

Israelites believed that Jehovah ever did that which was absolutely right. In their relation, therefore, as well with one another as with God, they were expected to do and act as worthy subjects of such a king. Because his kingdom was to be one of justice and righteousness and peace, they were required to perform justice, to execute righteousness, to promote peace. As the judicial authority of Jehovah extended over all the earth, the notion of a world-wide commonwealth would also be suggested by the idea of a divine kingdom. From the manifest difference, therefore, between the actual and the possible, between the real and the ideal, hope would naturally look forward to a period when the essential attributes of the divine kingdom should be apparent throughout the entire world.

The idea of a divine administration of government was connected with the conception of a divine state, as founded by Moses. In this state the nation was declared to be directly governed by God. While making use of human instruments, Jehovah was supposed to carry on the government of the state himself. Although the idea of a divine state was reluctantly surrendered at the time of Samuel, when the Israelites demanded a human king, in order to be like the surrounding nations, still the essential principle of the Theocracy was perpetuated during the period of the Monarchy. The rights of the visible ruler were made identical with the rights of the invisible ruler, and the closest possible union between the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Jehovah was conceived by the idea that the king of Israel was "Jehovah's anointed," who, as God's vicegerent, administered his divine government on the earth. The two kingdoms were regarded as one and the same in a similar way, perhaps, to that in which we regard the kingdom of God in heaven and the kingdom of God on earth as one and the same. Thus, from the conception of Jehovah's anointed, which, from the time of David, was always associated with his royal house, there originated the idea of a Messianic king, whose future greatness and glory so largely constitute the theme of the great Hebrew prophets.