king" (I Chronicles 26: 30). Likewise, Hobbes continues, that he made other Hebronites "rulers over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh", "for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king" (Ibid., 26:32).

He also mentions that Solomon "thrust out Abiathar from being priest before the Lord" (I Kings 2:27) and that he therefore had authority over the high priest.³⁴ Solomon also dedicated the Temple, blessed the people and he himself in person made a prayer in the consecrations of all churches and houses of prayer (Ibid., 8), which, according to Hobbes, is another great mark of supremacy of secular kingship over

³³ Paragraph 12 in Chapter 40.

³⁴ Paragraph 12 in Chapter 40.

priests. Further, he continues, when there was question concerning the Book of the Law found in the Temple, the same was not decided by the high priest, but Josiah sent both and others to enquire concerning it, of Huldah, the prophetess (II Kings, 22) which is another mark of the supremacy of secular kingship over priests over religious matters.

Concerning the kingship of Solomon, Chapter 20 “Of Dominion Paternal and Despotical” in *Leviathan* mentions the prayer of Solomon to God: “Give to thy servant understanding, to judge thy people, and to discern between good and evil.”(I Kings, 3. 9) It belonged therefore to the sovereign to be judge, and to prescribe the rules of discerning good and evil: which rules are laws; and therefore in him is the legislative power.” This part indicates that Hobbes was of the view that the secular kingship of Solomon is always supported by the wisdom of God as the true sovereign.³⁵

He then concludes: “from the first institution of God’s kingdom, to the Captivity, the supremacy of religion was in the same hand with that of the civil sovereignty; and the priest’s office, after the election of Saul, was not magisterial, but

³⁵ Likewise, Hobbes remarks on kingship (in Chapter 20):

Saul sought the life of David; yet when it was in his power to slay Saul, and his servants would have done it, David forbade them, saying, “God forbid I should do such an act against my Lord, the anointed of God.”(I Samuel, 24. 6) For obedience of servants St. Paul saith, “Servants obey your masters in all things”;(Colossians, 3. 22) and, “Children obey your parents in all things.”(Ibid., 3. 20) There is simple obedience in those that are subject to paternal or despotical dominion. Again, “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ chair, and therefore all that they shall bid you observe, that observe and do.”(Matthew, 23. 2, 3) There again is simple obedience. And St. Paul, “Warn them that they subject themselves to princes, and to those that are in authority, and obey them.”(Titus, 3. 1)

This obedience, to Hobbes is simple:

[O]ur Saviour Himself acknowledges that men ought to pay such taxes as are by kings imposed, where He says, “Give to Caesar that which is Caesar’s”; and paid such taxes Himself. And that the king’s word is sufficient to take anything from any subject, when there is need; and that the king is judge of that need: for He Himself, as king of the Jews, commanded his Disciples to take the ass and ass’s colt to carry him into Jerusalem, saying, “Go into the village over against you, and you shall find a she ass tied, and her colt with her; untie them, and bring them to me. And if any man ask you, what you mean by it, say the Lord hath need of them: and they will let them go.”(Matthew, 21. 2, 3) They will not ask whether his necessity be a sufficient title; nor whether he be judge of that necessity; but acquiesce in the will of the Lord.

ministerial.” Again, this view of kingship held by Hobbes is somewhat misguided. The next section discusses whether this view is theologically sound or not.

2.6 Comparison of Biblical and Hobbes’s Discussion on the Sovereignty of Human Kingship

We take it for granted that we must not discriminate against people, that we must not hurt people, and that we will hit the bees, but they are all acquired. Primitive humans may discriminate and even kill people. However, the reason why it doesn't happen is that some kind of "root of the way of thinking" is unknowingly present. Hobbes has made a significant achievement, especially in political philosophy linked with Christian theology. Hobbes systematically thought out what kind of form is politics ideal, based on theology. This section makes a comparison of his sovereignty (social contract) thesis and a theological viewpoint on sovereignty

At the end of the period of judges, as mentioned above, Samuel served as a prophet and judge in Israel. The Israelites continued to tell Samuel that they, like other countries, want a human king. Although it was an insulting request to God, He directed Samuel to respond to the people’s demands and chose a “humble” (at this point) man named Saul as king.

A theological assessment of the anointing of Saul by God through Samuel was that it was done out of God’s grace in spite of human sinfulness: those Israelite people simply wanted to follow other nations’ custom of having a human king. Out of sovereign grace, God gave permission for Israelites to have their own human king, while mentioning that they rejected Him. It is notable that God had predicted that the Israelites would one day ask for a king. In Deuteronomy 17:14–15, for example, God said, “When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken

possession of it and settled in it, and you say, ‘Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,’ be sure to appoint over you a king the Lord your God chooses.”³⁶

The reason why asking for a king was wrong on human side was that while God, their Lord, was the absolute leader, or the sovereign, of Israel, they still rejected Him. He led the people through Abraham and Moses, and then through priests and judges raised up to govern the people. In Samuel’s time, however, the Israelites began to worry about who the next leader would be, since Samuel’s sons did not follow the Lord. Another reason was that the Israelites requested a king in order to be like “all the other nations,” in spite of the fact that God had created Israel as a peculiar group of His people. The nation whose God was to be the Lord alone was envious of the nations who followed false gods.

God had promised, “I will establish my belief between you and your descendants in later generations as an eternal belief that you will be God to you and your descendants.” (Genesis 17:7-8), yet the people of Israel sinfully failed to trust in His words. Although the promised special sovereignty of God was established for Abraham and his descendants as the first historical archetype of the “Kingdom of God”, the Israelites lost sight of this divine kingdom and instead, asked for a human kingdom for their immediate earthly benefits and for their false sense of security.

³⁶ There are other passages which predict that the Israelites would one day ask for a king: God promised Jacob, “A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants” (Genesis 35:11). Similarly, references to future kings can be found in Genesis 36:31; 49:10; Numbers 24:7–9; and Deuteronomy 28:36.

On the concept of sovereignty (מַלְכוּת, *Malku*) which is used in the text above (I Samuel) as a verb cognate of king (Owens³⁷), Harris, Archer and Waltke³⁸ point out that in the Bible, rulers (including kings) were thought to be constituted by divine authority rather than by human (authority). That is, divine sovereignty was always implied in connection to the appointment (or anointing) of human kings.³⁹ In this sense, Hobbes's emphasis that human secular king was awarded absolute sovereignty seems to be theologically misguided.

In this connection, Pratt⁴⁰ provides a topical article "Was it wrong to have a human king?". Below is the summary of this article. While the general belief of many well-intended Christians is that God's ideal for Israel was that he should remain Israel's only king throughout history and that the appointment of human kings was at best God's "concession" to his people's sinfulness, divine and human kingship in Israel were quite compatible, so long as the human monarchs remained God's faithful vice-regents. God did not prohibit human kingship *per se* but warned against the troubles that would come to Israel for seeking a king from wrong motives, at the wrong time and without regard for the law of God. And God's warnings turned out to be accurate, since all of Israel's monarchs committed sin in terms of personal and religious ethics, failing miserably and leading to the exile of God's people.

³⁷ Owens, *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* (Vol. 2 (Judges-Chronicles), Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 2001).

³⁸ Harris, Archer and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Vol.1 (Aleph-Mem), Chicago: Moody Press, 1980).

³⁹ Berlin and Brettler (eds.), *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). They point out that no less than five chapters (8-12 of I Samuel) are dedicated to the foundation of the monarchy or kingship, showing its importance.

⁴⁰ Pratt (ed.), *NIV Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003); 406.

Sovereignty has an absolute meaning when it is attributed to the Creator God of heaven and earth (Daniel 4:35). In a relative sense, sovereignty is attributed to creatures, such as King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Daniel 4:22), and spiritual creatures in the New Testament (Ephesians 1:21, Colossians 1:16). The relative sovereignty, however, is established and has to be always underpinned by the absolute sovereignty (Romans 13:1).

Hobbes elaborates on the concept of the Messiah in *Leviathan*, and it seems to be based on the Christian elements, in that Jesus is taken to be the Messiah in the sense of being the earthly king of the Israelites as well as the Son of God and king of heaven. Hobbes thereby inaugurates a new kind of biblical criticism which the Deists of the enlightenment era developed and which continues today.

A commonwealth, for Hobbes, “is said to be instituted when a multitude of men do agree, and covenant, everyone with every one, that to whatsoever man, or assembly of men, shall be given by the major part the right to present the person of them all, that is to say, to be their representative; every one, as well he that voted for it as he that voted against it, shall authorize all the actions and judgements of that man, or assembly of men, in the same manner as if they were his own, to the end to live peaceably amongst themselves, and be protected against other men.”

However, Hobbes argues that this natural law cannot be defended without fear of anything and security cannot be obtained. Without the concept of commonwealth, all human beings rely on their own skills for their own safety, out of fear of others. And looting and robbing becomes a state of human life. Moreover, security cannot be obtained even with a small number of solidarity, solidarity, and temporary solidarity, and in the end, people will be in a state of war against each other, ignoring natural law.

Therefore, in order to consolidate the wills of all persons into one by majority, by handing over all the powers of them to one individual or a panel, the “public power”, that is, the commonwealth, is created. We need to ensure that peace and defense are assured by the enforcement of natural laws.

For the people, the sovereignty is a collegial body or an individual who has the commonwealth personality that they (people) have established by mutual contract. The person who bears this personality is called the sovereign, and is said to have sovereignty. And everyone but him is his “nation”. In the mutual contract of the people, the personality, rights, and will of each person are handed over to the sovereign in order to ensure the security of the people. Therefore, it can be said that the sovereignty is a representative of the people’s personality, rights, and will in order to prevent confusion as each person acts individually to ensure security.

Sovereignty (in Commonwealth) arises from the mutual agreement of those who are unable to exercise their natural rights (which are, to Hobbes in Part 1 and Part 2 of *Leviathan*, rather autonomous and not necessarily given by God) because they are in a fight against every other. On the other hand, in the kingdom of God, God has power that cannot be countered by anyone, so even if he exercises his natural right by that power, he does not fall into a fighting state and rules all people. It is possible and can become a sovereign.

From a theological perspective, God’s sovereign right comes from his omnipotence. And an unregenerate person is considered “imperfect.” He or she kills people, betrays each other, and reveals immaturity. On the contrary, we consider God alone to be perfect. If we believe that we are perfect, we cannot kill people and can be

kind to each other with love. This would be called “reason,” yet this is now our reality, and we believe that only God has reason, a perfect heart.

Hobbes also considers “human nature” to be “imperfect.” Imperfection in this case means that we humans obey our instinctive will, not move by reason. Hobbes first thought that “human nature follows instinctive will.” What happens when humans follow their instinctive will? According to Hobbes, humans have the ultimate right to maintain their lives. This is called the “natural right”, and we believe that human beings have this right by nature, and thus cannot avoid conflicts with each other. Humans are instinctively designed to sustain own lives, for death is an overwhelming and ultimate threat to them.

Hobbes believed that struggles were inevitable because humans all have natural rights and are desiring to live. If everyone wants to live, it will develop into a war of all against all. When the war occurs, disproportionate amount of effort is usually made to protect the natural rights of “self”, and ironically, the natural rights are violated. Human cannot sustain society in this state.

How can we get out of this state? Hobbes’s thesis was that individuals transfer their natural rights to a nation, or “Leviathan.” On the other hand, instead of transferring all the natural rights of the people to the sovereign, and the people enter into a “social contract” with the sovereign. In other words, a social contract is a contract that restrains conflicts that would occur in the natural state. In other words, the power of the nation is a set of forces to maintain people’s natural rights. Citizens, however, have not abandoned their natural rights; they have simply transferred them to the nation. Since it is only transferred, those who exercise national power should be representatives and

agents of the people. This is why Hobbes is, interestingly, even said to be the father of democracy.

Thus, Hobbes's book *Leviathan* made a great contribution to the development of absolute monarchy as well as modern democracy, a conundrum to solve (as discussed later in Chapter 6). At any rate, it was a work born from a Christian worldview, and its fundamental idea is very modern.

In England at that time, Christianity had a tremendously dominant power, so people could be executed for having a rebellious belief if it was a thought that did not follow Christianity. Hobbes made a great achievement in sublimating his idea in favor of secular sovereign states, while successfully integrating Christianity with it. Without his contribution, democracy might not have been born. Having said that, his logic remains ambivalent, as seen above. The next section continues to look into his thesis on stage sovereignty from the perspective of systematic theology.

CHAPTER 3

NATURE OF HUMAN KINGSHIP AND SOVEREIGNTY FROM SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the nature of human kingship and sovereignty⁴¹ from systematic theology. John Calvin's Institute of the Christian Religion paved the way for the systematization of theology from a protestant perspective, hence a focus first. Then Westminster Confession of Faith serves as a more standardized expression of reformed theology, hence a second focus below.

3.2 Brief Overview of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* on the role of Civil Magistrates vis-à-vis Ecclesiastical Authority

Chapter 20 of Calvin's *Institutes* (Calvin, 1560) is entitled "Of Civil Government discusses the necessity, dignity, and use of Civil Government." Divine appointment of civil magistrates is emphasized in this chapter; with regard to the function of magistrates, the Lord has not only declared that he approves and is pleased with it, but, moreover, has strongly recommended it to us by the very honorable titles which he has conferred upon it.

⁴¹ Pratt (ed.), *NIV Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan. 2003), 908. He describes divine sovereignty in general, as follows. It is based on the Biblical truth that God is the true king over all, and unlike human kings, there is no limit to God's sovereignty: the entire universe depends on him. Reformed theology stresses God's sovereignty in three ways, creation, providence and grace. Concerning his sovereignty in creation, he simply commanded the universe into existence out of nothing (Genesis 1:1-3). As for his sovereignty in providence, God rules over all things and does his will as he pleases. God's sovereignty over history is comprehensive and he carries out all that he decrees, without failure. Regarding his sovereignty in grace, his salvific grace is unlike any human kingship, which cannot provide everlasting life in eternal peace. However, God's sovereignty does not deny the reality of human dignity; rather, his sovereignty promotes it, since human dignity is the very reflection of divine sovereignty. Without recourse to God, however, human dignity, including the "sovereignty of kingship", loses its meaning.

In Calvin's theological view, the secular government is distinct from the spiritual and internal kingdom of Christ, yet they are not inconsistent with each other.⁴² The former begins the heavenly kingdom in us here on earth, while the latter is assigned to foster and maintain the *external* worship of God, to defend sound doctrine and the Church, and to adapt our conduct to human society, to form our manners to civil justice, to conciliate us to each other, to cherish common peace and tranquility.

It is therefore a theological mistake to seek and include the kingdom of Christ under the elements of this world, as Scripture clearly teaches that the blessings which we derive from Christ are primarily spiritual. With regard to the function of civil magistrates, the Lord not only declared that he approves and is pleased with it, but, moreover, has strongly recommended it to us by the very honorable titles which he has conferred upon it: they have a commission from God, that they are invested with divine authority, and, in fact, represent the person of God as His *substitutes*: this implies that apart from God, there can never be absolute sovereignty in human headship.

The Apostle Paul is properly speaking of the senate of grave men who were appointed in the primitive Church to take charge of public discipline. This office, in the Bible (e.g., 1 Corinthians 12:28) is called "governments" (κυβερνήσεις, *kybemeseis* in Greek, meaning government, and administration). Paul speaks much more clearly when he comes to a proper discussion of the subject. For he says that "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God." (Romans 13:1).

⁴² Chapter 20 (paragraph 1), Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, available online (<http://www.ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/Calvin%20Institutes%20of%20Christian%20Religion.pdf>), 1560.

Calvin takes up the examples of leaders with authority, such as David, Josiah, and Hezekiah; others of governors, as Joseph and Daniel; others of civil magistrates among a free people, as Moses, Joshua, and the Judges. Their functions as leaders of the people of Israel were approved by the Lord. There is no doubt, Calvin continues, that civil authority is, in the sight of God, not only just sacred and lawful, but the most sacred, and by far the most honorable, of all stations. However, importantly, their authority or sovereignty is obviously not exerted apart from God. There can never be a secular, God-less state sovereignty.

3.3 Reformed Theology on Secular Authority

Reformed theology on secular authority, as exemplified in Calvin's Institutes, was later to be formed into the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (in 1646). This Confession is contemporary with Hobbes' *Leviathan* (published in 1651). The Confession's Chapter 23 entitled "Of the Civil Magistrate" addresses state sovereignty as follows: "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 therefore "lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth." Civil magistrates, however, "may not assume to themselves the

administration of the Word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith.”

Having said that, the Confession remarks, “as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger.” Also, “as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief.”

It is the duty, not the right, “of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretense of religion or of infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever...” (Chapter 23).

The Dutch reformed theologian Berkhof⁴³, in his influential *Systematic Theology*, touches on the civil authority as follows. “civil authority... has no power in ecclesiastical matters”, as well as the following summary statement separating the office of the civil government and the church government:

The State represents the government of God over the outward and temporal estate of man, while the Church represents His government of man's inward and spiritual estate. The former aims at assuring its subjects of the possession and enjoyment of their external and civil rights, and is often constrained to exercise coercive power over against human violence. The latter is founded in opposition to an evil spirit and for the purpose of delivering men from spiritual bondage by imparting to them the knowledge of the truth, by

⁴³ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, available online (<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/berkhof/systematictheology.vii.i.v.html>), 1941, Chapter 4, Paragraph 1.

cultivating in them spiritual graces, and by leading them to a life of obedience to the divine precepts (in IV. The Power of the Church, A. The Source of Church Power).

Reformed theologian Moltmann⁴⁴ takes on the stance of political theology, which is a theological branch trying to find theological concepts or ways of thinking that relate to secular politics, e.g., human dignity as arising from humans being created as God's image. He relates Hobbes's discussion of absolute sovereignty to the socialist centralism of the command economy as a historical offshoot of absolute monarchy; and points out that in modern Europe, it has collapsed and instead, the federal republic with a diversity of regional, local and personal initiatives becoming stronger, the trend away from the ideological claim of Hobbes in *Leviathan*.

Yet Hobbes's theological views in the book (*Leviathan*) is diversely and partially interpreted; the effort to link the theology of Hobbes in the context of trinity and Christian communities (as sovereign states) can naturally have diverse opinions. Hobbes might have promoted theologically backed establishment of an absolute monarchy; he might have also encouraged the view of a god of Deism and hence the related political view that absolute rights of people lead to the absolute secular sovereignty of a king (since the god of Deism does not interfere with the secular sphere).

Geach⁴⁵ remarks that the religious belief of Thomas Hobbes has been taken *curiously* at best when only a few chapters of *Leviathan* is read; yet as one read the

⁴⁴ Moltmann, "Covenant or Leviathan? Political Theology for Modern Times" (*Scottish Journal of Theology*, Volume 47, Issue 1, February 1994); 19-42.

⁴⁵ Geach, "The Religion of Thomas Hobbes" (*Religious Studies*, Volume 17, Issue 4, December 1981); 549-558.

whole of Leviathan, the impression changes and one would take the theological view of Leviathan seriously. Atheists were rare and obscure in seventeenth-century England, making it difficult to label Hobbes as such Willis⁴⁶.

Thus, while the actual religious stance of Hobbes remains unclear, it is true that he made a large impact on the way theology is done in connection to the secular society. Kemp⁴⁷ discusses the links between divine sovereignty and (human) political sovereignty; the rise of nominalism and its influence over modern political theory is also addressed.

Morrow⁴⁸ points out that the early modern political philosopher Thomas Hobbes played a pivotal role in the emergence of modern biblical criticism. An examination of his work on the Bible in his *Leviathan* shows how his exegesis supported his political agenda, with the political context to Hobbes's biblical criticism shaping the way in which he interpreted the Bible: his was an attempt to politicize the modern biblical criticism. Specifically, Hobbes attempted to place the Bible not only in the hands of the theologians, but also in the hands of state-appointed secular officials. It can therefore be said that after Hobbes, early modern politics contributed to shaping modern biblical criticism in later centuries.

As seen above, Hobbes was the first to advocate the social contract theory that the authority of the political body came from the inherent rights of the people

⁴⁶ Willis, "God and Thomas Hobbes" (*Church History*, Volume 29, Issue 3, September 1960); 275-297.

⁴⁷ Kemp, "Whence the Sovereignty? Disentangling Some Theo-Political Concepts" (*Modern Theology*, Volume 35, Issue 4 (<https://doi.org/10.1111/moth.12475>), 2019).

⁴⁸ Morrow, "Leviathan and the Swallowing of Scripture: The Politics behind Thomas Hobbes' Early Modern Biblical Criticism" (*Christianity & Literature*, vol.61, no. 1, 2011); 33-54.

themselves, rather than being supported by the innate rights of the king or the absolute authority of God. He started with a human being not as a social being, but as an individual with private desires and passions and natural rights as inherent rights.

It was therefore Hobbes's achievement to have considered the constitutional principle of society starting from free and equal individuals; his social contract theory however had another feature. He made an assertion that once individuals make a contract and transfer their rights to the political body, they will lose all rights thereafter. Put differently, the political body to which individuals have transferred their rights to should be the absolute entity that owns all the rights. Hobbes likens the political body to the monstrous creature Leviathan in the Old Testament. For it is an entity with unparalleled power, with an overwhelming presence (but not God) that no human can check for power.

According to Hobbes, *Leviathan*, or sovereignty, who has been assigned the rights of all its citizens, has the right to enact the law, enforce courts, punish and punish, and engage in war. On the other hand, individuals who have agreed to transfer their own rights will lose all rights thereafter, and will be positioned as subjects.

It seems that Hobbes's argument like this can be criticized theologically in several ways. First, Hobbes presupposes that the individuals presumed to be Hobbes are utilitarian individuals who are only interested in fulfilling their wishes. Because human behavior, albeit tainted by sin, still seeks to meet the desire, and at the same time recognizes self and the world correctly, finds joy in being in the world, and seeks to collaborate with others to build a better world. In this sense, it must be said that Hobbes's view of human beings is too narrow, and if the individual was understood in a

different way, a view other than “the battle of each person against each other” would have been possible.

The second criticism concerns the view of natural rights. The starting point for Hobbes’s argument was that each individual had a natural right, the right to self-preservation. Then, even if they agree to transfer their rights to *Leviathan*, they would have the right to protect their own survival if the sovereign state did something unreasonable, such as endangering their lives. The interpretation that citizens can recover their natural rights should also be justified as discussed by Calvin on the role of civil magistrates (protector of citizens).

From the perspective of Reformed Theology, God first made a covenant with Adam in the form of “covenant of works.” All humans, however, violated the covenant of works through the agency of Adam’s sin. After Adam sinned, God established a new covenant, i.e., “the covenant of grace.” Then God renewed the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Jesus.

Martinich⁴⁹ points out that Hobbes’s version of the flow of history in four epochs is, while being novel, still based on the Bible, as follows. (1) The first epoch started with Adam. In this epoch, God was sovereign over all humans through his omnipotence, but not sovereign over any particular nation. (2) The second epoch begins either with Abraham or Moses (this point is unclear from the reading of *Leviathan*); in this epoch, God established a special way to exert his sovereignty over a particular people. (3) The third epoch began with the accession of Saul as the king of the Israelites

⁴⁹ Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); 287-288.

and will continue until the second coming of Jesus. (4) the fourth epoch will begin with the return of theocratic reign on the earth (under the name of the Millennial Kingdom).

In a nutshell, Table 1 attempts to summarize the viewpoint of Reformed Theology concerning the sovereignty of states both in the Bible and in modern times. There are five issues or concepts in connection to the sovereignty of states.

Table 1. Viewpoints of Reformed Theology concerning sovereignty of states

Issue	Viewpoint
Existence of (Christian) God	God exists (which is the presupposition of Christians).
Human faculty	God created humans with some God-driven yet limited faculty, beyond materialistic movements.
Natural rights of humans	God, out of grace, grants us the life to glorify and enjoy Him; it is not the <i>autonomous</i> natural rights but with God's <i>grace</i> , it is secure.
Natural law that humans should obey	A set of God-derived ethical laws (in the form of the Ten Commandments) functions as a natural law.
Sovereignty of states	Relative only, and our God alone has absolute sovereignty; the king, or the government, only has external rights to govern its citizens, while spiritual guidance is always given by God.

Source: Made by the author.

After Adam's sin, a new covenant had to be established in order to restore a relation between God and humans; this is the covenant of grace." The covenant was originally made with Abraham, and renewed with Isaac, Jacob, king David and others. With the anointing of Saul as king which heralded the third epoch as in the above, it is unclear whether it was under God's positive approval or not. At any rate, what we should notice above is that it is not that we humans have inherent natural rights, but only God's grace can provide believers with whatever is necessary (spiritual as well as

material needs inside a state) in His own timing. God has the sovereignty to decide

when and how to implement this.

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CHAPTER 4

CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITIES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

4.1 Historical Context of Rivalry between Civil Authorities and Secular State Authority in the West

This chapter discusses the relation between civil and ecclesiastical authorities from church history; the regional focus is placed on the western Europe. Church history is especially important for investigating the historical trend of secularization in which the national sovereignty issue is included. Grenz and Olson (1992), McGrath⁵⁰, Dowley, and Hoffecker⁵¹, both of which provide a historical account of how the secularization of the west happened in the church history leading up to the 17th century. Hobbes addressed in *Leviathan* the issue of there being two societal authorities, the sovereign state and the church leadership. To the next section (4.2) makes a brief overview of St. Augustine's patristic masterpiece, *City of God*, which provides a theological thrust of the development of history in God's will, addresses the nature of the state authority (namely, the Roman empire) vis-à-vis the Christian kingdom, i.e., the "City of God." Section 4.3 makes eschatological overviews on the role of sovereign states.

4.2 Brief Overview of St. Augustine's *City of God* in terms of the primacy, role and future of human-led nation states

⁵⁰ McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998).

⁵¹ Grenz and Olson, *20th-Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992); McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998); Dowley (ed.), *Introduction to the History of Christianity* (Singapore: First Fortress Press, 2002); Hoffecker (ed.), *Revolutions in Worldview* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2007).

Augustine's major work, *City of God*, was published successively from 413 to 426. It was an apologetic work against the charge that faith in Jesus Christ destroyed the Roman Empire. Augustine's response was that Rome fell because of its internal non-Christian nature. It shows that the true development of humanity, including sovereign states (like Rome), is the unfolding struggle between faith and unbelief. Importantly, while Augustine drew a distinction between the City of God (characterized by people's love of God) and the City of Man (featured by people's self-love), he did not dismiss the hope for transformation of both individuals and society: he inspired the implementation of this worldview in all spheres, including in politics Hoffecker⁵².

According to Augustine, when God is supposed to be the creator of human nature, and God's will is the ultimate source of natural law, the very basis of human society including the sovereign state. The Bible is, of course, nothing but the law of God unless it differs from natural law. This also applies to human reason, and when it is emphasized that God gave reason to human beings, God is also the ultimate source of human relative sovereignty which includes the sovereign state.

In the medieval period, a scholastic movement, in favor of human reason, began in the western philosophical and theological societies. Hoffecker⁵³ points out that the renowned 13th century scholastic theologian, Thomas Aquinas, arguably, operated with a two-story view of reality: on the top level is God's grace, while nature is a lower sphere; Aquinas, in a sense, paved the way for a "secular" sphere for politics, economics and so forth. Then, for Aquinas, natural law is a part of the permanent law,

⁵² Hoffecker (ed.), *Revolutions in Worldview* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2007); 127.

⁵³ Hoffecker (ed.), *Revolutions in Worldview* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2007); 157.

which is God's idea of governing the universe, yet with some division between divinity and secularity.

Hobbes, in the 17th century, built on these epistemologically crucial contributions by earlier theologians to propound his thesis on the sovereignty of secular states, in a sense ordained by God through the divinely granted natural law. Church history shows that Reformation of the 16-17 centuries in Europe paved the way for secularization as described in Myers⁵⁴. An emphasis on logically interpreting the Scripture (but based upon the faith as pre-supposition) and the establishment of human-operated "sovereign states" arose together in this Reformation era.⁵⁵

This principle of the separation of Church and State did not originally mean the "neglect" of church in public policy making. It surely did not mean non-connection of church to civil affairs. In the course of time, however, a secular orientation began to prevail, and as a result, the view that "Church should not interfere with state affairs" became an implicit norm. Later in the nineteenth century, the *Syllabus of Errors* (of 1864) released by Pope Pius IX lists and condemns 80 errors of modern thought, including separation of Church and State. While US has this policy of separation, again, it did not mean marginalization of Church. Unfortunately, though, the popular culture of the US went along that very path of treating church as merely providing inner peace for its adherents.

From the above overview of the course of history, it can be said that we read the source of the separation of Church and state into Hobbes's *Leviathan* perhaps in an excessive manner. And the liberalization trend even after the 19th century seems to

⁵⁴ Myers, *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989); 54.

⁵⁵ The latter idea of "sovereign states" entailed the "separation of church and state" in the US.

make an impact on the way *Leviathan* is interpreted. Popular culture in the modern world and the word “liberalism” have much in common, as in Myers⁵⁶. Liberalism’s individualism and rationalism provided the social freedom for a movement that shook its fist in the face of Liberalism (Myers⁵⁷). But, according to Myers, this liberalism created the “demon” that would threaten to destroy itself, since human-centered liberty only destroys true liberty in bondage to the sovereignty of God. At any rate, secular sovereign states and the spread of liberalism have much in common.

The word “liberalism”, however, should have a limited sense only, within faith in God, rather than “faith having a limited sense within the bounds of reason alone” as discussed by the influential philosopher Kant⁵⁸. Secularization had spawned the support for the view that Hobbes, albeit somewhat vague on his true theological standpoint, was the early advocate of the separation of civil authority and ecclesiastical one.

4.3 Eschatological Views on the Role of Sovereign States

Eschatologically speaking, human kingship has to culminate in the human kingship of Jesus Christ.⁵⁹ As the son of David, Jesus fulfilled the promises given to David’s dynasty (2 Samuel 7). David’s monarchy seemed to be completely destroyed during the exile; Jesus, however, came to re-establish David’s throne and to bring in the everlasting kingdom of God with the ultimately authority (Matthew 1:1). In fact, as

⁵⁶ Myers, *All God’s Children and Blue Suede Shoes* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989); 54.

⁵⁷ Myers, *All God’s Children and Blue Suede Shoes* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989); 109.

⁵⁸ Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, (downloadable at http://mail.trempealeau.net/religion_within_the_limits_of_reason_alone_immanuel_kant.pdf), 1793.

⁵⁹A one-on-one matching of Biblical eschatological description and the current events, e.g., conflicts between the US and China as the world’s two largest sovereign states (in the form of a new cold war), is not possible. However, the actual history is, broadly speaking, in line with the realization of the eschaton (comment from Dr. Bruce Baugus of RTS, at an interview on August 21, 2020).

Pratt⁶⁰ mentions, the title Christ (“anointed one”) had come to be virtually synonymous with *king* (Mark 15:32; Luke 23:2). Through his resurrection and ascension into heaven, Jesus initiated his sovereign kingship over all the world (Ephesians 1:20-23; Revelation 2:26-27). Thus, human kingship was, on God’s side, perfectly designed, with the true King Jesus being the glorious fulfillment of God’s people’s hopes since the Abrahamic covenant.

In Christ, divine and human kingship are brought into perfect harmony; during Hobbes’s and our time period, Jesus continues to rule until all of his enemies have been banished to a position under his feet (1 Corinthians 15:25); after this, the eschatological end will come, when he, together with all of his faithful servants, will rule in the new heavens and on the new earth (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 11:15; 22: 5). Concerning eschatology, “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). Hence the sovereignty of God which is so heavily emphasized in the book of Daniel reaches its climax in Revelation.

It is worthwhile to note here that the kingdom of God has duality, spiritual and earthly. Eschatologically speaking, these two kingdoms will merge to form God’s true kingdom with Jesus as its king. The two kingdoms doctrine⁶¹, which is a Protestant Christian doctrine that teaches that God is the ruler of the whole world and that he rules in two ways (through law and through grace), is relevant to the thesis.

⁶⁰ Pratt (ed.), *NIV Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003); 406.

⁶¹ Luther and Calvin took the two kingdoms view of two kingdoms view.

Civil authority in the current age is tentative, temporary and not absolute. Ecclesiastical authority on earth is also limited and under the noetic effects of sin. How continuous or discontinuous then is the state sovereignty from an eschatological viewpoint? Theologically speaking, ethnic sovereign states might survive the intermediate era which lasts until Jesus' second coming and the establishment of the eschatological kingdom. Civil governments as part of the function of the kingdom, however, might not survive the intermediate era; hence, the civil government of a sovereign state has only a limited sphere sovereignty.⁶²

Hobbes discusses that since the eschatological kingdom, which will be ruled by God with Jesus as king, is ahead of our own era, the current secular states should have the sovereignty and supremacy over the true kingdom of God in the eschatological era. For sure, the "Kingdom of God" in the scripture was the "kingdom" here on earth, with God's prophets proclaiming its establishment. Hobbes, however, claims that with establishment of king Saul, God willed that the secular kingdom play a supreme role over the yet-to-come spiritual kingdom.

Put differently, Hobbes's position on this is that the Bible itself tells us that the nation should have absolute civil power and the church should not intervene in secular politics. None other than the Bible is the basis for "absoluteness of national sovereignty" and "superiority of the nation over the church." To Hobbes, in short, this very arrangement was God's idea. The ancient communities and kingdoms in the Old Testament were featured as possessing "cultic unity", hence "theocracy." Political leaders were often prophets (i.e., people who receive the word and revelation of God) at

⁶² A personal remark by Dr. Bruce Baugus of RTS on 15 July 2020 at an online meeting with the author.

the same time. Hobbes says, however, that it was legitimate for the Israelite to obey the leader because they were “political sovereigns” rather than “because they were under divine revelation.”

Eschatologically, Jesus says, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). That is, the Savior came into this world to become king and judge in the coming world. For Hobbes, the kingdom of God was not a figurative one (before the loss of God's kingdom by choosing Saul); it was a historical reality⁶³, and it was the government through God's chosen person.

However, Hobbes’s era (as it is in the present age) was an era in which one must somehow await the savior’s return, and the true kingdom of God is not a reality; in this intermediate state, therefore, God had ordained the secular sovereign state to exert its absolute-looking power even over religious authorities. However, it is clear that this kind of arrangement cannot be established without a Christian society in the background. Separation of church and state in the current age does not mean segregation of church from secular affairs; and eschatologically, the three (or threefold) offices of Jesus, Prophet, Priest and King, will eventually be unified. At this point, there will be no difference between the civil and ecclesiastical authority; the sovereignty of the Lord pervades the new Kingdom as in Revelation 21:21-24: “I did not see a temple in the city, because the LORD God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it”.

⁶³ State, “Hobbes and Hooker; Politics and Religion: A Note on the Structuring of Leviathan,” (*Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. XX, no.1, March 1987); 79-96.

CHAPTER 5

CHRISTIAN ASSESSMENT OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF NON-CHRISTIAN STATES

5.1 Possibility of Inter-Faith Dialogue among Religiously Diverse Sovereign States

Introduction

This Chapter assesses the role of non-Christian sovereign states and the possibility of inter-faith dialogue between Christian sovereign states and non-Christian ones. As the twenty-first century brings an unprecedented number of threats involving nation states as well as non-state actors, the issue of state “sovereignty”, originating in the sovereignty of God yet secularized in use, has to be examined, with diverse non-Christian sovereign states also in view. The book *Leviathan* somewhat assumed that Christianization of the society was the only right norm. In the 21st century world, this is not the case, with sovereign states with heterogeneous religious as well as institutional backbones co-existing. This chapter therefore makes a Christian assessment of the sovereignty of non-Christian states, since there cannot be value-neutral discussion; the author’s Christian viewpoint is inevitably reflected as a soundly “biased” standpoint, or presupposition (discussed in 5.2 below).

As examined in previous chapters, Hobbes said: “the nation is the highest authority”; however, there must have been something to compare with the nation. Actually, there was a rival organization for the nation that Hobbes was aware of. That was the “Church.” Britain has a “national religion” system (although it was temporarily interrupted by the Puritan Revolution, the Church of England. It is a system in which the king also serves as the top of the church. Even though it is called a church, it is a part of the nation and an organization within the state system, so there was no problem

for Hobbes. The problem is that there were many other churches that can be created from below without relation to the nation.

For example, there were churches called “independent church” of Puritans, which literally sought independence from the state church, and other churches such as Baptists and Quakers existed. Another case was the church called Catholic Church, a huge international organization that comes out of the country. Hobbes argues that “national sovereignty is absolute” in response to the fact that such churches outside the state system are politicized against the backdrop of the authority of God. Hobbes, however, is a very enthusiastic Christian, and he was also reading the Bible seriously. For Hobbes, after all, “God’s will is everything.” But is the nation greater than the church that should convey God’s will?

5.2 Cornelius Van Til’s Presuppositionalism, John Frame’s Tri-perspectivalism and God’s Sovereignty

Cornelius Van Til’s (1955) presuppositionalism, or the epistemological stance that knowledge and existence of God should be the starting point of our logical thinking, is pertinent to the discussion of absolute sovereignty of secular authority since Christian viewpoints have an indispensable impact on how we view the absoluteness of natural law. If we do not start from the “soundly biased” standpoint of the existence of absolutely sovereign God, the source of absoluteness of natural law as well as natural rights would simply be lost.

Frame’s⁶⁴ Tri-perspectivalism is related to this issue of the source of absolute sovereignty: Our human epistemology is formed by the triangular relationship among

⁶⁴ Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008).

God, self and others⁶⁵; when the links between God and self, and between God and others, is lost; then there is no source of absoluteness secured for absolute kings (as others). Pre-suppositionalism takes a fundamental view that the God of the Bible is the source of all meaning, rationality and authority (that is, sovereignty). The Biblical supports for pre-suppositionalism should start with the very first verse of the Bible, i.e., Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”. In this verse, the existence of God is presupposed, not hypothetically posited for logical debates. That is because “God is the source of all meaning and rationality”.⁶⁶

Indeed, God-centered deductive method is the only valid worldview “for the believers” invited to the faith by the Holy Spirit. The Presuppositional method of Christian apologetics addresses faith as the starting point in human epistemology. And its nature is “transcendental”. The transcendental argument for God's existence has the following logic: (1) We must trust our senses and reason; (2) But these have no meaning unless God exists; (3) Therefore, we must believe in God as the ground of these faculties. Cornelius Van Til is a “Christian” transcendentalist in the sense that he presupposes the God of Christianity. In general, however, people are much less interested in this kind of transcendental pre-suppositionalism, since it can be taken as an offense against “neutral” arguments. Of course we Christians know that even the logic and meaning used in the arguments are borrowed capitals (borrowed from Christianity),

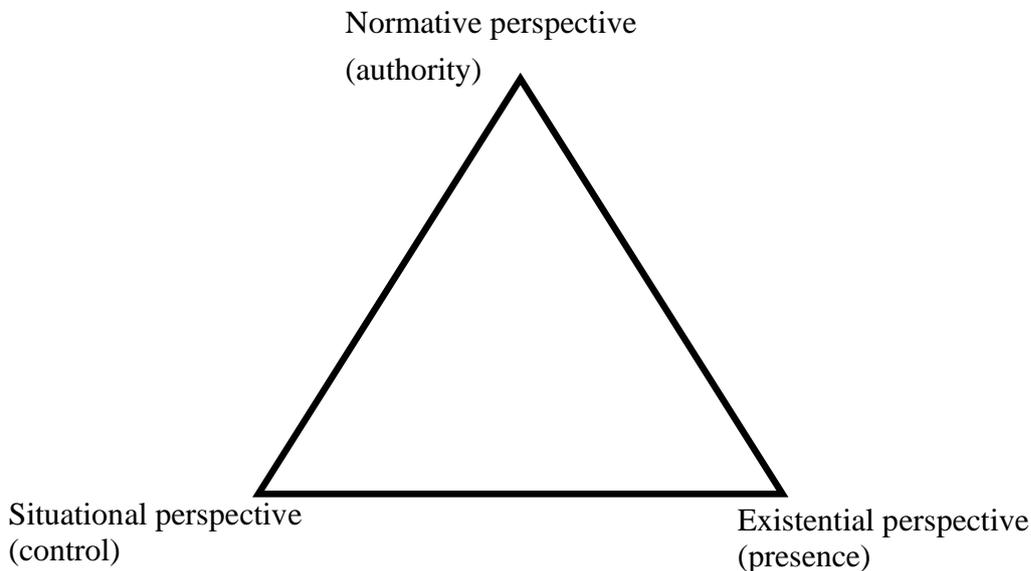
⁶⁵ Chamblin (1993) also applies a similar triangular relationship to secure individual’s spiritual wholeness. Chamblin, *Paul and Self: Apostolic Teaching for Personal Wholeness* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1993).

⁶⁶ Frame, “Presuppositional Apologetics” in Cowan, Steven and Stanley (eds.), *Five Views on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000); 220.

but they will simply try to suppress that point. They know God, but hate and try to repress his existence. This is indeed a paradigm of irrationality after the Fall.

Figure 1 shows the tri-perspectives (i.e., normative, situational and existential perspectives) proposed by Frame⁶⁷. Unless we presuppose God’s norm, there is no frame of reference for human epistemology, as the triangle shape (each apex is determined by the other two apexes) suggests.

Figure 1. Tri-perspectives of John Frame



Source: Based on Frame⁶⁸.

In other words, there is no guarantee that the normative, situational and existential perspectives cohere, as God is the only source of coherent perspectives. It is irrational for humans to assume human rationality: Rationalism supposes that the human

⁶⁷ Frame, *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 1987).
Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1994).

Frame, John, “A Primer on Perspectivalism”, available online (<http://www.frame-poythress.org/aprimer-on-perspectivalism/>), 2012.

⁶⁸ Frame, *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 1987).

mind is the ultimate criterion of truth. Humans, however, are clearly limited in their rationality.¹ In this sense, human rationality is simply presupposed. It might be valid until refuted, yet it was indeed refuted by modern physics. Romans 1:18-19 states: “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them”. Nonbelievers might then say, “what if we did not know the wrath of God?”

However, there can be no relativistic “if”, there can only be absolute “that”, i.e., that there is the scriptural presupposition being given to us humans. Human existential question of “where we came from” should presuppose the sovereignty of God because the question itself contains the “meaning”, which is created by the creator God. In this connection, Van Til⁶⁹ demonstrates his case that all facts are pre-interpreted by God (so there are no “brute” or uninterpreted facts) and that facts and norms are correlative (i.e., neither exist without the other).

The relativism of “trying not to presuppose anything” cannot hold on to its own statement, since if relativism is true, then the relativism itself has to be taken relatively, i.e., non-relativism (absolute belief) can also be taken to be a valid worldview. It seems there is no “point of contact”, yet here I think that there would be no “cognitive rest” for those relativists, which I am sure they are craving for at least subconsciously. Then this cognitive rest might be a “point of contact”: As in Van Til's transcendental argument, believers presuppose the existence and also “love” of God. We need to pray for a point

⁶⁹ Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, available online (http://mail.trempealeau.net/defense_of_the_faith_cornelius_van_til.pdf), 1955.

of contact depending on the people you are reasoning with, since the unbelievers you talk to already “know” God (as in Romans 1). It is comforting to know that our God is the creator of logic, meaning and also the human noetic functioning as part of human epistemology. However distorted unregenerate “self” might be, it has the longing to live eternally.

In the practical setting, Van Til’s pre-suppositionalism could incorporate the noetic effects of sin, i.e., human epistemology tends to display the “inertia” of sticking to the old “self”. “[I]f anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (II Corinthians 5:17). May this consideration to the noetic effects of sin be included as part and parcel of the 21st century (or even third Millennium) presuppositional apologetics when it is put into practice for the sin-tainted, but defeasible (through the work of the Holy Spirit) human episteme. Thus, only based on the presupposed knowledge of God, can we form a society and establish a sovereign nation state, with God as the true king and with a human as His substitute leader.

Another important point is depicted in Table 2 (this is the situation of Prisoner’s Dilemma⁷⁰, taken from the field of game theory in modern economics): from a human selfish perspective, the “political game” of whether to keep own natural rights or surrender it becomes two choices, with the consequent gains to self and the others, i.e., the first figures in parentheses in the table denote gains; the larger figure, the more

⁷⁰The prisoner’s dilemma is a paradox in decision analysis in which two individuals (or players) pursuing their own self-interests (personal benefits) do not produce the optimal outcome, ironically. The typical prisoner’s dilemma is defined in such a way that both parties choose to try to maximize personal benefits at the expense of the other individual’s benefit. As a result, however, both individuals find themselves in a worse state than if they had cooperated with each other in terms of the actual benefits gained. As a lesson, the lack of cooperation or social orderliness leads to the consequence of social impoverishment.

benefits. Both self and others try to selfishly maximize their benefits, they tend to keep the natural law; as a consequence, the war of all against all becomes a norm of the game, and this means the gains to self and others are, ironically, the smallest ($2+2=4$, which is smaller than any other sum of the social consequence in the Table), since there is no security and material affluence based on security.

Thus, “I keep my natural rights” and “Others keep their natural rights” become a logical consequence, since the personal benefit would be maximized when you keep the natural rights and others surrender them; all the parties involved, however, would think this way, and the consequence is that all will try to keep the natural rights but the gains are minimal (2 instead of 20 or 10 in the figure). In the Table, Consequence D: natural state (which is outside law), the worst-case scenario, will be realized instead of Consequence A: Social contract (which is inside natural law or orderliness).

What is notable here is that the consequence of Consequence D, or “all keep their natural rights” is seen to be *outside* the natural law or orderliness, since the situation is “war of all against all”, and no one will attempt to pursue social orderliness through complying with the natural law. When both individuals surrender their natural rights, the society is seen to be inside the natural law (Consequence A); that is, the whole human system is not always under an orderliness. This is an inconsistent situation, since not all the consequences are *inside* the realm of some sort of an overall social norm; even in the choice of surrendering natural rights (Consequence A), there is always the chance of returning back to Consequence D.

Table 2. Consequence of keeping/surrendering natural rights

Others’ choices (right)	Others surrender their natural rights	Others keep their natural rights
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My choices (bottom)		
I surrender my natural rights	Consequence A: (my benefit, others' benefit) = (10, 10)	Consequence B: (my benefit, others' benefit) = (0, 20)
I keep my natural rights	Consequence C: (my benefit, others' benefit) = (20, 0)	Consequence D: (my benefit, others' benefit) = (2, 2)

Source: Made by the author.

From a Christian perspective, the present age of “considering others as one’s own resource rather than God-given fellows” in the game over benefit capturing (as represented by the situation in Table 2) is the source of the war of all against all. Hobbes’s social contract theory suppresses or dismisses human sinfulness, and enshrines individual natural rights; the true source of natural rights, however, is not humans themselves but their creator, God.

Another way to reveal Hobbes’s inconsistency concerning sovereignty as authority is provided by Martinich.⁷¹ Hobbes in *Leviathan* is committed to the following four propositions:

- (1) If P₁ authorizes P₂ to do an action A, then P₁ has authority over P₂ with respect to A.
- (2) P₁ authorizes P₂ to govern P₁.
- (3) If P₁ has authority over P₂ with respect to A, then P₂ cannot have authority over P₁ with respect to A.
- (4) If P₁ authorizes P₂ to govern P₁, then P₂ has authority over P₁ with respect to governing P₁.

From (1) and (2), (5) follows.

⁷¹ Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); 171-172.

(5) P₁ has authority over P₂ with respect to governing P₁.

(6) P₂ cannot have authority over P₁ with respect to governing P₁.

(6') P₂ has authority over P₁ with respect to governing P₁.

Then (6) and (6') are inconsistent. Martinich⁷² points out that the proposition (4) above is the source of inconsistency: Hobbes asserts (4) since he wanted some way to subordinate citizens to the sovereign. However, there is a difference between “from authorized by” and “authority over”. The meaning of authorization is at stake here: without specifying what to authorize, the above contradiction happens.

A theological remark on the above inconsistency of Hobbes is that only God as the true authority can serve as universal sovereignty over humans, since He created us, together with the value of human life and natural rights associated with social contract. Authorization by humans to humans is only imperfect or inconsistent.

Schematically, Table 3 attempts to summarize the viewpoints of Hobbes concerning sovereignty of states as expressed in *Leviathan*. As discussed in previous chapters, Hobbes's viewpoints in connection to the sovereignty of states are subject to the following three assumptions: “Hobbes was a true Christian” (Assumption 1), “Hobbes was a secret atheist” (Assumption 2), and “Hobbes was confused with his own religious belief” (Assumption 3). The five parameters considered are: “Existence of (Christian) God”, “Human faculty”, “Natural rights of humans”, “Natural law that humans should obey” and “Sovereignty of states.” The conclusion of Hobbes concerning the absoluteness of secular states is more or less common, with some important remarks. In sum, Hobbes's religious standpoint still remains undetermined in

⁷² Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

the academic circle; having said that, his support for a secular absolute sovereignty of nation states is rather established. In order to further investigate the viewpoints of Hobbes, the following two sections address two cases, where sovereignty is at stake in an intricate manner in our contemporary society.

Table 3. Viewpoints of Hobbes concerning sovereignty of states as expressed in *Leviathan*

	Assumption 1: Hobbes was a true Christian	Assumption 2: Hobbes was a secret atheist	Assumption 3: Hobbes was confused with his own religious belief
Existence of (Christian) God	A Christian God exists	The concept of a Christian God might be compatible with atheistic philosophy.	Not sure; both philosophical and theological investigations should be pursued.
Human faculty	Materialistic movement but God willed that (similar to deism)	Materialistic movement	Materialistic movement
Natural rights of humans	Relative but God willed that natural rights be virtually absolute	Absolute	Not sure but there should be some sorts of rights for social orderliness
Natural law that humans should obey	Given by God	It self exists	It should exist, otherwise sovereignty of states cannot be discussed logically.
Sovereignty of states	Absolute since God willed that	Absolute	Almost absolute (since actual states look powerful)

Source: Made by the author based on the description of *Leviathan*.

5.3 Possibility of Dialogue with Muslim Sovereign States

In the above, I discussed the religion of medieval Europe in particular, but it is not a phenomenon only in Europe. In Islam, religion and law have the same root, and there is no idea of dividing the secular world into two. The secular differences are not clearly established. In other words, Islam has no distinction between canonical and secular laws. Islamic law is a system of unity of religion in that it includes God's orders regarding political and legal principles as well as religious worship and ceremonies. In this respect, it is fundamentally different from the Western European law, which is based on the separation of state and religion.

Again, no distinction is made between politics and religion in Islam, and secularity is fully blended with Muslim God. In other words, Islam is based on the principle of political and religious unity. It is, on the other hand, said that the American democracy and individualism of this day have, in a sense, inherited the tradition of medieval Europe. America, where people do not seem to cherish absolutism, has developed a system of civil liberties and self-help to that extent, so it has built a system and spirit to control it rather than relying on public authority as much as possible. Medieval Europe can be featured as a Christian society, yet the people of the Middle Ages were not particularly religious.

In the medieval Europe, there was no fundamental difference in the abilities of the king and the other princes; the relationship between the lord and his vassals was unreliable; and the danger of war and political tension were prevailing. Under these circumstances, transcendental authority like God was important for implementing politics, and people sought peace in the name of God and even waged war, in the name

of God. As a means for this, Christianity, which people can believe in common, had a meaning in response to the demand for absolute religious authority.

Turning again to the Islamic society, it is the world of Islamic religion and is represented by the so-called Ummah (Islamic community); it is neither a blood-related community nor a regional community because it is based solely on the covenant with God. Its power was delegated by God, and all Ummah Muslims, regardless of race, pedigree, status, old and young, male or female, operate a nation based on the Islamic law. For all Muslims, it seems, their God has an absolute sovereignty. In the presence of their God, the individual believers are powerless, and wealth, honor and power are useless. That is, all believers are equal before sovereign Islam God.

This signifies that in Islam, the right to control humans belongs only to God, and control over others is not allowed. In this way, Moslems form an intimate society through the Qur'an that regulates all public and private life in Moslem, with no difference in rank or class, equality across ethnic groups. Furthermore, it is basically both an international and domestic society where no self-help is allowed. In a nutshell, the Islamic state is a religious state. The legislative power in this political system is monopolized by God and not in the power of the state. Sovereignty does not belong to the nation, but says, "The sovereignty belongs only to Allah, and you shall not serve anyone other than him" (Quran 12:40). And the nation is regarded only as a tool or a tool for the purpose of realizing justice, which is the law of God. *Shariah* (the Islamic Law) is a revelation method that God ordered the believers to be modified and

destroyed for human convenience. The correct way of life is the way of life to heaven. Sharia goes into the inner life of man⁷³.

Importantly, it seems there is a similarity between what people believe Hobbes said of the absolute sovereignty of nation states. According to Hobbes, a nation is the power of people by a contract to a person or a collegial body to protect them from mutual infringement. The nation that has become one is “sovereign”. Since we have entrusted our power to one sovereign state by contract, each person must obey whatever that the sovereign state does. According to him, it is the theory that a social contract was made by consent; hence the will of the nation born by the social contract is assumed to be absolute.

A crucial point of discussion then would be whether the Islam God is the same as, or different from the Christian God. This is well beyond the purview of this thesis⁷⁴, yet one thing is worth consideration: it is said that Muslim states originate in Abraham and his descendant Ishmael; the blessing of Abraham is at stake concerning how Christian sovereign states can relate to Muslim sovereign states. With the Christian tolerance that emphasizes that eventually, Christ’s authority will be revealed, we need not hastily judge non-Christians (so far); in this sense, there is always a possibility to relate to the non-Christian “sovereign” (self-claiming) states.

⁷³Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁷⁴ Padgett (2005) points out that while the two deities of Christianity and Islam should be distinguished, there are a lot of conceptual and terminological commonalities. The trinity of father, son and the holy spirit is dismissed in the case of the god of Islam; in this sense, the two gods have to be distinguished; however, the system of the government under Islam (which tends to emphasize the absolute sovereignty of the deity), is similar to that of a Christian government (a personal remark by Dr. Bruce Baugus of RTS, at an online conversation with the author on August 21, 2020). Padgett, “Do Christianity and Islam Worship the Same God?” (Breakpoint Colson Center, December 4, 2005). <https://breakpoint.org/do-christianity-and-islam-worship-the-same-god/> (accessed August 16, 2020).

Schematically, Table 4 attempts to summarize the sovereignty of Muslim states with some related concepts. There are two types of Muslim related states, i.e., the case where its fundamental law itself reflects Islam, and the case where the fundamental law itself is religiously rather neutral but inclined toward Islam. In either case, the God of Islam is taken to be at the sovereign position of the state. An important point, as mentioned above, is whether the God of Islam (supposed to be the God of Abraham) is the same as the Christian God. Depending on the answer to this question, the point of contact between Muslim states and Christian states will be determined. This topic is, again beyond the purview of this paper, yet it is a serious future research and practical question.

Table 4. Sovereignty of Muslim states

	Type 1: Fundamental law (Constitution) itself reflects Islam	Type 2: Fundamental law (Constitution) itself is religiously neutral
Existence of (Christian) God	If the Christian God is the same as the God of Islam, then God exists.	There can be multiple view on this, depending on the religion one adheres to.
Human faculty	God of Islam created humans with some God-driven yet limited faculty, beyond materialistic movements.	There can be multiple view on this, depending on the religion one adheres to.
Natural rights of humans	Basically no natural rights; God of Islam has the absolute rights, and humans are simply to obey the will of God.	There can be multiple view on this, depending on the religion one adheres to.
Natural law that humans should obey	Islam Law is equal to natural law.	Islam Law is one of the positive laws.
Sovereignty of states	Absolute, because of the Islamic Law	Absolute, because of the Hobbesian social contract

Source: Made by the author.

5.4 Possibility of Dialogue with Sovereign States with Atheistic Communism

What about the possibility of dialogue with atheistic communist states? Most notably in Asia (where the author is based), the People's Republic of China⁷⁵ would be categorized as such a sovereign state. The root of atheistic communism is in Karl Marx's *Capital*. He was a significant twentieth-century philosopher who wrote against the human and social problems of capitalism in its early form characterized by exploitation of workers by capitalists⁷⁶.

Communism, socialism and Marxism are similar terms (of course with different ramifications in details) and are used interchangeably in what follows. Marxism is said to be based on materialism as well as arguably "scientific" socialism, while denying class societies and religious beliefs.⁷⁷

The essence of Marxism is not economics but some sort of anti-God standpoint dismissing the sovereignty of the Lord. Under the pretext of revolutionizing the oppressed world, proponents of Marxism is engaged in a "Satanic" ideology of "revenge" against God for having "created" such an unfair world. It is said that the logic of *Capital* is patterned after Judaism or some sort of monotheism: the preservation of the central communist party is the sole purpose, i.e., its god, or an idol. In this sense, it

⁷⁵ In connection to historical mission activities in China, Moffet (1998) details how the eastward spread of Christianity was made, with China in view: the Nestorian Christianity is said to have arrived in China in the 7th century during the Tang dynasty, but a large-scale mission was conducted in the 16th century by Jesuit missionaries. Then in the modern era, China as a sovereign state adopted atheistic communism. Thus, the Chinese society has a multi-layers in terms of religious attitudes. Moffet, *A History of Christianity in Asia (Volume I: Beginnings to 1500*, New York: Orbis, 1998).

⁷⁶Peterson, *The Concise History of Christianity* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2002); 294.

⁷⁷ The Chinese Communist Party is said to suppress religious beliefs because of its materialism and atheism. As for the religious beliefs of Party members, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and other leaders of each generation defined Communist Party members as atheists.

seems there is a point of contact between Christian sovereign states and sovereign states under atheistic communism.

As it happens, Hobbes materialism has an unexpectedly close connection to atheism: Hobbes's basic idea of humans is one of materialism. In Part I (Of Humans) of *Leviathan*, he shows a thorough view of materialistic human beings: human beings are objects, and their lives are motions. The human mind has no movements other than sensations, thoughts, and chains of thoughts. And the sources of all thoughts are physical sensations, which are the movements of external objects that put pressure on our sense organs. After all, motions produce nothing but motions. Thinking, to Hobbes, is an image as a "declining feeling."

However, atheistic communism, after all, dismisses the existent and sovereignty of our Lord, hence there is an inconsistency.⁷⁸ There is not much difference between humans and animals in this respect. To Hobbes, what makes humans superior to animals is the invention of letters and words, and without these inventions, there could be no nation, society, social contract or peace. The basic tendency of human beings in general is the restless desire for greater power. And a person's power is the means he has to obtain what he considers to be profitable in the future.

⁷⁸Baugus, *China's Reforming Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014); 21. In recent years Confucianism is becoming popularized in China, in reaction to the communist party's emphasis on a harmonious society in addition to just materialistic affluence; this means that morality, a non-material concept, is still important for a stable society (a personal remark by Dr. Bruce Baugus of RTS, at an online conversation with the author on August 21, 2020). This situation also reveals an inconsistency and social tension of a sovereign nation under materialistic communism. In connection to China, Baugus (2014: 21) points out that "Chinese society, from top to bottom, is founded on materialistic principles that have proved culturally bankrupt" and that Christianity might be able to replace materialism for a truly harmonious society.

Power, as a means of obtaining property, fame, friends and so forth, is what matters in this worldview. And he seeks greater power not because he is not satisfied with the *status quo*, but because he needs more power to maintain it. This, however, implies that the power will try to suppress other powers trying to preserve the lives of individuals under the system. In essence, “preservation of my life is good; preservation of your life, as long as it interferes with my purpose, is not good.”

From a philosophical perspective, humans are equal in their physical and mental abilities, and there is no difference between their values. This results in equality of our hope. However, there is a limit to wealth, and it is impossible to meet all the desires of each person. There is then conflicts among the people and distrust, which causes war. The natural state is always the state of a war, or “the war of all against all.”

In connection to the functioning of totalitarian states (including communism), the Nobel-prize economist Hayek⁷⁹ points out that there is too much uncertainty in the management of politics and economics based on any government planning, therefore it will sooner or later fail. In short, Hayek said that citizens have vastly different desires, thoughts and actions, and it is impossible to control them by the government. This is a violation of the social contract between the state and its citizens. It appears, therefore, that a sovereign state under atheistic communism cannot maintain its existence on its own secular ability. What this means is that if the central government with atheistic communism cherishes its own existence, then there is always the state of war.

Schematically, Table 5 attempts to summarize the viewpoints of states under atheistic communism concerning sovereignty of states. There are two columns

⁷⁹ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).

representing the official view and a realistic view. Overall, God is dismissed, and like Hobbes assumed, human faculty is basically one of materialistic movements; the central government takes on the position of a god. The sovereignty of the secular atheistic states is taken to be absolute, and its preservation is the utmost purpose of the sovereign state.

Table 5. Sovereignty of states under atheistic communism

	Official view of the civil government	Realistic view of the civil government
Existence of (Christian) God	Does not exist	Some of the citizens might think in the affirmative; religious “tolerance” could be secured as long as this does not infringe upon the existence of the state government.
Human faculty	It is a movement of materials, and it naturally exists (not given by a god), and the leader of the state has “all-powerfulness.”	There can be multiple view on this, depending on the religion one adheres to.
Natural rights of humans	The state has the rights over its citizens.	There can be multiple view on this, depending on the religion one adheres to.
Natural law that humans should obey	Communist Manifesto defined by the government is equal to natural law.	It should be acknowledged due to the necessity to negotiate with other states.
Sovereignty of states	Absolute, because of the universal validity of atheistic communism	Absolute, because of the Hobbesian social contract but more so because of the universal validity of atheistic communism

Source: Made by the author.

There is some anti-God standpoint in the way atheistic communism is operated. It is better to have some sort of a secular government than having no government, since citizens are selfish and sinful. Unknowingly, the secular authority is underpinned by God's absolute sovereignty. Indeed, as the Apostle Paul stresses (e.g., Romans 13:1-4),

obeying the secular authority is in an indirect sense, obeying the absolute sovereignty of God.

The point of contact between Christian sovereign states and states with atheistic communism seems to be limited. Eschatologically speaking, however, there is always hope, after much struggle, of reconciliation, not between the warring sovereign states but among the trilateral parties, i.e., God, my sovereign state and other sovereign states (as discussed in the next chapter).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion on the Research Hypothesis

The thesis has attempted to link the Biblical concept of God's sovereignty and the secular concept of national sovereignty. Overall, the thesis has attempted to link the Biblical concept of God's sovereignty and the secular concept of national sovereignty. Chapter 1 of this thesis has set the research hypothesis "the Scripture teaches only relative, God-derived sovereignty of human kings" and pointed out the paucity of theological research into the sovereignty of nation states. Chapter 2 has discussed the nature of Abrahamic Covenant, Mosaic Covenant and the anointing of Saul and David as King from biblical study perspectives. Hobbes's theological discussion on the sovereignty of kings and states has also been highlighted. Chapter 3 has made an overview of the nature of human kingship and sovereignty from systematic theology, and discussed that the outward means of human kingship and sovereignty to restrain sins. Chapter 4 discusses civil and ecclesiastical authorities from church history. Chapter 5 makes a Christian assessment of the sovereignty of non-Christian states (including Muslim states and states with atheistic communism), with inter-faith dialogue in view.

The main hypothesis of this thesis was that the Scripture teaches only relative, God-derived sovereignty of human kings: that is, while relative sovereignty is granted to Biblical human leaders, most importantly, to Abraham, Moses and King Saul, civil authority of sovereign states is not held to be above the cultic (religious) authority in the Bible. The preceding chapters have demonstrated that the above hypothesis holds, in spite of the Hobbes's apparent claim that there can be human absolute sovereignty.

Human relative sovereign power is always tainted by sin and susceptible to corruption; thus, human relative sovereignty has to be always sustained by God's absolute sovereignty.

Hobbes considers that this natural right of human beings is freely given and equal, but at the same time, he argues, multiple humans can by their nature of self-preservation, lead to the situation of "the war of all against all." He argued that he had a social contract to transfer individual rights to the state power, that is, the king, in order to overcome the situation, is indispensable. Hobbes's view of the relationship between an individual and a nation (king) as a "contract" was a philosophy that in a sense denies the divine right of kings.

In sum, Hobbes said: "the nation is the highest authority". However, there must have been something to compare with the nation. Actually, there was a rival organization for the nation that Hobbes was aware of: the "Church." Britain started in the 16th century to have a "national religion" system or the Church of England, although it was temporarily interrupted by the Puritan Revolution.⁸⁰ It is a system in which the king also serves as the top of the church. Even though it is called a church, it is a part of the nation and an organization within the state system, so there was no problem for Hobbes. The problem is that there were many other churches that can be created from below without relation to the nation.

For example, there were churches called "independent church" of Puritans, which literally sought independence from the state church, and other churches such as Baptists and Quakers existed. Another case was the church called Catholic Church, a

⁸⁰ Dowley (ed.), *Introduction to the History of Christianity* (Singapore: First Fortress Press, 2002).

huge international organization that comes out of the country. Hobbes argues that national sovereignty is absolute in response to the fact that such churches outside the state system are politicized against the backdrop of the authority of God.

6.2 Kingship of Christ and Hobbes's Discussion on the Present Age

This section briefly provides the wrap-up comment on the kingship of Christ and Hobbes's discussion on the present age. Hobbes's social contract theory is characterized by applying the viewpoint of the British empiricism that cherished direct observations; Hobbes in a sense applied it to the direct observation of humans and the state. He considers human existence as a substance (not the creature of God), and considers that the right to survive is an *autonomous* natural right (actually, God-breathed rights only) that all individuals equally have. In the present age when Christ has not yet returned, Hobbes "viewed the church as essentially a branch of the state and therefore subject to the control of the established secular authorities"⁸¹).

6.3 Brief Remark on the Future of Human State Sovereignty and God's Sovereignty

Eschatological viewpoints on sovereignty was also discussed in this thesis: God is in sovereign control over all creation. He creates, sustains, and redeems in sovereignty. He is the only one who can "micro-manage" the course of events happening to each of us. After all, micro control by the sovereign state is not possible, and anything can happen around the "sovereign" but powerless state.

⁸¹ Hoffecker (ed.), *Revolutions in Worldview* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2007); 199.

Sovereignty, in the Scripture, means all-powerfulness, hence God is the only source of eternal peace and affluence in the true sense of the words. For instance, the nuance of sovereignty (מְשִׁרָהּ *hammisrah* in Hebrew) in Isaiah 9:7⁸² (translated as “government”) is chieftainship. God is in sovereign control over all creation. He creates, sustains, and redeems in sovereignty.

And as is theologically recognized, there are three offices of Jesus Christ: Prophet, Priest and King. Only in Jesus are these offices, albeit distinct, unified and inseparable; what could be mentioned here is that among these three offices, the office of prophet comes first, implying that the authority of Priest and King comes from God, through Prophet as the direct bearer of God’s word.

Humans, as Hobbes mentions, seek peace out of the fear of death and the desire to have a comfortable life, that is, the desire to live and the desire to live. But in the natural state which is outside any order (if we dismiss God), it would be difficult to form a social contract, which is under some sort of orderliness. The Hobbesian view of humanity is correct on one side: certainly, when we observe our behaviors, we always seek self-interest. Oftentimes we have no choice but to think that our kindness is fundamentally under the guise of pursuing self-interest.

The nature of human sinfulness is suppressed in Hobbes’s discussion of human nature. Human motivations and passions for self-preservation themselves are not a sin, but it is important to regulate them. To that end, humans ultimately need Jesus

⁸² “Of the greatness of his *government* and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.” Sovereignty in modern times tends to be defined in an anthropocentric, narrow sense, especially in politics.

Christ the true King of a Christian sovereign state, in a spiritual and material sense.

Thus, it would be more correct to say that as a course of the historical event, Hobbes was led to defend absolute sovereignty of human kingship. Importantly, Hobbes does not specify who the sovereign is. This was the source of confusion as to what he meant by absolute sovereignty.

Theologically speaking, if the sovereign, i.e., a king, a dictator or a parliamentary system, follows God and then listens to the opinions of the people (sinful and therefore opportunistic, yet weak and fragile) and controls the country seriously, any type of sovereign states (under monarchy, democracy or communism) would start to function properly.

It is sometimes pointed out that Hobbes's theory of social contract is contradictory and dual, with Hobbes himself pledging loyalty to both the parliamentarians and the group in favor of absolute monarchy. After all, Hobbes was not in favor of the royal party or parliamentary politicians, he was just a scholar to follow the principle of absolute sovereignty of nations. However, absolute sovereignty comes from God who can only make self-reference to prove his absoluteness. And our secular society is not just a gathering, but an organic whole, as planned by God, and it requires new covenants and commitments. A society is not just a materialistic relationship in which human beings are born, but a system in which sovereign nations are shaped because of individuals' needs for self-preservation and prosperity.

Transformation to being a Christian, would make a drastic difference, however. Ultimately (or eschatologically) speaking, we can be hopeful that we (Christians) will be forming a truly absolute state with Jesus Christ as the sovereign king. The trilateral relationships among God, myself and other self, together with all the sovereign states

trying to preserve the lives of us individuals, will be restored in perfect harmony. The final kingdom is God's kingdom where people will rule with Christ over all creation. Of course, Hobbesian thinkers are invited to be transformed and brought into this truly sovereign state (kingdom) of God.

Hobbes's discussion, while rather ambivalent and unclear as to his religious commitment, was still taken, misguidedly, by modern scholars as well as political leaders to be in favor of the absolute sovereignty of secular states. While Hobbes, albeit being ambivalent and unclear, emphasized the absolute and autonomous sovereignty of the kingship of Israel, the relevant Scriptural passages clearly vindicate that human leadership of the people of Israel was always underpinned by the absolute sovereignty of God; put differently, nation states have relative sovereignty which merely reflects God's absolute sovereignty.

Non-Christian "sovereign" states should therefore be assessed by the pre-suppositional viewpoint that the God of Christianity is the only source of absolute authority. We can, however, be hopeful of the eschatological coming of Jesus as the true king, unifying the offices of prophet, priest and king and exerting absolute and gracious authority to all the citizens of His kingdom, or Christians, who have been delivered from any human kingship including illegitimate "sovereign" states.

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