

# Politics Based on A Biblical Perspective and Its Implications for the Involvement of Believers in Politics

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## Abstract

This article was written with the aim of analyzing a topic that is often the subject of discussion among Christians in general and theologians in particular. The topic to be analyzed is politics in the Old Testament as a biblical study. Through this article, we will seriously describe the views of Old Testament experts on politics and then see its relationship with Theopolitics as an important part offered in the Old Testament. In the end, this article will analyze and conclude comprehensively “what it really looks like” the Old Testament looked at politics and tried to relate it to the life of believers.

Keywords: Analysis, Biblical, Old Testament, Politics, Theopolitic.

## Abstrak

Artikel ini ditulis dengan tujuan menganalisis topik yang seringkali menjadi subjek pembahasan di kalangan orang Kristen secara umum dan para teolog. Pembahasan dalam artikel adalah politik secara biblika dalam Perjanjian Lama. Melalui artikel ini, akan dipaparkan pandangan pakar-pakar Perjanjian Lama terkait politik dan melihat hubungannya dengan Teopolitik sebagai bagian penting yang disajikan Perjanjian Lama. Dalam akhir pembahasan, artikel ini akan menganalisis dan menyimpulkan secara komprehensif bagaimana pandangan Perjanjian Lama mengenai politik dan mencoba mengaitkannya dengan kehidupan orang-orang percaya.

Kata-kata Kunci: Analisis, Biblika, Perjanjian Lama, Politik, Teopolitik.

## Introduction

What and how is politics discussed in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament? This question is very basic and becomes important to

explain. Of course, it is possible that many people question the Bible's view of politics and its relationship to the life of today's people especially the believers. On the one hand, Eregare (represent some people) believed that politics is part of both church and secular government.<sup>1</sup> There is value from Christianity which policymakers can take as a lesson.<sup>2</sup> Christian must engage the political arena of culture.<sup>3</sup> Those sentences show that Christianity has good connection with politics. On the other hand, it may also be possible for believers to be reluctant to discuss political matters in relation to the Bible.<sup>4</sup> Or maybe put decision in the conservative position.<sup>5</sup> What is more extreme is the possibility of a closed attitude to discussing politics in relation to the lives of believers, because politics is considered as something that is contrary to the teachings of the Bible.<sup>6</sup> Like Cochran wrote, incorporation of scripture and political thinking largely died.<sup>7</sup>

Seeing or assuming that "Politics" as something that is contrary to the teachings of the Bible, is an assumption that deserves to be questioned to be explained later in this paper. Is it true that the Bible never teaches about politics? Or how? While Walzer said that the Bible is a religious book, it is also a political book. Walzer's statement certainly arouses curiosity for each of us, to seriously think about and

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<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Orihantare Eregare, "A Perspective on Biblical Cultural Politics and Social Service: A Platform for Gospel Ministry," *Insight: Journal of Religious Studies* 14 (2018): 211; Katsh wrote that the new society which established in America was profoundly influenced by the ancient Israelite model. So, sometimes scripture and government are connected. Abraham I. Katsh, "The Biblical Background of the Political System of America," *Hebrew Studies* 17 (1976): 30.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Davies, "Reading Politics Through Scripture: International relations, the Bible and Conservative Christianity," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 38, no. 1 (2018): 64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/18124461.2018.1440466>.

<sup>3</sup> Gary Ball, "A Scriptural and Scholarly Basis for Engaging the Political Arena," *Diligence: Journal of the Liberty University Online Religion Capstone in Research and Scholarship* 8 (2021): 16-17, <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1071&context=djrc>.

<sup>4</sup> Paul K.-K. Cho, "A House of Her Own: The Tactical Deployment of Strategy in Esther," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 140, no. 4 (2021): 664.

<sup>5</sup> Kant Patel, Denny Pilant, Gary Rose, "Born-Again Christian in the Bible Belt: In Religion, Politics, and Ideology," *American Politics Research* 10, no. 2 (1982): 255, <https://doi.org/10.1177/004478082010002008>.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Fulton, *The Book of Books: Biblical interpretation, literary culture, and the political imagination from Erasmus to Milton* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press, 2021), 3-5.

<sup>7</sup> Clarke E. Cochran, "Political Science Confronts the Book: Recent Work on Scripture and Politics," *The Journal of Politics* 50, no. 1 (February 1988): 219, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2131050>.

understand “politics” from a biblical point of view, especially in the Old Testament and not vice versa by quickly giving unwarranted assumptions about politics itself.<sup>8</sup> Punt says that Bible (especially New Testament based on his research), has political nature.<sup>9</sup>

Another thing about politics in the Old Testament that needs to be researched is about “Power” the extent to which political roles influence power and vice versa.<sup>10</sup> Is politics really a tool to gain power?<sup>11</sup> This question is also very important to be studied in this paper. In the other side, we must realize about the importance and the portion of wisdom of God’s people in relation with politics, according to the bible.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, this paper aims to briefly and clearly explain how politics in the Old Testament is related to the historical context that surrounds it. What is the relationship between politics and power? Is there a connection between politics in the Old Testament and the lives of its readers, especially the believers? Some of these things will be critically analyzed and then given a conclusion, as a summary of the challenges faced by every Bible reader to find the relevance of political elements in the Old Testament for today’s life of the believers.

## Method

The research method used in this article is the argumentative-analytical method. The author will present expert arguments that discuss politics in the Old Testament and then provide an analysis of the arguments offered. In turn, they return to text analysis or biblical studies to provide an analysis of the arguments presented.

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Walzer, *In God’s Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible* (New Haven London: Yale University Press, 2018), xii.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremy Punt, “The New Testament as Political Document,” *Scriptura* 116 (2017): 1, <http://doi.org/10.7833/115-0-1280>.

<sup>10</sup> McConville discusses about power in his book, but it more focus on God’s power. Kyle R. Greenwood, “God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology Genesis-Kings (Review),” *Hebrew Studies* 51 (2010): 401, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/400604/pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> And maybe politics just to give profit to them who have power? Terry M. Moe, “Power and Political Institutions,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 2 (2005): 215, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3688027>.

<sup>12</sup> Kyle C. Dunham, “Political Folly and Royal Wisdom in Eccl. 5,7-8,” *Biblica* 102, no. 3 (2021): 336, <https://doi.org/10.2143/BIB.102.3.3289779>.

## Result and Discussion

### Politics in the Old Testament

Actually, the word “politics” is fundamentally derived from the Greek, namely *πολις* (*polis*) unexplained etymology of this word, but the meaning is most likely to be given is the city.<sup>13</sup> The word *polis* relates to a strong political nuance and is often compared to the Old Testament, especially in Hebrew *עיר* (*ir*).<sup>14</sup>

Based on Genesis 26:1-11 as the narrative says *עיר* (*ir*) is used to describe the city as a center of political power in which God’s role remains paramount. The city is often associated with Jerusalem as the place of God’s presence and may become the city of God.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand the word *ir* not only means city, but is also associated with political structures and kings who ruled in cities/kingdoms (having power), such as the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (cf. 1 Kings 4:7-19).<sup>16</sup>

The definition of “politics” in this paper is understood as knowledge/methods/systems regarding city/kingdom/state/government arrangements involving kings/leaders. Next, we will try to describe some expert thoughts on politics in relation to the Old Testament.

### Expert Thoughts on Politics in Relation to the Old Testament

#### *Matthew B. Schwartz-Kalman J. Kaplan*

The Bible (OT) commanded the Israelites to “Put a king for them” (Deu. 17:15). However, then we read in the Psalms the following warning: “Do not believe in the nobles, in the children of men who cannot give salvation (Psalm 146:3).” The first directive is clearly not anti-monarchical, but the second warns us not to trust the nobility (king). How do we reconcile or reconcile these two directions, which at

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<sup>13</sup> Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich (Ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Vol. VI* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 516.

<sup>14</sup> “*πολις* contained a political sense...” Ibid., 517.

<sup>15</sup> G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinze-Josef Fabry (Ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: Vol. XI* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 62.

<sup>16</sup> John Pederson, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 7.

first glance seems contradictory? Are Israelis pro or anti-monarchy? Are they better off with or without a king?<sup>17</sup>

What can be understood from both of the above is, although a king may be desired, he has his limits, and God is the real King. Many ancient kings saw themselves as gods. However, the Kings of Israel did not. The kings of Israel were to be obeyed and respected, but not as gods and the people had to be aware of the potential abuse of power, they gave their king. The prophet Samuel, for example, warned the Israelites that the kings would “Take your sons (...) and will take your daughters as perfumers, cooks, and bakers, etc. (1 Sam. 8:11-17). That is why, for the Bible, government (politics) is not an end, but a means to improve human life, to provide the greatest opportunity for people to grow and develop in faith, individuality, and creativity.<sup>18</sup> The best politics is not just about campaigning and political maneuvering.

In conclusion, Matthew B. Schwartz and Kalman J. Kaplan reveal that in the biblical approach, especially the OT, there is a broad purpose and meaning about politics, both past and present aspects in order to revive one's relationship with the world around him. His relationship with the kings in the OT as part of political life is understood that does not mean the kings in the Bible (OT) are always just and people are always fascinated with them. The Bible (OT) does not hesitate to provide examples where the greatest leaders were found lacking, such as King Saul, King David at times, and Solomon after, let alone many lesser kings. Often people themselves lack courage and vision. That is why it can be concluded simply, that for Matthew B. Schwartz-Kalman J. Kaplan government (politics) is not an end, but a means to improve human life through a king/leader, but the real King is God himself.

### *Daniel E. Fleming*

Fleming tries to explain politics in the Old Testament in terms of the differences between the two kingdoms in the OT, namely Israel and Judah. That is why, Fleming wrote the following:

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew B. Schwartz and Kalman J. Kaplan, *Politics in the Hebrew Bible* (Lanham, Maryland: Jason Aronson, Inc., 2013), xiii, 180-181.

<sup>18</sup> Kalman J. Kaplan, “The death of Martha Wichorek,” <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2014/10/the-death-of-martha-wichorek>.

At the same time, my entire analysis of the biblical evidence for Israel rests particularly on a political distinction between Israel and Judah. Historical Israel, to borrow Philip Davies turn of phrase, appears to have been characterized by a political framework that was strikingly different from that of historical Judah. The very preservation of this contrast in the biblical accounts of Israel and Judah demonstrates some continuity between the Bible and history, though the relationship must be evaluated case by case for individual texts and issues. In particular, the actual political life and landscapes of Israel and Judah were recalled only indirectly after each kingdom came to an end. Politics rarely interests the biblical writers for its own sake, and political information is preserved only as part of a matrix for stories about divine acts and the people caught up in them.<sup>19</sup>

Historically Israel is very different from Judah in terms of politics, as described by Fleming above, where the contrast between Israel and Judah is continuous both in the Bible and in history, although issues of contrast must be investigated case by case. Differences that reflect more than just the geographical diversity, and political contrasts contained in the two kingdoms represents more than local developments built on a foundation of the same history. Indeed, there were local differences that had a geographical component, and each kingdom developed along different lines. However thus, deeper, Israel establishes a political identity without the need of a king, and the system of monarchy was added later in their identity. Israel is an association of people from different neighborhoods both west and east of the Jordan River, both north and south of the Jezreel Valley.<sup>20</sup>

The political character of the decentralized then survived under the leadership of a king. On the other hand, the kingdom that eventually came to be called Judah in the book of Kings came into existence only because the ruler of the line of David refused to be overthrown and took refuge in Jerusalem and sought to gain control of the south. This southern kingdom came to be called Judah, perhaps an old name associated with the plateau south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a sacred and political centre and a power base.

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel E. Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 45-46, 262-263.

<sup>20</sup> Lauren A.S. Monroe and Daniel E. Fleming, "Earliest Israel in Highland Company," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 82, no. 1 (March, 2019): 20, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/703322?journalCode=nea>.

For Fleming, the real political life shown by both Israel and Judah only happened indirectly after the two kingdoms ended. Politics rarely attract the interest of the book's writers to be intended as a personal interest. On the other hand, the political information retained is only part of the story of divine acts in which Bible people/characters are involved. Thus, according to Fleming, the politics found in the Old Testament were not practical politics that was deliberately designed by both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The mere politics that takes place and without design is a means to imply Divine actions to bring about His reign.

### *Michael Walzer*

Walzer explained that religious matters related to democratic culture were anticipated in ancient Israel. Democracy that occurs and is described in the Bible (OT) is democracy under God. God is repeatedly described with the metaphor of a monarchical government. The monarchy in question is a picture of God as a king who reigns forever. However, God is not depicted as a feudal king, but His power is absolute, and He reigns absolutely. God has chosen to bind Israel to Him through a covenant and direct His people through His laws.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, the people of Israel united and tried to imitate the other nations to have a king rule over them, thus imitating God's sovereignty. Monarchy represents a rejection of divine authority, as God told Samuel and Samuel the elders. This objection was not without an answer. The prophets concluded that the king was not to be guided by a counsellor who was also a human being; they were not allowed to develop their policies or make political decisions. The king had to "ask God," consult through the prophets and rely solely on divine protection. They (kings) need to learn that the hand of God "is a hand stretched out over all the nations."<sup>22</sup>

There is no doubt that kings sought secular counsel and struggled to make a place for themselves among the nations. However, the idea that each ruler/king could, in his own way, shape the destiny of Israel

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Walzer, *In God's Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible* (London: Yale University Press, 2018), 199-205.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

cannot be found in the prophets or in history.<sup>23</sup> The fate of Israel was in God's hands, as it always was, that God himself overthrew the Egyptians: "He threw his horse and his rider into the sea" (Ex. 15:1). In turn, Walzer raises the question, namely: which of the regimes described in history are authentic biblical regimes? What is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of the king (David)? Priest kingdom? the mixed reign of kings, judges, priests, and prophets suggested by Deuteronomy 16-18? How are these questions reconciled and by whom? Are priests, or prophets, or judges, or scribes the authoritative interpreters of God's law? Is Israel best understood as a political state or as a community of faith? If we focus on a particular moment in Bible history, we may be able to answer some of these questions. But the answer will be indirect because what is recorded in the Bible (OT) is a series of adjustments to changing circumstances.

The question that then arises is whether the prophets were hostile to the monarchy itself or only criticized certain kings? This question has been debated by many scholars. The narratives described in the Bible (OT) show that all the prophets denied the independent value of monarchy, because the consequences of being a king were also emphasized. That is why, no other regime is more valuable, no other ruler is more important. When kings obeyed God, everything went well for Israel; when they disobey, things go bad. Worldly rulers, existing powers, whatever their social or political character, are more likely to disobey and that disobedience is a picture of human stupidity. According to Walzer, it seems that it can be concluded that the Bible (OT) has no political teachings, at least in the sense that it teaches directly about practical political life(s), because what happens is politics indirectly and that is only by Allah Himself (Theopolitics/politics).

From the views of the above experts regarding politics in the Old Testament which is understood as systems regarding government arrangements involving kings/leaders. The author agrees that politics in the Old Testament always puts God as the real King/Leader. Allah as the real King/Leader in His actions may use the kings/leaders in this world to realize God's government/politics (Theopolitics).

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<sup>23</sup> David C. Flatto, "Featured Reviews – Michael Walzer: In God's Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible," *AJS Review* 38, no. 1 (April 2014): 163.



### Critical Analysis and its Implication to Believers

I will try to give a critical analysis in this section, based on the explanation that has been written above. So that the analysis given is directed, I divide it into three important parts, including: 1) God and Politics, 2) God uses His people Politically? 3) Politics as a Means of Creation of the City/Kingdom of God. These three important sections are described in more detail in the sections below.

#### *God and Politics*

After describing politics in the Old Testament and the expert thoughts about politics and its relation to the OT, this section will be an analysis of the description. The analysis that the author gives especially in this section is about God and politics. God in His actions certainly have a goal or purpose to be achieved and realized. In order to fulfill the purpose or purpose that is intended to be realized, is it not possible that there are nuances or political elements that accompany it?

For the author, God and politics are two things that cannot be contradicted, or in other words, God and politics can become an inseparable unity. As explained by Walzer before that the Bible is a religious book, but at the same time a political book, so in turn Walzer arrives at the conclusion that the politics he means is Theopolitics (the politics of God). It means that God and His actions for His people can happen politically and again, they are done in the context of fulfilling His plan. However, it also cannot be denied that theoretically matters concerning politics have never been directly taught in the Bible (OT) for later kings or rulers to do practical(s) or practical politics(s).

This is different from the political concept run by the Greeks, where for them the role of God and faith is not needed in carrying out political life, even though they recognize the character of Moses as an excellent legislator.<sup>24</sup> For them (the Greeks) the highest political ideal is the creation of an orderly city/community arrangement and that can be realized by the existence of clear laws/regulations. The author agrees with Josephus as explained by Yehoshua Amir that the theoretical Greek political ideals can be realized by the acceptance of God's government "Theocracy" because God has given laws that govern His people directly

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<sup>24</sup> Paul Parker, "God, Faith, and Politics: Palestinian Christians," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 46, no. 2 (2019): 217, <https://ixtheo.de/Record/1690229772>.

through Moses which the Greeks themselves admit, not the other way around the reign of Zeus as ruler of the gods.

Likewise, the political life of the Romans put forward the role of the emperor, thus placing the emperor as “god,” in turn they did not recognize the role of God in political life. In fact, as Wayne A. Grudem said before that God is the one who rules all nations with eternal government, so everyone must worship Him.

Not much different from American politics which is democratic and places a leader who has power over them, but his power is limited and must recognize the eternal power and government of God. In the end, for the author, as the experts say (Matthew B. Schwartz and Kalman J. Kaplan,<sup>25</sup> Daniel Fleming,<sup>26</sup> and Michael Walzer<sup>27</sup>) in the previous section that politics is not an end, but a means by which God brings about His plans. That is why, the true King is God himself and the existing kings/leaders must seek guidance from God (ask God) when making a decision.<sup>28</sup> In this respect, Bernhard W. Anderson said that the decision of God is absolute, like a judge, which in its original language word / term the judge used was *שֹׁפֵט* (sopetenu) from the word *shapat* (cf. Isa. 33:22) where the closest meaning is “to rule.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, it becomes increasingly clear that Allah is the real ruler/leader.

### *God Uses His People (the Believers) Politically*

How can the concept of Theopolitics (God’s politics) be applied or realized? This question becomes an important analysis in this section, because God in His actions is often associated with His people. When the leadership process shifts from the pre-monarchy era to the era of the

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<sup>25</sup> Matthew B. Schwartz and Kalman J. Kaplan, *Politics in the Hebrew Bible* (Lanham, Maryland: Jason Aronson, Inc., 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Daniel E. Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible: History, Politics and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

<sup>27</sup> Michael Walzer, *In God’s Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible* (London: Yale University Press, 2018).

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Silliman, “Democratic Christians’ Primary Concern: The Presidential Contenders are Wooing Religious Voters. How Do the Faithful Make Sure God Isn’t A Political Prop,” <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/march/democratic-christians-primary-concerns.html>.

<sup>29</sup> “The word *שֹׁפֵט* is close meaning to “ruler,” as we see from Isaiah 33:22: “Yahweh is our ruler, Yahweh is our king; he will save us.” Bernhard W. Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament* (UK., England: Longman Group UK Limited, 1993), 195.

monarchy in the Old Testament, it is illustrated that God chooses His people. Was the elect politically used by God?

For the Greeks and Romans, they do not recognize the role of God in political life, so it can be said that the rulers they recognize, such as Zeus (Greek) and emperor (Roman) are the absolute rulers. Thus, the recognized ruler did not need to give an account to God as intended in the political concept in the Old Testament. In other words, the politics practiced by the Greeks and Romans was the politics of their rulers, whether it was a god like Zeus or an emperor. Meanwhile, in American politics, it can still be said that there is an acknowledgment of Allah as the absolute ruler, even though there is a leader/president that they choose democratically. Therefore, to answer the question above, namely about whether God uses His people politically? It can be said that the answer is yes and it is quite possible that God can use His people for the purposes and fulfillment of His political purposes. Wayne Grudem in his explanation quotes several verses in the Old Testament that say:

God rules over the rulers and destinies of nations, consider the following passages of Scripture: For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations (Ps. 22:28). Who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations, let not therebellious exalt themselves (Ps. 66:7)? For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another (Ps. 75:6-7). The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all (Ps. 103:19). The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will (Prov. 21:1). "The Highest rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowest of men" (Dan. 4:17).<sup>30</sup>

The verses conveyed by Wayne Grudem become a very clear basis, where God who rules all nations freely and responsibly chooses and gives power to His people. This is done by God in the context of fulfilling His intended purposes and objectives and may take place politically, depending on His sovereignty.

Therefore, the leaders are under the control and power of God who is the absolute ruler over all nations and these leaders must be

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<sup>30</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Politics - According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2018), 849.

understood as God's instruments to realize God's Theopolitics.<sup>31</sup> With a note, that the leaders especially the believers must recognize the role and position of God as absolute leader/ruler as described in the Old Testament. Walter Brueggemann in one of his commentaries, in particular makes a section on "The king as mediator," in which he writes about Sigmund Mowinckel's conclusion which says:

Accordingly, there is for the thought of Israel and the Old Testament no conflict between the kingly rule of Yahweh and that of the Messiah, just as, ideally, there is no conflict between Yahweh's kingly rule that of His son, the anointed, earthly king .... Nowhere are his (the human king's) status and power so emphasized that they threaten the exclusive dominion of Yahweh or the monotheism of the Old Testament.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, Mowinckel as quoted by Walter Brueggemann is emphasizing that there is no problem between the kingdom of man anointed by God himself and the kingdom of God itself. No human power or power is overemphasized, so as to threaten the exclusive power of God. In other words, it is very possible for God to choose and use His people (the believers) and it can be politically in the context of fulfilling God's own purposes and purposes.

### *Politics as a Means of Creation of the City/Kingdom of God*

As the last part of the analysis that the author can give towards politics in the Old Testament and its relation to the historical context is to depart from the initial and main definition of politics itself. As noted above that the initial definition of politics based on the original language was the city, where kingdom or power was important. How is a city/kingdom/country run? Is it by focusing on the political goals of the people who lead them? Or the political power that a person has over the city/kingdom becomes the personal power tool of the leader or group?

The questions above become an important reference in explaining how the politics that are carried out in every place in the world are the means of creating the city/kingdom of God which is a picture of the

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<sup>31</sup> Juan Francisco Martínez, "Preparing Leaders for God's Work in a World of Adaptive Challenge," *Theological Education* 51, no. 2 (2018): 13, <https://www.ats.edu/files/galleries/2018-theological-education-v51-n2.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 603.

eternal city/kingdom of God. What should be expected to happen in political life itself, is not focusing on the political goals of the existing leaders' power or in other words, politics being a tool of world leaders' power. As explained in the previous section. In fact, the utopian city/society structure as aspired especially by the believers in Indonesians and even every nation can be realized when every politics that is carried out is based on the will of God.

The role of God's people today becomes important as God's "People", who participate in creating God's city/kingdom as expected.<sup>33</sup> That is why, government (politics) is not an end, but a means to improve human life, to provide maximum opportunities for people to grow and develop in faith, individuality, and creativity. Furthermore, regarding the role of God's people for the establishment of God's city/kingdom, Wayne A. Grudem provides an important view based on biblical examples, he writes:

The Bible gives several examples of faithful believers who gave clear witness to government officials about how they should govern. The prophet Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the most powerful ruler in the world in about 600 BC: "O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity," (Dan. 4:27).<sup>34</sup>

The role of God's people cannot be ignored so that everyone is responsible politically and theologically for creating the city/kingdom of God everywhere. The city/kingdom of God is not always measured by the physical progress of a city or country, although it can be a factor. The creation of a kingdom of God for every nation. It is the implementation of the values of the kingdom of God now and here (earth). Walter Brueggemann said: "The ultimate promise for the nations as partners of Yahweh is the complete end of hostility and the rule of a shared shalom. "This affirmation of God's central promise towards every nation as God's partner is the end of enmity between God and every country and

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<sup>33</sup> Throstrur Thordarson, "Should A Christian Leader Always Wait On God to Act?" *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 8, no. 2 (2014): 94, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1234&context=jacl>.

<sup>34</sup> Thordarson, 521.

between every government. On the contrary, the creation of shalom(peace) embodies the values of God's kingdom on this earth.

## Conclusion

The term "politics" in the Old Testament was not meant to refer to God's people's political practice(s). Politics in the Old Testament is described as Theopolitics (the politics of God). Thus, God and politics are not two things that need to be contradicted but can become an inseparable unity. God as an "absolute ruler", can use His people, and it can be understood as a political act in fulfilling God's purposes and objectives. Therefore, God freely and responsibly chooses His people based on His sovereignty. Politics in the Old Testament is understood as realizing God's own city/kingdom through His people. The arrangement of the city/kingdom/state is a picture of God's eternal city/kingdom in the history of the life of His people. Each of God's people is responsible, both politically and theologically, for the implementation/creation of God's city/kingdom.

Theopolitics (God's politics) is implemented through His people to realize the city/kingdom of God for every nation in this world. Thus, every leader who leads in this world should embody God's purposes, not the political intentions of these leaders. All existing leadership to the realization of the city/kingdom of God. Through the implementation of the values of the kingdom of God now and here (earth).

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