

HOBBS CONFRONTS SCRIPTURE

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Thomas Hobbes was foremost among the seventeenth century political philosophers who led the Western world across the fault line separating classical from modern political philosophy. In doing so, he, like his other colleagues, had to confront not only classical political philosophy but the Bible. From the first of his writings to the last he consistently confronted Scripture. Reading Hobbes reveals both the ambiguity and the ambivalence of his confrontation with the Bible. Hobbes wished to assault orthodox or conventional Christian belief but at the same time is drawn to the Hebrew Scriptures, not only because it is necessary for him to confront it for the sake of his argument or because of the Bible's own elemental and compelling power. His struggle foreshadows and is even paradigmatic of that of modern man. This article traces his confrontation with Scripture in Leviathan.

I

With few exceptions, students of politics and political thought recognize that the seventeenth century was a fault line in human development, the beginning of the modern epoch, first in Europe and North America and subsequently spreading throughout the world. The modern epoch is notable for its break with premodern ways, both in the realm of ideas and actions. It set us off on the path toward the world that we know today.

Nowhere were the changes of modernity more evident than in the realm of the political. Leo Strauss powerfully demonstrated the seventeenth century political philosophers' break with classic political philosophy.¹ A critical part of that break was in the way that the philosophers of the "new science of politics" related to the Bible. When classical political philosophy emerged, the Greeks had no apparent knowledge of the Bible and its system. The authors or compilers of the Bible, in turn, whose origins much antedated Greek philosophy, while aware of pagan myth as it was manifested in the religions around them, were deeply thoughtful but not philosophic as we understand the term.

It was only in the Hellenistic era that exponents of biblical thought and Greek philosophy encountered one another. Among them were Jews faithful to their ancient religious tradition who nevertheless felt the need to know, understand and assimilate Greek

Jewish Political Studies Review 4:2 (Fall 1992)

philosophy to respond to the questions which philosophy posed to biblical religion. In the two centuries before the emergence of Christianity they developed a synthesis of biblical thought with its roots in *yirat shamayim*, literally, awe of Heaven, and philosophy that abjured the necessity for Divine sources and rooted its understanding entirely in human reason.²

The leading synthesizer of these two systems was Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (c.20 BCE-50 CE). Philo began with the Mosaic law as the foundation of philosophy but held that God had created the world indirectly through His potencies and attributes. Between the perfection of God and imperfect finite matter, all beings have their unity in and proceed from the Divine logos. Philo's teachings came just at the time of the emergence of Christianity and had a great impact on the Christian search for a synthesis between the Bible and philosophy. (After an initial period, they had much less impact on Jewish thought which went in another direction.) Indeed, as Harry Austryn Wolfson has demonstrated, it is the Philonic synthesis which formed the basis for Christian "philosophic" thought until the beginning of the modern epoch.

The synthesis that Philo crafted was destroyed by Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza in the mid-seventeenth century, as Wolfson points out. Spinoza, like Philo a Jew, felt comfortable assaulting the very foundations of that synthesis in pursuit of his goal to res secularize philosophy. Other seventeenth century philosophers who also assaulted the synthesis directly or indirectly, including Hobbes and Locke, were more circumspect because they were members of the majority Christian society and for them undermining the synthesis could be seen as a direct attack on Christianity. Spinoza, on the other hand, was not interested in attacking Christianity per se, but only in finding a place for a totally secular way of life by creating a secular space in the world where Jews and Christians could meet together without either having to accept the religion of the other.

Whatever the opportunities and constraints felt by the seventeenth century political philosophers, they had to confront Scripture in order to reconstruct the world of ideas on new foundations. In doing so they were aided by what had happened a century earlier, namely the Protestant Reformation, which, inter alia, restored direct contact between Christians and the biblical text, not filtered through 1500 years of church tradition which prescribed certain understandings and proscribed others and discouraged or forbade direct confrontation with the biblical teachings.³

The Protestant reformers returned to the original text for religious reasons with great piety, but they did so with maximum precision as well, seeking to understand the Bible in its original languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, rather than through Latin veils. They

systematically studied those languages, seeking to understand their philology. Particularly in connection with Hebrew and Aramaic they searched rabbinic writings, especially the biblical commentaries by medieval Jewish grammarians, in an effort to better understand the plain meaning of Scripture.⁴ The result was revolutionary in more ways than one. Protestantism itself flowed from their renewed contact with Scripture. More specifically, Reformed Protestantism developed its federal theology from its renewed understanding of biblical covenantalism, a theology which was not only to become the cutting edge for the most powerful and influential group within Protestantism, but which, later secularized, was to have a profound influence on the seventeenth century political philosophers of concern to us here and through them on the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century and the constitutional regimes that resulted from them. Their work also laid the foundations for the modern science of biblical criticism which, beginning with the seventeenth century, moved from a pious concern with precise philologies to secular and rather impious concern with the apparent contradictions, omissions and duplications in the biblical text.

The sixteenth century Protestant concern with Scripture led directly to the seventeenth century confrontation. The latter, in turn, resulted in giving the Bible new impact that decisively shaped the modern world even as it was based on a rejection of an older belief system and much of biblical theology. As they found it necessary to confront Scripture in order to refute it or explicate it in new directions, these secularizing political philosophers discovered the raw power of the biblical text. They were the first to generate the ambivalent relationship of moderns to the Bible; on one hand rejecting its doctrines or principles of faith yet, on the other, being drawn toward it as a compelling explication of the human condition through a set of profound "case studies" of human behavior. This ambivalence toward the Bible has remained with us, to be discovered anew in every generation of the modern and now the postmodern epochs. This deep and profound ambivalence is a key element in modern thought. It is nowhere better illustrated than among the first moderns.

Hobbes as the First Modern

Of the first moderns, Thomas Hobbes was the first of the first. From the first of his writings to the last he consistently confronted Scripture. Exactly how and with what perspective has been a matter of controversy since the first of his contemporaries accused him of atheism. Much ink has been spilled trying to discover the true nature of Hobbes's belief. The other articles written for this issue explore

that question with far greater expertise than this writer can hope to do and certainly with far greater philosophic skill, but even a mere empirical political scientist who is struck by the profundity of Hobbes's thought is also struck by the profundity of his confrontation with Scripture and biblical beliefs as he understood them.

For me, reading Hobbes reveals both the ambiguity and the ambivalence of that confrontation. It seems clear that Hobbes wishes to assault orthodox or conventional Christian belief. Given his system, he must. At the same time he is drawn to Scripture not only because it is necessary for him to confront it for the sake of his argument but because of the Bible's own elemental and compelling power, at the very least as a classic text. So he struggles and his struggle foreshadows and is even paradigmatic of that of modern man.

I would venture to say that the essence of Hobbes's confrontation with and understanding of Scripture has at least three facets. The first relates to his psychology or his understanding of nature, the second relates to his philosophy or his understanding of covenant, and the third relates to his prescriptions or political solutions to the problematics of the human condition. In *De Cive* and in *Leviathan* Hobbes has chapters or sections directly devoted to the problem of understanding Scripture, but in fact, as others have pointed out, there is no part of his work that is not informed by his confrontation with and understanding of the Bible. It has been suggested that those parts overtly devoted to interpreting Scripture are mostly for purposes of dissimulation while his true understanding and challenge of the Bible and its system of thought and belief is to be found in the running dialogue that he conducts with Scripture throughout the other parts of his writings.

II

There is no question that Hobbes relied greatly on Scripture to provide models and paradigms. In the Cambridge edition of *Leviathan*, Richard Tuck, the editor, provides an extensive set of biographical notes on the references Hobbes makes in the text. He brings 218 names; of them 87 are from the Hebrew Scriptures. Sixty-five are of the Christian era including New Testament, medieval personages and Europeans and Englishmen contemporary with Hobbes. Sixty-one are references to classic mythology and Greek and Roman historical personages not associated with Christianity. The other five include Josephus and Philo, two Jewish thinkers, two Muslims, and one character from Nordic mythology. Examination of Hobbes's citations and the index to *Leviathan* reveal much the same result.⁵

As we all know, Hobbes begins his philosophic revolution by placing the individual and his psychology at the beginning as the entire

subject of the first six chapters of *Leviathan*. With Chapter Seven, Hobbes begins to consider man as a social being (with all the problematics of that term for him) and there begins to bring examples from the classical, historical, and biblical literature. The first such examples appear in Chapter Eight. After a classical example he brings three Old Testament citations and five New, dealing with the question of God's spirit as a form of possession, the foretaste of his radical reinterpretation of Scripture.

Hobbes's first extensive discussion of religion comes in Chapter Twelve, essentially as part of the discussion of man as a social being. He discusses something akin to natural religion, that is to say, the necessity and capacity of men to believe. His examples are drawn almost exclusively from classic paganism for that reason, after which he jumps to Christianity as the replacement for that old paganism, responding to the same needs of the human condition. Why does he omit the Bible? The section culminates in Chapter Thirteen which describes the problematics of living in the state of nature.

Chapter Fourteen sets down the fundamental laws of nature and how men may defend themselves through contracts, compacts and covenants. In this sense Chapter Fourteen is the key chapter for everything that follows. In Chapter Fourteen Hobbes defines contracts, covenants, promises and oaths. While he does not cite sources, biblical or otherwise, his definitions at least partly reflect what is implicit in the biblical treatment of the subject. Of course he does so from the perspective of the psychology as outlined, which leads him to a minimalist definition of the use of covenant. Covenants simply are needed to establish and maintain civil society as distinct from the biblical's maximalist usage, having to do with the ordering of God's relationship with humanity in the deepest moral sense.⁶ Thus the final three chapters of Part I essentially deal with covenants: what they are and who can enter into them.

This leads directly to Part II, "Commonwealth." Hobbes emphasizes the necessity to institute legitimate commonwealths by covenant and rejects commonwealths established by acquisition, i.e., the use of force. He clearly rejects commonwealths founded by force and just as clearly emphasizes that all proper commonwealths have to be founded by covenant, but does not distinguish clearly between commonwealths that developed by accident and those established by reflection and choice.⁷

Hobbes, as is well known, sees the proper commonwealth as one in which there is a single ultimate authority established by covenant. At the end of Chapter Twenty, after his discussion of the issue, Hobbes brings the Bible in as a proof-text for his position, with a series of references to Moses, Samuel, and the New Testament. While others have used the biblical text to justify monarchy as he does, his interpretation

is by no means the only one. Indeed, to this writer it is an inaccurate one. He makes Moses an absolute human sovereign, whereas the Bible presents him as God's prime minister, even using the technical term *eved adonai* as the title applied to Moses, and to Joshua after him who also served in that capacity.⁸ Significantly, according to Scripture, David, who already called himself king, also tries to revive that term for himself to establish his legitimacy.⁹

Hobbes could argue against my analysis that all that was just a cover for absolute rule. However, the plain text of Scripture continues by presenting Moses, beyond his prophetic role as constitution-maker, as having to share governing power with the entire *edah* (the biblical Hebrew word for the Israelite polity, meaning assembled people) and their *nesiim* (biblical Hebrew: those raised up — by God and/or the people — to govern) who came together as the elders of the *edah*. Moreover, the paragraph that Hobbes brings from Samuel out of context as the Divine grant of power to kings, in its context was a dire warning, not a constitutional authorization as he (and certain other Jewish and Christian commentators) states.¹⁰

Hobbes, then, does what so many far more pious thinkers have done over the years. He determines his own position and then finds prooftexts to support it. Hobbes is, however, wise enough to recognize that both reason and Scripture provide that the sovereign power may be placed in either one man or in one assembly of men. While he does not bring prooftexts for the latter, he must have known, especially in the Puritan age, that the latter was the preferred scriptural reading of Reformed Protestantism, just as the former was the Royalist doctrine of the age — what today is referred to conventionally as the "Divine right of kings" — and the keystone of the politics of the Stuarts with whom he identified politically.

Perhaps the sharpest contrast between the Hobbesian and scriptural views comes on the issue of what is liberty or freedom. Hobbes insists that true liberty is natural liberty, that covenants are artificial bonds and that true liberty is liberty *from* covenants (Chapter Twenty-One). Just as his definition of sovereignty anticipates Jacobinism, so his definition of liberty anticipates or lays the groundwork for contemporary ideas of natural liberty. Here he comes to more direct conflict with the regnant Puritan view of federal liberty, that is to say, a liberty derived from the fundamental covenants between God and man. In his effort to reconcile natural liberty and sovereignty, Hobbes brings the examples of Jephtha and his daughter and David and Uriah. Moreover, he emphasizes, unlike the ancients who saw liberty as the liberty of sovereigns (including the assembled citizens as the sovereign in classic democracies), true liberty is that of individuals.

In Chapters Twenty-One, Twenty-Two and following, where Hobbes discusses the subject of political and private systems, the

Hobbesian discussion might profitably be contrasted with that of Althusius in his *Politics*.¹¹ Althusius, who completed the third and final edition of his *Politicum Methodice Digesta* in 1614, at the threshold of the seventeenth century, thirty-five years or a generation before the publication of *Leviathan*, was the great political theorist of the Reformed Protestant federalists. He understands the commonwealth as being built on similar distinctions but starts from the premises of federal theology and federal liberty and derives from reason and Scripture a very different picture of the authority, powers and relations of public and private institutions in the commonwealth.¹²

Hobbes does not use biblical references at all in his discussion of public and private bodies but does return to Scripture in Chapter Twenty-Four where he discusses land ownership and distribution in the commonwealth. Here, too, his interpretation of Scripture emphasizes the absolute power of the leaders and their arbitrary actions, comparing the allocation of Canaan to the Israelite tribes and families by Joshua and Elazar the high priest, to the land redistribution of William the Conqueror. I would suggest a more accurate reading of the biblical account is far more complex and reflects the checks and balances of the Mosaic system of government, something that Hobbes totally rejects.¹³

Hobbes is quite correct in Chapter Twenty-Five when he uses scriptural sources as examples of the difference between command and counsel. Nevertheless, in this and the following chapters on law and justice he emphasizes classical and most particularly English sources and examples, referring with piety from time to time to the role of revelation when he discusses Divine law, principally to show that there is no contradiction between Divine law, especially God's covenant with Abraham and with Moses and the Jewish people at Sinai, and his thoughts on the subject.

At the end of Chapter Twenty-Six Hobbes discusses the difference between fundamental and non-fundamental laws and laws and charters. From this discussion it is apparent that while he relies heavily on covenants, he does not rely heavily on constitutions, seeing, rather, the allocation of sovereign power through the original covenant of civil society as the equivalent of fundamental law. That is to say, "That, which being taken away, the Common-wealth faileth and is utterly dissolved; as a building whose Foundation is destroyed." By the same token, he properly defines a charter as not a law but a donation from the sovereign — very different from a constitution derived from the people.¹⁴

In Chapter Twenty-Seven Hobbes distinguishes between sins and crimes according to his system, especially emphasizing the psychology outlined at the beginning of *Leviathan* which he follows in Chapter Twenty-Eight with a discussion of punishments. At the end of Chapter

Twenty-Eight he brings a short biblical proof-text from the Book of Job which speaks directly to Hobbes's choosing of the name "Leviathan." Nor does Hobbes refer to Scripture in his discussion of diseases of commonwealth, but he does draw heavily on classical examples.

III

Hobbes concludes Part II with two chapters on the office of the sovereign representative (Chapter Thirty) and the kingdom of God by nature (Chapter Thirty-One) which lead into Part III of a Christian commonwealth. In Chapters Thirty and Thirty-One he brings together the principles of reason and the principles of authority of Scripture as the same. Here he emphasizes one of the fundamental points of his understanding of history, namely that Scripture describes how humanity has united with God in two covenants: one, the general covenant between God and mankind and the other the special pact which makes God the king over the Jews, His peculiar people. Hobbes refers to the latter as "the Kingdome of God, (ministered by Moses,) owed the Jews, his peculiar people by Covenant" (Chapter Thirty).

Following this line of thought Hobbes describes the first table of the Decalogue as "spent all, in setting down the summe of Gods absolute Power; not onely as God, but as King by pact, (in peculiar) of the Jewes"; (Chapter Thirty) — a paradigm of the powers of earthly monarchs over their peoples. It is a standard doctrine among interpreters of Scripture that the two tables of the Decalogue address different things. The most common explanation is that the first tablet deals with the relationship between man and God and the second between man and man.¹⁵ Here Hobbes expounds another view. The first table deals with the special relationship between God and His people the Jews while the second deals with mankind as a whole. This duality is the subject of the remainder of the book. "In respect of God, as he is Author of Nature, are Naturall; and respect of the same God, as he is King of Kings, are Lawes. But of the Kingdome of God, as King of Kings, and as King of Peculiar people," (Chapter Thirty).

Hobbes begins his discussion in Chapter Thirty-One and continues it through Parts III and IV. Having used Scripture as proof-text for his own reasoning up to this point, here he turns around and begins with Scripture in an effort to show how his reasoning is appropriate to it.

In Chapter Thirty-One Hobbes focuses on how God declares His laws in three ways: through the dictates of natural reason, by revelation, and by the voice of some man; namely, rational or right reason, sensible or sense supernatural, and prophecy or faith. Hobbes continues and suggests that no universal laws have been given through revelation or inspiration because God speaks to particular persons and diverse

men.¹⁶ Therefore he concentrates on the other two kinds of God's word: rational and prophetic; the first applicable to all of mankind and the second to one, a peculiar nation, the Jews.

With that he turns to consideration of the natural kingdom of God through a consideration of Scripture. God's right of rule is His not as creator but because of His irresistible power. Here Hobbes almost returns to premonotheistic myth. God is projected as the most absolute of sovereigns by virtue of His power who must be given honor through worship, whose end among men is power. The natural laws and natural punishments of God are listed and, reversing the order of the other chapters, in the conclusion of the second part Hobbes draws his proof-texts from classical political philosophy.

Needless to say, Part III, by the nature of its subject matter, is permeated with biblical analysis, interpretation and reference to the Bible and its figures. Part III is devoted to the nature and rights of what Hobbes terms "a Christian commonwealth" dependent on supernatural revelations of the will of God and the natural word of God, namely prophecy, both of which he sees as truth reconcilable with natural reason. He sets as his first task an understanding of prophecy, how God speaks to men through prophets and how true prophets are known. He closes his discussion with a discussion of why and how prophets ceased to appear and what Scripture supplies in their place.

This leads Hobbes to the next step in Chapter Thirty-Three, appropriately titled "Of the Number, Antiquity, Scope, Authority, and Interpreters of the Books of Holy Scripture," which is necessary to determine "who understands the laws God the sovereign has given humankind." Hobbes accepts the biblical canon of the Church of England which he justifies by quoting the Jewish historian Josephus. Nevertheless, Hobbes puts forward the basic lines of biblical criticism, i.e., that Moses did not write all of the Pentateuch, that the Books of Joshua and Samuel were written long after the lifetimes of their central figures as were the other "historical" books of the Bible, citing what are now commonplace references that suggest a later dating within the biblical text itself in his book-by-book analysis.

While reflecting a critical approach to biblical text, Hobbes's criticism is based entirely on his reading of the texts themselves. In this he in no way departs from the conclusions of several medieval Jewish biblical commentators (e.g., Kimchi and Ibn Ezra). He does the same for the New Testament. He even goes so far as to understand that the Apocrypha was left out of the canon principally because the books were not found in Hebrew.

Hobbes's division of Scripture (Chapter Thirty-Three) not only follows the plain sense of the text read through a political prism but actually leaves room for doubt as to the inevitable legitimacy of kingship in the eyes of God, at least for the Jews and probably for all men.

In that same chapter Hobbes concludes that for anyone who has not personally experienced God's direct revelation, the authority of that revelation comes through the civil commonwealth and its civil sovereign, just as it is the Church that determines which books of the Bible are canonical. He makes his case on the grounds that there are always people "that out of pride, and ignorance, take their own Dreams and extravagant Fancies and Madnesse, for testimonies of Gods Spirit; or out of ambition, pretend to such Divine testimonies, falsely in contrary to their own consciences." This leads to a problem for Hobbes, but his theory carried to its logical conclusion would recognize the power of a vicar of Christ, that is to say, papacy, and would have a hard time with the reality of the division of Christians into different polities and sects, which should do two things: one, prevent any sovereign from claiming sovereignty directly from God, and, two, raising questions as to whether Scripture is truly authoritative.

In Chapter Thirty-Four Hobbes attempts to show the difference between the use of the term "spirit" as the spirit of God in Scripture and in ordinary usage. Hobbes argues that, in the Hebrew Scriptures, spirit is a wind or a breath as per the Hebrew original, *ruah*, or gift of understanding, extraordinary affection, with a gift of prediction through dreams and visions, the very breath of life, or the basis for establishing authority. Only in the New Testament does it acquire the meaning of supernatural entities closer to what Christians describe as angels or daemons. It seems that his rather detailed argument in this chapter is designed to wean people away from what we would call superstitions about angels and daemons so as to better understand the spirit of God as truly incorporeal, one might say depersonified.

In Chapter Thirty-Five Hobbes presents the ancient Israelite polity as the "Kingdome of God," the paradigm of the good regime. In this he follows the true meaning of Hebrew Scriptures and the interpretation of federal theology to argue that the Kingdome of God is not a metaphor, nor is it in the afterlife, but it is a concrete and very real kingdom of this earth, established by covenant between God and the Israelites, first through Abraham and then through Moses at Sinai; that God is its king by covenant, not only the way He is king over all humanity by virtue of His power. In other words, God's rule in the universe is based on the realities of His might or force and as such cannot be resisted, but God's legitimate rule over His people was established by consent as legitimate rule must be in every case.

God's covenants with the Israelites represent the paradigmatic covenants for all civil society. As Hobbes puts it: "I find the Kingdome Of God, to signify in most places of Scripture, a *Kingdome properly so named*, constituted by the Votes of the People of Israel in peculiar manner; wherein they chose God for their King by Covenant made with Him, upon Gods promising them the possession of the land of

Canaan...." Hobbes continues: "God not only reigned over all men *naturally* by His might; but also had *peculiar* Subjects, whom He commanded by a Voice, as one man speaketh to another. In which manner he *reigned* over Adam....After this, it pleased God to speak to Abraham and (Genesis 17:7-8) to make a Covenant with Him."

Hobbes goes into an extended discussion of how the Jews were God's people. Hobbes emphasizes that this kingship involves civil government and suggests that first Moses and then the high priests were to be God's viceroys or lieutenants on earth. Then Hobbes turns to the Jews' abandonment of the Kingdome of God by asking for a king of flesh and blood. He attributes this entirely to a natural situation, namely that the elders of Israel were grieved with the corruption of Samuel's sons. (Curiously he ignores the security reasons for the Israelites' demanding a king of flesh and blood, namely that they could not resist the Philistines, their major enemy, perhaps because that would suggest that God was not performing His kingly functions properly.)

Hobbes's final point is that even after the Israelites had rejected God, the prophets had foretold the restoration of His direct rule through the covenant, citing Isaiah, Micah, and Ezekiel. Hobbes goes on to state that Jesus was to be that restoration as king of the Jews so that ultimately there would be the "Kingdome of God by Christ." Hobbes sums up: "In short, the Kingdome of God is a civill Kingdome; which consisted, first in the obligation of the people of Israel to those Laws, which Moses should bring unto them from Mount Sinai; and which afterwards the High Priests for the time being, should deliver to them from before the *Cherubins* in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; and which Kingdome having been cast off in the election of Saul, the Prophets foretold, should be restored by Christ; and the restauration whereof we daily pray for, when we say in the Lord's Prayer Thy Kingdome come."

Hobbes continues with a brilliant act of interpretation to advance his argument that Scripture is concerned first and foremost with the civil commonwealth and its civil governance. He equates the word "holy" with "public," which means in turn that it is "of the commonwealth," that is to say, belonging to the commons or public and "no private person can claim any propriety therein." Hobbes argues extensively for equating holy and public, giving as his examples the Sabbath and the Temple, sacrifices, tithes and offerings, priests, prophets and anointed kings, and administering spirit, building the bridge between the two terms through covenant; that is to say, to make something holy is to hallow it by covenant, to make something public is to establish it by covenant.

Hobbes concludes the chapter by secularizing the concept of sacraments. He defines sacraments as "a separation of some physical thing from common use; and a consecration of it to Gods service, for a sign,

either of our admission into the Kingdome of God, to be of the number of his peculiar people, or of a Commemoration of the same." Sacraments of admission include circumcision (Old Testament) and baptism (New Testament). They are performed but once. Sacraments of commemoration include, in the Old Testament, eating the pascal lamb and, in the New, celebrating the Lord's Supper. They are designed to remind people of their allegiance and hence are repeated on regular occasions as solemn oaths of allegiance. In this way he renders the Kingdom of God entirely compatible with civil government.

In Chapter Thirty-Six Hobbes deals with prophets, emphasizing the word of God equated with the dictates of reason. From the scriptural text he derives three significances to the term "prophet": (1) he who speaks from God to man or from man to God, or prolocuter (in his term); (2) a foreteller of things to come, or predictor; or (3) someone who speaks incoherently. The first sense is the most important. Prophets in the second sense were simply an extension of the first, i.e., they foretold events that God told them to foretell. Others were imposters. The third sense of incoherent speech is not really prophecy but was only taken as a sort of prophecy by the gentiles who used oracles.

Since Hobbes is interested in maintaining the kingship as solely authoritative, he both reduces prophecy to a subordinate role and defines all those to whom God speaks or who bring messages from God as prophets, including priests and kings of flesh and blood. In this way he claims that those kings of the Jews who submitted themselves to God's government were also God's chief prophets — e.g., Moses — while the high priests to whom Hobbes refers as "God's prophets" between Moses and Saul were reduced to ministerial functions. Here Hobbes's demand for hierarchy in rule leads him to distort the Hebrew Scriptures. Since this did not square entirely with Scripture, Hobbes invented a category called "prophets of perpetual calling" to distinguish those whom we know as prophets from others who were in communication with God.

A great part of Hobbes's argument is that God's communications with humans, with the (possible) exception of Moses and the high priest in the Holy of Holies, were never direct. God appeared to humans through dreams and visions and did not speak with them in a supernatural manner. Here his discussion of the biblical meaning of spirit becomes important as one of the vehicles for prophecy. Casting of lots was another. Consequently all prophecy except that of Moses, whom Hobbes refers to as the sovereign prophet, must be examined for its truthfulness.

From the examples he brings and the context in general it is obvious that Hobbes sees prophecy as potentially disruptive to civil order and hence to be handled with great care. Since the Bible emphasizes prophecy he cannot ignore it. He must try to secure it by appropriate fences. A century and a half later John Adams was to echo Hobbes's

view in a letter to Thomas Jefferson in which he indicated that had he been a party to the controversies between kings and prophets in ancient Israel he would have sided with the kings because of the total lack of political realism on the part of the prophets: "It may be thought impiety by many, but I could not help wishing that the ancient practice [of putting prophets in the stocks] [Jer. 20:23] had been continued down to modern times."¹⁷

Hobbes has a similar problem with miracles (Chapter Thirty-Seven) and attempts to explain them away as no more than admirable works of God, very rare and hence their natural causes are not known, implying that there must be natural causes, and uncertain in the sense that one man's miracle may not be a miracle to the next man. Moreover, he relegates miracles to the past as necessary only to bring about the initial consent of the Israelites to God's covenant (a position similar to that of the sages of the Talmud) and thus start the process of the proper organization of civil society. Here, too, Hobbes cautions against imposters.

Hobbes, as was accepted in his time, argued that the maintenance of civil society is based on popular acceptance of reward and punishment after death and so he argues in Chapter Thirty-Eight. In that sense, atheism is destructive of civil order. Still, Hobbes is torn between the need for a clear sense of reward and punishment and his conviction that the punishments and torments of Hell as described in the Bible are metaphorical only.

If the Kingdom of God is a civil commonwealth, what, then, is the Church? In Chapter Thirty-Nine Hobbes redefines church in such a way as to conform to his model: "A company of men professing Christian religion united in the person of one sovereign at whose command they ought to assemble and without whose authority they ought not to assemble." In this he is true to the meaning of the term "congregation" derived from *kahal* and *edah* in Hebrew, on through *synagogos* in Greek, yet false in that he places all of the church under one sovereign and enables it to assemble only on that sovereign's approval. What is clear is that, for Hobbes, such a church is fully subordinate to the civil sovereign. Here the true purpose of this chapter emerges. It is a dual polemic: one against the Roman Catholic idea of a universal church, an impossibility since there is no universal state, and the second against the Puritan congregationalists, who believed that the church was based on "gathered" grassroots assemblies. Hobbes argues for national churches with sovereign kings at the head of each. One can see in this a polemic against the Presbyterians as well, who had a national church but who rejected the idea of single sovereignty, a position Hobbes brings out later.

Throughout this Hobbes follows good Reformed Protestant doctrine in making Abraham "the father of the faithful and first in the

Kingdome of God by covenant" (Chapter Forty). The reasons for this should not be difficult to understand since the Bible describes Abraham as the recipient of God's promise to be the father of many peoples and Christian doctrine saw him as at least the spiritual father of Christians as well as Jews. Hence it was not difficult to see that his covenant with God was the founding covenant of the God-fearing world, what was subsequently denatured into what today is referred to as the monotheistic world including Jews, Christians and Muslims. The covenant at Sinai, on the other hand, while on a grander popular and constitutional scale, was clearly meant for the Jews and, as such, most of its constitutional dimension was abrogated by Christians and Muslims.

In addition, Hobbes makes the case that Abraham, as a civil sovereign of his household, could contract with God on their behalf, thus affirming that civil sovereigns have the sole power of ordering religion among their own people. Furthermore, for Hobbes it illustrates that the religion of the sovereign is the religion of the state, that there can be no private religions if the sovereign perceives them to be against the laws of the state. Third, the civil sovereign is the sole judge and interpreter of God's word. Needless to say, these three points represent a powerful argument on behalf of a crown-determined state church in England. Scripturally, they are a "stretch" from the text and context.

Passing on to Moses, Hobbes argues that the covenant was necessary because, unlike Isaac and Jacob and by implication Joseph and his sons as the heads of the tribes, Moses had no authority to govern the Israelites as a successor to Abraham by inheritance. In order that he not rely upon the miracle of his direct communication with God, the matter needed to be regularized. That could not come by commandment from God since God spoke only to Moses and Moses could not successfully bear witness about himself, especially on such a claim. Therefore, his authority, like that of all princes, had to be grounded in the consent of the people. As Hobbes says: "And so it was."

Hobbes continues the argument: although Moses established a more regularized polity and provided for its continuity through Aaron and his line of priests, as long as Moses was God's lieutenant, only he was sovereign under God, bringing a string of biblical case studies to document this. Hobbes needs to choose selectively since this is not what the Bible indicates through its plain text. Hobbes attempts to explain away the power of the other office-holders by making them hierarchically subordinate to Moses in all things. Hobbes is faced with a similar problem of finding the sole repository of sovereignty after the Israelites settle in Canaan. He does this by distinguishing between the right of governing which was still with the high priest and the reality of life as described in the Book of Judges, treating the judges as

people who were periodically called to the government for extraordinary purposes of military defense and no more.

For Hobbes, as for the Bible, the shift in regime in the days of Samuel, from Divine to human sovereignty, and in government, from the high priest to the kings, was rebellion against God. Subsequently, the priests were subordinated to the king. For Hobbes this demonstrates that supreme religious authority was in the same hands as supreme civil authority. "The Priests office after the election of Saul, was not Magisteriall, but Ministeriall." Even if in reality both kings and priests were not given their due, they did hold the authority.

Hobbes then turns to the role of prophets which he sees as somewhat restoring God's kingship, certainly in matters religious but also in matters civil through controlling the kings. They are the kings' only possible rivals, a point which Hobbes rejects as ill-informed and not endorsed by any scholars. Here his argument is minimal since his case is very weak.

For Hobbes, the end of the Israelites' relevant political experience came with the destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian captivity. From then on the Jews either had no commonwealth at all or were subject to others. Still, he concludes that the civil and religious authority within the regime that they did have was combined until the arrival of Jesus.

Jesus offers Hobbes a far better case. Presented by Hobbes as the messiah, Jesus is seen as combining in his person the three offices of redeemer or savior; pastor, counsellor, teacher or prophet; and king (Chapter Forty-One). For Hobbes, Jesus came to renew the covenant of the Kingdome of God, which had been ended in the days of Samuel, through a new covenant of the elect which would include both Jews and gentiles, a fairly orthodox Christian doctrine in certain respects, particularly sympathetic to Reformed Protestantism.

Hobbes is at pains to demonstrate that Jesus was not a revolutionary, that his preaching was not contrary either to the laws of the Jews or of Rome. For obvious reasons, his kingship, according to Hobbes, was only to begin with the resurrection when it would fit in with the restoration of the Jews under the old covenant with one of the apostles on the throne of each of the twelve tribes and Jesus on the throne above them as stated in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Even so, Jesus is only to be king in the sense of Moses, that is to say, Jesus has the same standing as Abraham and Moses, sovereigns representing the person of God but as viceroys, even though he is God the Father's son. This is both a "promotion" for Moses and a "demotion" of Jesus. Here Hobbes is very radical in his reinterpretation of the role of Jesus as messiah.

Hobbes is still left with the problem of what happened to the ecclesiastical power between the death of Jesus and the conversion of Rome. Here, too, Hobbes confronts the problem of the authority of the

pope more directly. While he accepts the conventional view of the chain of succession of the ecclesiastical power, he reduces it to the power to teach and no more. His argument is long and detailed in what is the longest chapter in *Leviathan*. In Chapter Forty-Two he must rely exclusively on the New Testament except when he touches on questions that involve civil authority such as excommunication.

Once again, by his argument the civil sovereign emerges supreme. He confronts that issue when considering the power to make scriptural precepts laws rather than merely rules. Hobbes must go through a long argument with regard to what constitutes law, which is binding, and rules, which are mere precepts. He begins in the accepted fashion with the Ten Commandments which he understands in his way. The first table of the Decalogue he refers to as the law of sovereignty which, as indicated earlier, is binding on members of God's kingdom, initially only the Jews. The second he defines as dealing with the universal duty of one man toward another. To make this distinction, Hobbes understands the Sabbath not in the Jewish (and Puritan) way as a day of rest but in the mainstream Christian way — opposed by the Puritans — as a day set aside to do God public honor, while he understands honoring parents as an obligation of man to man. Since the second table is no more than a restatement of the law of nature, its commandments naturally are binding on all people, but regarding those laws peculiar to the Israelites in the first table, since the Israelites did not see God but received the laws via Moses they could only be binding by consent. Thus the consent was with Moses.

Hobbes argues once again that even canonizing or the making of scriptural law belongs to the civil sovereign. The same applies to what Hobbes refers to as the judicial law, that is to say, the material in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers following the Decalogue and the Levitical law made canonical by Moses as the civil sovereign, what the Bible itself refers to as *Sefer Ha'Brit* — the Book of the Covenant.

The addition of Deuteronomy, literally the second law, on the Plains of Moab required a second covenant between the Lord, Moses and the children of Israel. This law was later lost and repromulgated by King Josiah, another civil sovereign. Hence, it, too, demonstrates the power of the civil sovereign to make Scripture canonical and, hence, law. Here, too, Hobbes ignores the role of the bearers of authority in the domains that the Bible carefully sets forth.

The problem with Hobbes's conclusions are that they are not a correct understanding of the biblical text and postbiblical Jewish history. Canonization of Scripture by the Jews was the province of the sages — the heirs of prophetic authority — not of the kings or civil authorities. Like Hobbes, the Bible saw all human authority as derived from God, but understood God as having directly delegated authority to representatives of three domains: *prophecy*, the communication of God's

word to the people; *priesthood*, primarily responsible for the communication of the people's responses and requests to God; and *civil rule*.

Moses was first and foremost a prophet who, as God's chief minister, acquired powers of civil rule which he shared with elders (*zekenim*) and magistrates (*nesiim*) whose authority flowed from the people. Since his task was to present the Jews with a new constitution in the name of God, he had a special role. Moses also shared power with his brother Aaron as the first high priest and founder of the priestly line. According to the Bible, God made a covenant of priesthood directly with Aaron and his sons.

Following Moses' death, Joshua, God's chief minister, and Elazar the high priest shared power. In the days of the Judges, judges, prophets and priests shared rule more or less equally. Subsequently kings achieved the upper hand but even they had to give due respect to authoritative prophets and priests, according to the biblical account.

After the end of prophecy in the fifth century, the mantle of that domain passed to the Torah sages. Ultimately those sages determined the canon. Ezra (whom Hobbes refers to by his Catholic Christian name Esdras), the first of those sages, was not the civil sovereign of the Jews according to the Bible. Nehemiah, a Jew sent to Jerusalem as governor or viceroy by the Persian imperial authorities who worked very closely with Ezra, held civil authority. Moreover, although Ezra was of priestly descent, he did not claim the high priesthood. The domain of priesthood continued in priestly hands for hundreds of years more, until the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE). Kings and prophets disappeared at the same time. Civil rule passed to a variety of officers.

Hobbes has a greater problem with the canonization of the New Testament because the early Christians did not have civil authority and he had to maneuver to "prove" his point. In fact, his maneuvers in connection with the New Testament are only more obvious than what he has done with the Old because the difficulties are more obvious.

Hobbes must also account for the appointment or election of church officers, drawing on both Old and New Testaments to do so. I will not go through the steps of argument here, but his conclusion is foreordained, that all church offices also have the human source of their authority in the commonwealth: "Given...by the King, or Assembly that representeth it." Here, too, his argument is both anti-papist and anti-congregationalist.

The final chapter of Part III deals with the problem of reconciling Divine and human authority in the frequent cases in which they come into conflict. Needless to say, Hobbes is very sceptical of claims of being commanded by God that run counter to the commands of the human sovereign, whether monarch or a sovereign assembly. Thus he seeks to demonstrate that the human origins of most of the supposed commands

of God need to be carefully examined for the possibility that they emanate from false prophets or feigned dreams and visions. Not only does Hobbes denigrate supposed commands from God but argues on behalf of the godliness of obedience to civil sovereigns. To do so he must rely overwhelmingly on New Testament sources since the Hebrew Scriptures are not conducive to Hobbes's claims. Hobbes draws upon the submissiveness to civil authority, even infidel authority, embodied in the early Christian texts (Chapter Forty-Three).

That discussion leads to Part IV, "Of the Kingdome of Darknesse," the shortest of the four parts of the book. In it, Hobbes attacks what he believes to be the superstitious dimension of Christianity as part of his effort to harmonize Christianity with reason. The thrust of his argument is to treat those superstitions as idolatry carried over from the gentiles or errors of Roman Catholicism. In this respect his doctrine again scores well with Puritan theology. Catholic saints, sacraments and ceremonials are particularly rejected. In Chapter Forty-Four he strengthens his argument against the medieval Catholic doctrine of the two swords while taking a mild swipe against the Presbyterian view of the Kingdome of God as well. Hobbes returns to Hebrew Scriptures when dealing with what he calls "consecrations" to reject whatever magical dimension they might have.

Chapter Forty-Five focuses on borrowings from pagan religion, on how they were attacked by the leading scriptural figures to oppose them or counteract them. Here his political purpose is to distinguish between Divine and civil worship and to refute the argument that homage to kings is idolatry. Here he uses sources from both testaments about equally and intermixed, comparing Israelite and Christian practices with those of the Greeks and the Romans.

Having dealt with false religion, Hobbes turns to attack what he deems to be false or vain philosophy in Chapter Forty-Six, essentially an attack on the classical tradition. Others will have considerably more to say about it than I, but in his attack on the classical tradition Hobbes recognizes that he must attack not only Athens but also Jerusalem, that is to say, Aristotle and post-biblical Jewish interpretation of Scripture. Hobbes follows traditional paths in the history of philosophy. What he attacks essentially is scholasticism in its late medieval form as it developed within the framework of the Philonic synthesis. The conclusion of Hobbes's attack is political, namely an attack on Aristotelian political science, what he calls "Aristotles Civill Philosophy" and what Hobbes sees as its penchant for democracy, its rejection of absolute rule as tyranny, and its, to Hobbes, false notion that a well-ordered commonwealth is governed by laws, not men; in other words, those accepted elements of political philosophy that go against his new teaching.

In his final chapter (Forty-Seven) Hobbes directly attacks the

Presbyterian acceptance of the view that the church is the Kingdome of God on earth. He summarizes his argument against the Roman and Presbyterian clergy and the classical philosophers. His is essentially an attack on the Reformed Protestant effort to establish the supremacy of ecclesiastical government over civil rulers and their control of them, namely, the situation in the British Isles in his time.

In his review and conclusion Hobbes provides his own abstract of *Leviathan*, beginning with his psychology and on through to his rejection of the situation in England under Puritan rule. In that summary he cites five chapters specifically: Chapter Fifteen on the laws of nature, Chapter Twenty-One on consent and submission, Chapter Twenty-Nine on the need for an absolute and arbitrary legislative power, Chapter Thirty-Five on the commonwealth of the Jews, and Chapter Thirty-Six on revelation. He resorts again to prooftexts only in his discussion of Chapters Thirty-Five and Thirty-Six which together comprise over a third of the review and conclusion. His reason for doing so is that he introduces a discussion of who were the officers authorized to inflict capital punishment and for what reasons, another argument for the supremacy of civil rule and a civil ruler.

In his final part Hobbes once again emphasizes his reliance on natural right and reason, with its starting point as peace and loyalty to the sovereign as a means of achieving peace as its conclusion.

IV

In the first section of this essay, I indicated that the essence of Hobbes's confrontation with and understanding of Scripture relates to three themes: his psychology, his use of covenant, and his politics. Hobbes is well recognized as the first philosopher to totally ground his philosophy in his understanding of human psychology. The Bible, as many have discovered through the ages, is a book rich with psychological insights and case studies presenting those insights in dynamic situations. In many ways, then, a turn to psychological foundations is a return to a biblical understanding of humans, although Hobbes as a philosopher seeks generalization while the style of the Bible is specification. More important, biblical psychology begins with God and the awe of heaven while Hobbes's psychology is purely secular. Here, then, is a kind of a convergence for which it is hard to determine lines of influence, if any.

Much the same is true of Hobbes's use of covenant, except that, while one can find efforts to understand the psychological basis of human behavior elsewhere, the idea of covenant is more unequivocally scriptural, even if filtered through the federal theology of the Reformation. While Hobbes's fundamental covenant is minimalist, to

keep the peace, rather than maximalist to mold humans in a certain way as in the Bible, the idea of covenant he could take from only one place. Moreover, his distinction between covenants and contracts shows the same understanding of the role of mutual promises and trust that is present in biblical covenants. Hobbes does not cite biblical examples in his presentation of the basic covenants of mankind in Chapter Fourteen; he does so in Part III where he presents the paradigmatic commonwealth as described in the Bible. His minimalist covenant does include the Golden Rule in its negative formulation (which is more encompassing) as in the Hebrew Scriptures.

It is in his discussion of politics that Hobbes relies most heavily on biblical sources, yet it is there that he diverges most extensively from the biblical worldview and ideas. Hobbes brings biblical examples for just about everything but he interprets them in his own way, using them as prooftexts but often incorrectly. Certainly one cannot rely on any of his interpretations. Even so, the reader has the feeling that he is drawn to Scripture even more than to classical sources and not only for tactical reasons.

V

In presenting his argument, Hobbes makes it clear that, while pious people recognize the reality of revelation, revelation is not necessary to his system. While careful not to deny revelation in so many words, Hobbes can certainly be numbered among those who contributed to breaking the Philonic synthesis. He and those who followed him achieved the detachment of reason and natural law from revelation that they sought, thus creating the modern epoch, an epoch in which God has become increasingly hidden from the eyes of humans. If more people still claim to believe in God than not, for most of them that belief has no significant consequences except maybe to help people justify actions that would be deemed very ungodly by traditionalists.

Under such circumstances, the Bible, which reached a peak of perceived relevance in the seventeenth century founding of the new epoch and construction of modernity, and was essential to any civilized discourse about political life, became increasingly ignored. After nineteenth century science exploded the biblical theory of creation as literally presented in Genesis, the authority of Scripture was thoroughly undermined in every sphere. People in the West still learned the Bible but no longer relied on it. In the twentieth century, they stopped learning it as well. Yet intelligent people brought into contact with Scripture remain captivated by it, sharing the ambivalences toward Scripture that Hobbes pioneered.

Nearly 300 years after Hobbes embarked upon his reformulation of natural law as natural right, Leo Strauss raised the question of

revelation as a philosophically serious one once again. In rejecting the adequacy of the natural right foundations of modern philosophy and seeking to resurrect classical natural law, Strauss found himself having to take seriously the claims of revelation.¹⁸

There may be a great irony here. Hobbes may indeed have been a believer, even though he found that he did not need to be, to build his philosophic system. Strauss, who had trouble with belief for most of his adult life, was the one who made us take belief and its problems seriously. For Strauss, the great intellectual confrontation of humanity is between Jerusalem and Athens. Thus he, too, was much concerned with Scripture. He read the Bible as a Jew, emphasizing the Hebrew Scriptures which he read in their original language, and whose commentators he followed from their original texts. Yet he did not use those texts as Hobbes did, not as proof texts but as a teaching in its own right, with its own premises that need to be treated as authentic.

In his way Strauss is as bold as Hobbes. Hobbes takes the Bible as Divine, yet determines the meaning of its text to fit his purposes. Strauss looks at the Bible rather impiously as a book, but in doing so treats it as the classic book that must be understood on its own terms. The methodological argument between the two is where we are today.

Notes

1. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953) and *Liberalism: Ancient and Modern* (New York: Basic Books, 1968).
2. Josephus Flavius, *The Antiquities of the Jews* in *The Works of Josephus Flavius*, trans. by William Whiston (Philadelphia: D. McKay, 1820) and *Kidmot HaYehudim, Hai Yosef: Neged Apion* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Masada, 1959).
For the best collection of Philo Judaeus's writings, see Hans Lewy, ed., *Three Jewish Philosophers* (New York: Atheneum, 1965). Cf. also Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947).
3. On the biblicism of the Protestant Reformation in Luther's thought, see Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) and James Mackinnon, *Luther and the Reformation* (London: Longmans Green, 1929). Cf. also Jean Calvin's commentaries on and criticism of the Old Testament in *Jean Calvin: Commentaries*, translated and edited by Joseph Harautunian with Louise Pettibone Smith (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958).
4. On Protestant Hebraism, see Louis Finkelstein, *The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949).

5. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited with an introduction by Richard Tuck (Cambridge: The University Press, 1991).
6. Cf. Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant Tradition in Politics* (forthcoming).
7. On the three models of polity, see *The Federalist*, No. 1 and Daniel J. Elazar, "Federal Models of Civil Authority" in *The Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Spring 1991): 231-254.
8. On the first apostrophization of Moses as *eved adonai*, cf. Exodus 14:31. The first like reference to Joshua is Joshua 24:29 (cf. also Judges 2:8).
9. On David's reference to his own kingship, cf. especially Psalms 2:6. Cf. also 18:51.
10. On the warning from Samuel to the People of Israel, cf. I Samuel 8-12.
11. Cf. selections from Johannes Althusius, *Politica Methodice Digesta* in *The Politics of Johannes Althusius*, trans. with an introduction by Frederick S. Carney and edited by Carl J. Friedrich (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1965).
12. But note that Friedrich in his introduction to his 1935 edition of the *Politica* sees that Althusius and Hobbes are quite similar in their conceptions of sovereignty. Gierke, Carney and I disagree. Cf. Otto von Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1950); *Op. cit.*, Carney; and Daniel J. Elazar, "The Multi-Faceted Covenant: The Biblical Approach to the Problem of Organizations, Constitutions, and Liberty as Reflected in the Thought of Johannes Althusius," *Journal of Constitutional Political Economy*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring/Summer 1991): 187-208.
13. Cf. Daniel J. Elazar, "The Book of Joshua as a Political Classic," *Jewish Political Studies Review*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1/2 (Spring 1989): 93-150.
14. For a discussion of the difference between charters and popular constitutions, see Charles H. McIlwain, *Constitutionalism, Ancient and Modern* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1947) and Daniel J. Elazar, *Exploring Federalism* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1987), especially pp. 158-163.
15. Alternatively some modern biblical historians have argued that the two tablets reflect the covenantal character of the document, namely that each party received a copy of the covenant to preserve.
16. The question remains as to whether the Decalogue was spoken to Israel directly by God or whether it, too, was mediated through Moses. If the former, then direct revelation has presented humans with universal laws.
17. Adams's letter to Jefferson, 3 May 1812, in *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams*, edited by Lester J. Cappon (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
18. Cf. Leo Strauss, *Philosophy and Law: Essays Toward the Understanding of Maimonides and His Predecessors*, translated by Fred Bauman with an introduction by Ralph Lerner. Cf. also "Jerusalem and Athens" in *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, with an introduction by Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).