

Mashiah as Davidic Ruler

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Examination of the thirty-eight times the word *mashiah* occurs in the Old Testament leads to a recognition of a discernable growth of the significance of this concept in the ongoing of God's self-revelation. There appear to be three distinct levels of significance. The first was that of chosen, consecrated, empowered leader.¹ This present article will consider *mashiah* as the Davidic ruler, and another later the significance of *mashiah* as the coming Messiah.

The basic significance of anointing was seen to lie in the idea that the anointed one was chosen and consecrated by God to represent Him in some avenue of service, and was empowered for that service by the Holy Spirit. Anointing signified that the recipient was set apart for service by and for Yahweh. He belonged to God, was to be dependent upon Him, and was protected by Him. He also was endowed with the Spirit of God for accomplishment of the appointed service.

Upon the basic concept of *mashiah* as a chosen, consecrated and empowered leader in the office of prophet, priest, and king is built a second and more specific concept of *mashiah* as the king of Israel and especially one of the dynasty of kings beginning with David, the son of Jesse.

There can be little doubt that the reign of David had a profound effect on the history of the nation both politically and spiritually. Bruce suggests that "in later expansions of the confessional recital of Yahweh's dealings with Israel the establishment of the throne of David is the goal to which His earlier dealings with Israel led up."²

In view of the great influence of David's relationship to God's person and reign over God's people, this article will analyze that influence as it relates to the concept of *mashiah*, both in David's lifetime and beyond. To this end the advent of David as king, the Davidic covenant itself, and the use of *mashiah* in the Psalms will be considered.

The Advent of David

The selection and coronation of Saul as the first king of Israel marked a major shift in the history of that nation. Although kingship was prophesied (Gen 49:10; Num 24:17), regulated, (Deut 17:14-20) and anticipated³ well in advance of its institution, some antagonism still resulted,⁴ coming initially from Samuel (I Sam 8:6, 10-18) and then later from certain "sons of Belial" (I Sam 10:27 after God had granted the request for a king.⁵ This negative beginning was to characterize the reign of Saul, for he failed to be the representative ruler that God wanted. One is tempted to agree with von Rad that:

to faith his supreme interest was as the anointed who slipped from Yahweh's hand, the one quitting the stage, and yielding to him who was coming; that is, Saul as the God-forsaken, driven from one delusion to the other, desperate, and in the end swallowed up in miserable darkness.⁶

It is against this backdrop of initial monarchical failure that the advent of David is set. "Yahweh, who gave the kingship to Saul, took it away from him, sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him to be chief over his people (I Sam 13:14).⁷ The distinction between Saul and David may be illustrated by the fact that the title of "servant of Yahweh" is not used of Saul but is repeatedly applied to David (I Sam 23:10-11; II Sam 3:18; 7:5, 8, 19-29; I Kgs 3:6; 8:24-26; 11:13, 32, 34, 36, 38; 14:8; II Kgs 19:34; 20:6).⁸ The submission and fidelity implied in the title were lacking in the reign of Saul, but present in the reign of David.

The installation of David as the second king of Israel afforded the people an opportunity to see an "anointed of Yahweh" whose life would be characterized by obedience and submission rather than by disobedience and rebellion. David could potentially add to the already existing concept of *mashiah* as a chosen and consecrated representative the further quality of a true inner righteousness. The rejection of Saul showed that even Yahweh's anointed could not escape the penalty of sin, while the success of David illustrates that He rewards the righteousness of faith.⁹

There can be little doubt that David was the greatest of all the kings of Israel or Judah—politically, militarily and spiritually. He seems to have taken very seriously the office to which God had chosen and anointed him. Perhaps this is why he uses the title *mashiah* more than any other, reflecting his reverence for the responsibility that it denoted. He even used the term ten times in connection with the rejected Saul, suggesting respect for the

office even though the officeholder was undeserving of such honor.

Thus, not only the history of Israel, but also the concept of her king, "the anointed of Yahweh," was greatly affected by the accession of David to the throne. He brought a personal righteousness to, as well as a high reward for, the position of *mashiah* at his anointing. Furthermore, his influence was to extend beyond his own lifetime and reign into Israel's future. A major source of that future influence was the Davidic covenant.

The Davidic Covenant

The history of Israel and the doctrine of the New Testament alike have been affected by the covenant which Yahweh established with David and his house. Although the term *mashiah* does not appear in the text of the divine promise, nevertheless the future significance of the title is influenced by its contents. It was not only given to the reigning *mashiah* of Israel, but effectively ended the personal selection of a king for Judah by Yahweh, "since the choice of David was also the choice of his dynasty forever."¹⁰ Thus, the concept of *mashiah* is narrowed to the Davidic line. This statement is supported by the fact that, although the anointing of one northern king, Jehu, is mentioned in Scripture (II Kgs 9:6), the title *mashiah* is only used of the Davidic kings.

The historical context of the Davidic covenant is well known. David, in a time of military peace and material prosperity, desired to build a house for the ark of God. Although Nathan's original reply was favorable, God sent him back to David with a corrected message that God would build him a house instead. The Bible clearly indicates that the message came from Yahweh and was not a dogma developed by David and Solomon.¹¹ The oracle produced the dogma, rather than vice versa. And the account in II Samuel 7 is understood to be authentic and reliable, contrary to the views of Pfeiffer,¹² McKenzie,¹³ and Labuschagne.¹⁴

The contents of the covenant are also familiar. God promised David that his house, or dynasty, would never be cut off like Saul's even for the commission of iniquity. Several specific facets of the promise are worthy of note here.

First, David was assured of a seed, a son, who would build God's house and whose kingdom God would establish. This next *mashiah* was to have a close father-son relationship with Yahweh, extending to chastisement for iniquity but not to removal. It appears, then, that Yahweh would treat the next *mashiah* in light of the same close relationship that David had established and enjoyed.

Second, the choice of David's line was to extend beyond the seed of the first generation and on into perpetuity, for twice (II Sam 7:13, 16) David was told that the kingdom given to him and his son would be established forever.¹⁵ Thus, a fulfillment and reign beyond the reign of Solomon is in view here also—in the distant future.

Third, the right to rule was to belong to David's dynasty as evidenced by the promise of a throne (vv 13, 16). The Davidic covenant, then, looks primarily to the future and adds that future aspect to the concept of *mashiah*.

The covenant with David is clearly unconditional in its character.¹⁶ David seems to have understood it as such. This is shown in his prayer after receiving the oracle (II Sam 7:18-29; cf v 19, "concerning the distant future"; v 25, "confirm it forever"; v 29, "that it may continue forever"), and in his last words (II Sam 23:5, "For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things, and secured").

The Psalms also reveal an understanding of the Davidic covenant as unconditional. Psalm 89 (vv 3, 4, 20, 21, 34-36, 49) and Psalm 132 (v 11) are clear in this respect. The words suggest an unconditional promise, for there are no conditions placed on the initiation of it in the context.

Finally, the Chronicler evidently felt it to be unconditional and still valid some five hundred years later when he included it as an encouragement for the returning remnant.¹⁷

The post-exilic account in I Chronicles 17 provides some insight into the interpretation of the covenant with David five hundred years after its pronouncement. A comparison of the two statements reveals several significant variations and verifies the declaration of von Rad that "this promise of Yahweh was never forgotten, but in the ages following it was constantly interpreted anew and made relevant to the present. In it also lie the historical origin and legitimation of all messianic expectations."¹⁸

The II Samuel 7 account may be characterized as near, simple, and general, while in I Corinthians 17 the account is remote, complex and specific.¹⁹ There are three specific variations to notice.

First, there is a difference in the occupant of the Davidic throne forever. II Samuel refers to "your seed who will come forth from your bowels" while I Chronicles 17 identified him as one "who shall be of your sons." The former refers primarily to Solomon in the terminology used, although the fulfillment is not limited to Solomon. The latter, on the other hand, employs terminology that eliminated Solomon, specifying a fulfillment

beyond the immediate family of David.²⁰ Thus the Chronicler interpreted the original promise as being ultimately unfulfilled in his day.²¹

A second variation may be found by comparing II Samuel 7:16 with I Chronicles 17:14. Again the former statement, "And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever" is specifically applied by the Chronicler to the descendant of Solomon: "But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever." The general now becomes specific: the promise of a dynasty to David now becomes the promise of an individual ruling forever in God's house, i e, the temple,²² and in His kingdom.

The third variation deals with an omission. In I Chronicles 17 the clause of II Samuel 7:14b is omitted: "When he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men." In the original text of the covenant, this clause symbolized both the character of God's relationship with the Davidic ruler and the extent of His chastening of him, i e, the king would be punished but not cut off. The omission of the clause, assuming it to be intentional, signifies either that the covenant is no longer to be understood as perpetual, or that the seed in view is no longer in danger of the chastening of Yahweh. The perpetuity of the covenant does not seem to be in question here. All of the other evidence in II Samuel 7 for an unconditional and perpetual covenant is intact in I Chronicles 17. It seems safe to conclude then that by the omission of this conditional clause the character of the expected seed is shown to be righteous and free from correction. This could not have been Solomon, nor any other of the Davidic kings. The Chronicler thus drew attention back to the incomplete righteousness of David himself and also forward to an expectation of one whose righteousness would be complete and who would rule forever.

At the initiation of the covenant David seems to have had no comprehension of the ultimate significance of the promise. His humble prayer of thanks and praise in II Samuel 7:18-29 is directed to Yahweh for the blessing promised to him and his "house." Seven times he refers to the future of that "house," and this is understandable in light of what has been pointed out regarding the content of II Samuel 7.

*An individual will rule forever in
the temple over the Kingdom.*

In the "last words of David" in II Samuel 23:1-7, however, there is indication that by the end of his life he had gained some insight into the true import of what God had promised him. The word *mashiah* does appear in this passage, and in a unique combination as "the anointed of the God of Jacob." In the position of "the anointed of the God of Jacob" and inspired by the Spirit of the Lord, David refers to his house, secured by God's everlasting covenant, as the source of one who will rule men righteously and in the fear of God (v 3). The nature of Solomon's reign and the comparison drawn in verse 4 suggest that this is not David's own son, but a righteous ruler beyond him.²³ The specific mention of inspiration here also implies that David did comprehend the future coming of an ultimate true Messiah.

Mashiah in the Psalms

The title *mashiah* occurs ten times in the Psalter. This is second in frequency only to its usage in the historical narratives of the books of Samuel. Most often *mashiah* is found in the royal psalms, in which Bright suggests that "the theology of Davidic kingship is best seen."²⁴ These psalms provide insight into both the general concept of kingship and the specific role of the king as *mashiah* in the monarchical period.

Preliminary Considerations

As preliminary it seems advisable to draw attention to a few underlying assumptions regarding the composition of the Psalter. First, it is presupposed that reliable evidence concerning the authorship of individual psalms is found in the combination of internal evidence with the psalm titles. These superscriptions are taken to be reliable and authentic, contrary to the conclusion of some critics.²⁵ Thus, at least seventy-three psalms are clearly of Davidic authorship. No convincing evidence for rejecting such authorship has been brought forward.²⁶

A second and related matter concerns the dating of individual psalms. While firm dates are impossible to ascertain for all but a few psalms, the majority are understood to have been composed during the United Monarchy.²⁷ Harrison suggests a time frame of the monarchy to the Persian period,²⁸ and Archer declares that "no convincing evidence, . . . has been offered for the dating of any of the psalms later than approximately 500 B C."²⁹ Even the consensus of critical opinion seems to have shifted to a mainly pre-exilic position, as evidenced by Ringgren:

Together with a growing number of Old Testament scholars we shall assume that most of the psalms are pre-exilic (although some are undeniably post-exilic) and that they are preserved in approximately their original form.³⁰

Third, a word must be said regarding the use for which the Psalter was intended and the proposed method of interpretation. It has been fashionable among critical scholars in this century to interpret the Psalms in light of a supposed uniform cultic pattern in the ancient Near East. While these various schools have suggested some helpful principles of psalm study, basically all of their comparisons and conclusions must be rejected. Thus the classification of psalms by literary form as suggested by Gunkel has proven beneficial to conservative Bible scholars, but any attempt to trace an evolution of these forms is unacceptable.³¹

Likewise, there is value in seeing a relationship of the psalms to the external form of worship, or cult, of Israel as proposed by Mowinckel, while his exclusive emphasis on the place of the various psalms in the cult,³² his proposed Babylonian-type enthronement festival in Israel,³³ and his idea of a divine kingship³⁴ are all untenable. Further, the proposition of a hypothetical myth and ritual pattern reflected in the Psalter by Hooke³⁵ and Engnell³⁶ is of no positive benefit.

Ultimately, the interpretation of the various occurrences of *mashiah* in the Psalms must take into account divine revelation and inspiration. Parallels of form may surface as a result of the common ANE culture, but the content of the Psalms cannot be compared to any other piece of ancient literature in ultimate meaning. The literary form and cultic application of a particular psalm will be helpful, but there is also a devotional purpose for the Psalms which should not be overlooked. They reflect first the relationship of a man with the living God, then, often, the relationship of the anointed king with that God, and finally, a cultic usage in the worship of the nation.³⁷

Specific Occurrences

It is the intent of this section to note and briefly discuss nine of the ten appearances of the word *mashiah* in the Psalms³⁸ that a clearer understanding of the significance of *mashiah* as Davidic ruler may thus be gained.

Psalm 2:2. Although this psalm has no superscription assigning it to David, the fact that it is ascribed to David in Acts 4:25 must settle the issue, Leupold says:

Granting that a common metonymy would allow for the use of the word "David" for "the Psalter," we cannot allow that the case is parallel when the "mouth of our father David" is referred

to, and he is further designated as "Thy servant." Such a statement is an unquestionable allusion to a person. We may not know how the author of Acts came into possession of this knowledge. But we believe that he has rendered a verdict on the problem of the authorship of this psalm.³⁹

Dahood suggests a tenth century date for the psalm,⁴⁰ concurring with Mowinckel⁴¹ and Weiser⁴² that it was written for the coronation or enthronement of the king. However, verses 7-9 seem to reflect back on that occasion in a time of subsequent trouble (perhaps II Sam 10).⁴³

The theme of the psalm is the furious but futile rebellion of the nations around Israel against the Lord and His anointed. The significant point to see here with regard to *mashiah* is the relationship between the Lord and His anointed. A close relationship is implied by the fact that both are included as the focus of the rebelling kings. A further measure of that relationship, as well as its basis, is the divine decree appealed to in verse 7. The reference must be to the pledge of adoption given to David's heir in II Samuel 7:14. On the basis of that promise (vv 7-9) and the incomparable power of God (vv 4-6), the psalmist, God's anointed can expect to be delivered.

Psalm 18:50. In view of the superscription, Psalm 18 can be accorded Davidic authorship.⁴⁴ That is supported by the historical note preceding the appearance of the psalm in II Samuel 22. Kidner suggests that an incidental pointer to David "is the allusion to fighting on foot (29, 33), since later kings soon took to chariots . . . which were introduced on a large scale by Solomon."⁴⁵ Delitzsch points out that "only a fondness for doubt can lead anyone to doubt the Davidic origin of this psalm."⁴⁶

The psalm is a "royal song of thanksgiving," marking a point, apparently early in David's reign, at which he had been granted many remarkable deliverances, not the least of which was freedom from Saul's hand.⁴⁸ The occurrence of *mashiah* is in verse 50, in a "concluding paean of praise."⁴⁹ David acknowledges God as the author of all his victories and His loving-kindness, undeserved and revealed in the Davidic covenant, as the basis for all God's help. He seems to reflect on a greater goal in the mind of God for his own descendants which transcends his own personal experience.⁵⁰

Two points of significance may be noted here. First, the achievements and successes of the *mashiah* spring, not from his own abilities, but from his association with Yahweh. Second, the Israelite monarchy is conceived of as an eternal institution under the Davidic dynasty in which its success is assured by the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh.

The success of the mashiah is assured by the faithfulness of Yahweh.

Psalm 20:6. Psalm 20 is a prayer of intercession by the nation on behalf of its king on the eve of battle. Although the superscription ascribes the psalm to David, it gives no information to help settle the question of the historical situation prompting its composition.⁵¹ The psalm may well reflect a liturgical usage at some time, but this should not be pressed, as Eaton,⁵² Sabourin,⁵³ and Weiser do.⁵⁴ There is no objective evidence for an enthronement festival liturgy here. "It certainly could have been part of the prayer of any devout Israelite at any time when he felt impelled to invoke the blessing of the Almighty upon his government and its king in times of trouble."⁵⁵

The reference to the anointed occurs in verse 6, at the beginning of the second section of the psalm which reflects the assurance of the king's success. Once again it is significant to notice that it is the Lord who is responsible for the deliverance of His anointed. Further, He will hear the prayer of His anointed. Finally, the whole psalm suggests that the king is a proper subject of the intercessory prayer of the nation.

Psalm 28:8. The author of Psalm 28 is described within the text as a righteous man (v 3), Yahweh's anointed (v 8), and one whose cause is identical with that of the people (vv 8, 9). This picture of the righteous king is supported by the assignment of the psalm to David in the heading. The psalm is commonly thought to have been written during the flight from Absalom.⁵⁶ The identification of the distress in view as illness⁵⁷ finds no more support in the text than does the idea of the psalm originating in a covenant festival.⁵⁸

It is in the section of praise (vv 6-9) for an answer to the prayer for help in the first section (vv 1-5) that Yahweh's anointed is mentioned. The significance of verse 8 is not only that Yahweh is the deliverer of His anointed, but that there is also a close relationship between the anointed and the people. Kidner points out:

David now builds on the fact that he is more than a private citizen. As the Lord's *anointed* (a term which grew into the word Messiah) he stood for his people, and God's grace must be meant for them as well.⁵⁹

Further, the parallelism in verse 8 between His people and His anointed served to highlight the importance of the anointed to the nation: it does not show that *mashiah* here refers to the nation itself.⁶⁰

Psalm 84:9. The most that can be said about the author of this psalm is that he was, according to the superscription, one of the Korahite temple singers, perhaps one who had been banished from the sanctuary for a time.⁶¹ The theme of the psalm is clearly the love for the sanctuary. Weiser calls it "a graphic illustration of the Old Testament's devotion to the house of God and the spiritual aspect of its cultic piety."⁶²

In the midst of this hymn of praise and longing for God's house there appears a prayer for blessing upon the king. There is practically unanimous agreement that the king is the subject of the petition to "look upon the face of Thine anointed" (v 9)⁶³ and not the high priest.⁶⁴ The connection in thought between praise for God's house and prayer for God's king may seem obscure. Delitzsch explains best, that "loving Jahve of Hosts, the heavenly King, he also loves His inviolably chosen one."⁶⁵ In fact, the prosperity of a righteous king would be a blessing to the sanctuary. Thus, the principle to be noted here is the close identification of the anointed king and the Almighty God. A further measure of this relationship in the context is the reference to the king as "our shield"⁶⁶ in verse 9, followed in verse 11 by a reference to the Lord God Himself as a "shield."

Psalm 89:38, 51. It should be no surprise to find *mashiah* appearing in this psalm, the theme of which is the eternal covenant of Yahweh with David. The division of this "royal lament"⁶⁷ into a hymn of praise (vv 1-18), a rehearsal of the promise to David (vv 19-37), and a lament over the present situation (vv 38-51) is not sufficient justification for questioning the "formal integrity of the psalm as it appears in the Psalter."⁶⁸ According to the superscription, Ethan the Ezrahite is the author, but the circumstances and time of composition are more difficult to ascertain. In light of the mention of Ethan the Ezrahite during the reign of Solomon (I Kgs 4:31), it seems best to follow Delitzsch⁶⁹ in seeing the setting for the psalm in the defeat of Rehoboam by Sheshonk I (I Kgs 14:21-28) when Ethan could still have been living. There does not appear to be any compelling reason to hold to a date late in the monarchy⁷⁰ or in the exile⁷¹ for Psalm 89. Neither is it necessary to see the cult as the primary motivation for the psalm, although it may have had a liturgical usage at a later time.⁷²

Content of the psalm is the contrast between God's person and promise to David on one hand, and the contemporary plight of

*The Lord will hear the prayer of His
anointed and deliver him.*

God's favor toward His anointed includes His favor toward His people.

the king and nation on the other. "So there is painful tension here, yet the spirit of the psalm is humble, never bitter."⁷³ There is a reference to the anointing of David (v 20) in the section rehearsing the circumstances of the covenant, but both occurrences of *mashiah* are found in the last section of lament. The contrast of the entire psalm is epitomized in the contrast between "Thine anointed" and "cast off and rejected" (v 38), as well as the reproach mentioned in verse 51.

Several significant features should be noted at this point. First, the psalm conveys obvious hope in the faithfulness of God to His promise. The psalmist pleads with Yahweh to intervene on the basis of that promise (vv 49-51). Second, the psalmist shows an understanding that the Davidic covenant is eternal. Four times he refers to God's promise as being "forever" (vv 4, 29, 36, 37). Third, the condition of the people is wrapped up in the relationship of Yahweh with His anointed. Verses 50-51 indicate that His reproach is their reproach also. Finally, note that the hope of the nation is embodied in the person of God's anointed. The psalmist's particular concern is God's wrath against His anointed (vv 38-45), while his plea is for restoration and intervention on behalf of the anointed king (vv 49-51).

Psalm 132:10, 17. The setting of Psalm 132 is obscure. The author appears not to be David on the basis of the reference to both David and Yahweh's anointed in verse 10. "The exclusive reference to the situation as it prevailed in David's time would suggest that the psalm originated near the time of that outstanding king and near the work of this king who is alluded to in the psalm."⁷⁴ Thus a post-exilic date would be precluded. The most likely setting seems to be the completion and dedication of the temple, since verses 8-10 are placed in the mouth of Solomon by the Chronicler in II Chronicles 6:41-42. Once again, the suggestion of Eaton,⁷⁵ Mowinckel,⁷⁶ Porter,⁷⁷ and Weiser⁷⁸ that the psalm is part of the liturgy of a yearly festival is unsupported by the plain language of the text.

The central theme is the sanctuary,⁷⁹ David's resolve to provide it, and God's resolve to bless both David's dynasty and his city, Zion. Two references to *mashiah* are found in the psalm. Each closes a section: in verse 10, the present anointed king pleads access to God on the basis of David's standing, while in verse 17, the answer to the plea is God's promise of strength and continuance for David's line.⁸⁰

The significance of Psalm 132 to *mashiah* is threefold. First, the future success of God's anointed is again associated with the worship of God and specifically with Zion, for that certainly must be the antecedent of "there" in verse 17. Then, the psalm also indicates that it is not individual worthiness which is the basis for God's blessing, but His faithfulness to the Davidic promise: thus the plea "for the sake of David." Finally, the line of David, including the present anointed representative, is assured once again of future ultimate strength, stability, and victory.

Collective Significance

It seems advisable at this point to summarize contribution of the Psalter to an understanding of *mashiah*. The position of the "anointed of Yahweh" as the Psalms portray it is first a dependent relationship. His anointed is to be dependent on God's person: success comes from a right relationship with Him (18:50), deliverance comes from Him (20:6; 28:8). His faithfulness to the Davidic promise is the ultimate basis of blessing for the king (132:10), thus the true hope of Israel is in God's faithfulness to that promise (89:49-51). The anointed of God is also to depend upon prayer: not only ought he himself to pray, but the nation ought to intercede on his behalf (20:6). A third aspect of dependence is the program of God, the sanctuary: the anointed is closely associated with God's house (84:9) and the future success of David's line is wrapped up with God's chosen place, Zion (132:17).

The position of "God's anointed" is also seen in the Psalms to be a representative relationship. The anointed king is the representative of Yahweh: as such, love for the Lord is identified closely with concern for the king (84:9), and he is envisioned as the hope of the nation (89:38, 51). He is also representative of the people: he is not only closely related to them (28:8), but their condition depends, in a very real sense, on his relationship to God (89:38, 51).

Finally, the position of "the anointed of Yahweh" is declared in the Psalms to be a perpetual relationship. The Davidic dynasty is eternal (89:49), guaranteed by the covenant faithfulness of God (18:50), and assured by the same faithfulness of ultimate strength, stability, and victory (132:17).

*Love for the Lord is manifest in love
for the king.*

Mashiah in Lamentations

Lamentations 4:20 contains an occurrence of *mashiah* as the Davidic ruler which should be noticed along with occurrences in Psalms. The book of Lamentations is anonymously written. Tradition supports Jeremiah as the author,⁸¹ and further arguments marshalled for or against him are mostly subjective and inconclusive.⁸² The book does seem to have been written by a single eyewitness author not long after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B C.⁸³

"The book comprises five poems, each forming one chapter of Lamentations, of which four are acrostic in form."⁸⁴ In chapter four, the horror and tragedy of the seige and defeat are depicted. Near the end of this description, verse 20 says:

The breath of our nostrils, the Lord's anointed,
Was captured in their pits,
Of whom we had said, "Under his shadow
We shall live among the nations."

The author has already described the responsibility and punishment of the prophets (v 13), the priests (vv 13, 16), and the elders (v 16). The capture of the king, Zedekiah, is set forth as the culmination of the defeat. It is the measure of the doom of the southern kingdom.

There are three points with regard to the significance of *mashiah* which may be drawn from this verse. First, the close connection of king and people is emphasized. Zedekiah or perhaps better the Davidic kingship which he represented,⁸⁵ is called "the breath of our nostrils" or "our life's breath," signifying an intimate and important relationship.

Next one sees here the hope which was invested in the Davidic monarch. In him was personified the hope of security and prosperity as a nation,⁸⁶ even among the heathen.

For, so long as there remained to them the king whom God had given, together with the promises attached to the kingdom, they might cherish the hope that the Lord would still fulfill to them these promises also. But this hope seemed to be destroyed when the king was taken prisoner, deprived of sight, and carried away to Babylon into captivity.⁸⁷

Finally, note the implication of the necessity of ultimate dependence upon the Lord. Hope in the Lord's anointed was only sound in so far as it reflected an ultimate faith in the God who had

*God's promise to David brought
stability, perpetuity, and hope.*

chosen him. This faith in God's program is shown to be ineffectual without a preceding faith in God's person.

Summary and Conclusion

Upon the basic concept of *mashiah* as God's chosen and consecrated leader, there developed in the time of David a second concept of *mashiah* as the Davidic ruler. The significance of *mashiah* was forever affected by the advent of David's person to the throne of Israel and by the declaration of God's promise regarding the future of that throne.

With the advent of David as king, a second meaning was added to *mashiah*: the Davidic ruler. Both David and the covenant that Yahweh made with him influenced and specified the significance of the title "anointed." Several Psalms furnish evidence of this influence (2, 18, 20, 28, 84, 89, 132).

David brought submission and a personal relationship to the concept of the anointed, while God's promise to him brought stability, perpetuity, and hope. These qualities are stressed in the Psalter as *mashiah* appears speaking of the Davidic monarch. In Lamentations the necessity of ultimate dependence upon Yahweh by both people and king is demonstrated.

Upon these two successive concepts of *mashiah* there is a third found in the Old Testament. It is the idea of *mashiah* as the coming Messiah. The next article will consider this concept and the passages which reveal it.

This study is from the author's ThM thesis "The Significance of *mashiah* in the Old Testament" Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Ind. 1983

Quotations of Scripture are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise stated.

Notes

¹ Jeffrey P Tuttle, "Anointing and Anointed" *Calvary Baptist Theological Journal* Spring 1985 p 44

² F F Bruce, *The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publ Co, 1968) p 68

³ This anticipation is shown by the incident with Abimelech (Judg 9), the Jothan fable (Judg 17-20), and even the prayer of Hannah (I Sam 2:10, 35).

⁴ This antagonism is not sufficient to support the modern theory of an anti-monarchical movement in Israel and two narratives of the institution of monarchy. See John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959) pp 182-83; Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel, Its Life and Institutions*, trans John McHugh (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961): 94; and Hans W Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*, trans J S Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960) p 74

⁵ It is evident that the time and motivation of Israel's request for a king were in error, and not the whole concept of monarchy. Thus God could call their request sin and still use that sin to accomplish His ultimate goal for the nation. To be rejected is the proposal that God here contradicts Himself as Budde suggests, *Die Schatzung*

des Koniqthums in Alten Testament: eine Kaisersgeburtstagsrede (Marburg, n p, 1903) p 14; and the suggestion of Wilke that kingship was a political move to Samuel, *Die politische Wirksamkeit der Propheten Israels* (Leipzig, n p, 1913) pp 91, 10-12

⁶ G von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol 1 (New York: Harper and Row, 1962) p 324

⁷ Roland de Vaux, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, trans Damian McHugh (Garden City: Doubleday & Co, 1971) p 152

⁸ *Ibid*, p 154

⁹ This is not to intimate that David was free from the sin which beset Saul, but rather to suggest that the righteousness which he claimed (Ps 7:8; 17:1-5; 18:20-24; 119:121) was the righteousness of faith and furnished the basis for his ultimate blessing.

¹⁰ de Vaux, *Bible and ANE*, p 153

¹¹ See the intimation of Bright, *History of Israel*, p 220

¹² R H Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1953) pp 368-73

¹³ John L McKenzie, "The Dynastic Oracle: II Samuel 7" *TS* 8 (1947): 195

¹⁴ C J Labuschagne, "Some Remarks on the Prayer of David in II Samuel 7" *Studies on the Book of Samuel* (Stellenbosche, South Africa: n p, 1960) p 29

¹⁵ Although the meaning of 'olam is not confined to the future, the phrase 'adh-'olam generally indicates indefinite continuance into the future, *BDB*, pp 761-62; see also J A Thompson, "The Root '-L-M in Semitic Languages and Some Proposed New Translations in Ugaritic and Hebrew" in *A Tribute to Arthur Voobus: Studies in Early Christian Literature and Its Environment, Primarily in the Syrian East*, ed Robert H Fischer (Chicago: Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1977) p 162

¹⁶ Walter C Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub House, 1978) pp 156-77; G N H Peters, *Theocratic Kingdom*, 3 vols (reprinted Grand Rapids: Kregel Publ, 1952), 1:343; cf Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Steadfast House: What was David Promised

in II Samuel 7:11b-16?" *HUCA* 34 (1963): 73

¹⁷ William Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: Inter-arsity Press, 1979) p 121

¹⁸ von Rad, *OT Theology*, I, p 311

¹⁹ W David Ring, "David's Awareness of Messianic Meaning in the Messianic Psalms" (MDiv thesis, Grace Theol Seminary, 1979) p 27

²⁰ David Cooper, *Messiah: His Nature and Person* (Los Angeles: David L Cooper, 1933) p 99; C F Keil, *The Books of Chronicles*, trans Andrew Harper in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub Co, 1949) p 223

²¹ This is also the view of James D Newsome Jr, "Toward a New Understanding of the Chronicler and His Purposes" *JBL* 94 (1975): 208-210, 213; and Magne Saebø, "Messianism in Chronicles? Some Remarks to the Old Testament Background of the New Testament Christology" *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 2 (1980): 102; for an alternative view see H G M Williamson, "Eschatology in Chronicles" *TB* 28 (1977): 136-42

²² Cooper, *Messiah*, p 100; Keil, *Chronicles*, pp 223-24

²³ C F Keil and F Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, trans James Martin in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub Co, 1949) pp 487-88

²⁴ Bright, *History of Israel*, p 220. See also the discussions by Walter Kaiser, *Old Testament Theology*, pp 159-62; F Delitzsch, *Messianic Prophecies in Historical Succession*, trans S I Curtiss (New York: Chas Scribner's Sons, 1891) p 94; H R Holmyard III, "Preparation of Israel for Messiah with regard to Resurrection as Epitomized by Psalm 16 in Acts 2" (ThM thesis, Grace Theol Seminary, 1981) pp 74-78

²⁵ See Leopold Sabourin, *The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning*, 2 vols (Staten Island: Society of St Paul, 1969) 1:15; Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962) pp 94-95

²⁶ See Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964) p 440-43

²⁷ Zondervan *Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, s v "Psalms, Book of" by J B Payne, p 928

²⁸ R K Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub Co, 1969) p 928

²⁹ Archer, *Introduction*, p 440

³⁰ Helmer, Ringgren, *The Faith of the Psalmists* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1963) p x; See also W F Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1951) p 226; John Paterson, *The Praises of Israel* (New York: Chas Scribner's Sons, 1950) p 15

³¹ Bruce K Waltke, "The Book of Psalms" Institute of Theological Studies taped lecture (Grand Rapids: Outreach, Inc)

³² Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 vol, trans D R Ap-Thomas (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962) 1:1-41; Weiser, *Psalms*, pp 21-35

³³ Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 1:106-192; Weiser, *Psalms*, pp 35-52; the theory of a New Year's Enthronement Festival in Israel has been analyzed and found deficient by such scholars as C L Feinberg, "The Uses of the Psalter" *B Sac* 105 (1948): 164-169, 463-77; Harrison, *Introduction*, p 996; Edmund Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1958) p 237; K A Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1966) pp 102-106; even critical scholars who accept the theory of a yearly enthronement festival admit that it lacks solid evidence; A Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955) p 21; A S Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*, trans G W Anderson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965) pp 66-67; Weiser, *Psalms*, p 35; Walter G Williams, "Liturgical Aspects in Enthronement Psalms" *JBL* 25 (1957): 120

³⁴ See Gerald Cooke, "The Israelite King as Son of God" *ZAW* 73 (1961): 202-225; Jacob, *Theology*, pp 238-39; Kitchen, *Ancient Orient*, p 106; M Noth, "God, King, and Nation" *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies*, trans D R Ap-Thomas (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966) pp 174-75; B B Warfield, "The Divine Messiah in the Old Testament" *Ptr* 14 (1916): 404

³⁵ S H Hooke, ed *Myth, Ritual, and*

Kingship (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958)

³⁶ I Engnell, *A Rigid Scrutiny*, trans and ed John T Willis (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ Press, 1969); *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967)

³⁷ Warren Vanhetloo, "Early Liturgical Use of the Psalms" (unpublished ThM thesis: Calvin Seminary, 1954) pp 10-11; condensed in "The Use of Psalms in Public Worship in Bible Times" *Central Bible Quarterly* Winter 1971 p 2

³⁸ For use of *Mashiah* in Ps 105:15 see J Tuttle, "Anointing and Anointed" p 54

³⁹ H C Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969) p 45

⁴⁰ Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms*, 3 vols in *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co, 1966) 1:7

⁴¹ Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 1:62-63

⁴² Weiser, *Psalms*, pp 109-110

⁴³ Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, 2 vols in *The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove: The Intervarsity Press, 1973) 1:50

⁴⁴ Even Weiser concedes the possibility, *Psalms*, pp 185-186; so also Dahood, *Psalms*, 1:104

⁴⁵ Kidner, *Psalms*, 1:90; cf Weiser, *Psalms*, p 146

⁴⁶ Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 3 vols, trans Francis Bolton in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publ Co, 1949) 1:250

⁴⁷ Dahood, *Psalms*, 1:104; for an alternate view see Moses Buttenwieser, *The Psalms Chronologically Treated with a New Translation* (Chicago: The Univ of Chicago Press, 1938) pp 456-57

⁴⁸ Leupold, *Psalms*, p 163

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p 174

⁵⁰ Mowinckel supposes that the reference to David's descendants in the last phrase proves that David is not the king in view in Ps 18; *Psalms*, 2:100

⁵¹ Delitzsch suggests that the most satisfactory situation is to be found in II Sam 11, 12, while denying Davidic authorship, *Psalms*, 1:291

⁵² John H Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (Naperville, Il: Alec R Allenson Inc,

nd) pp 116-17

⁵³ Sabourin, *Psalms*, 2:226

⁵⁴ Weiser, *Psalms*, p 205-206

⁵⁵ Leupold, *Psalms*, p 185

⁵⁶ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 1:362; Leupold, *Psalms*, p 240

⁵⁷ Dahood, *Psalms*, 1:172; Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 2:2

⁵⁸ Weiser, *Psalms*, p 256

⁵⁹ Kidner, *Psalms*, 1:123

⁶⁰ Buitenweiser, *Psalms*, p 829

⁶¹ Leupold, *Psalms*, p 603; Delitzsch suggests that the author was among the followers of David, the banished one, *Psalms*, 3:2

⁶² Weiser, *Psalms*, p 566

⁶³ Dahood, *Psalms*, 2:282; Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:3 Kidner, *Psalms*, 2:306; Leupold, *Psalms*, p 607; Weiser, *Psalms*, p 566

⁶⁴ Sabourin, *Psalms*, 1:240

⁶⁵ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:3

⁶⁶ There is no necessity to translate "our Suzerain" for "our shield" here as Dahood does, *Psalms*, 2:282. See also Ps 89:18

⁶⁷ D W Knife, "Psalm 89 and the Ancient Near East" (unpublished ThD dissertation: Grace Theol Seminary, 1973) pp 64-65

⁶⁸ James M Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm 89" *VT* 11 (1961): 321; Weiser, *Psalms*, p 591

⁶⁹ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:33-34

⁷⁰ Leupold, *Psalms*, p 632

⁷¹ Sabourin, *Psalms*, 2:239; Weiser, *Psalms*, p 591

⁷² Knife, "Psalm 89" pp 64-65

⁷³ Kidner, *Psalms*, 2:319

⁷⁴ Leupold, *Psalms*, p 910

⁷⁵ Eaton, *Kingship and Psalms*, pp 126-27

⁷⁶ Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 1:5-6, 129

⁷⁷ J R Porter, "The Interpretation of II

Samuel 6 and Psalm 132" *JTS* 5 (1954): 167-71

⁷⁸ Weiser, *Psalms*, p 779

⁷⁹ It is probably this theme of the sanctuary which accounts for the inclusion of Ps 132 with the Songs of Ascents. See Leupold, *Psalms*, p 910

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p 916

⁸¹ Delbert R Hillers, *Lamentations in The Anchor Bible* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co, 1972) pp XIX-XXIII

⁸² *Ibid*; Archer, *OT Introduction*, pp 365-66; Harrison, *Introduction*, pp 1069-70

⁸³ Hillers, *Lamentations*, pp XVIII-XIX; Harrison, *Introduction*, p 1070

⁸⁴ Harrison, *Introduction*, p 1065

⁸⁵ Keil, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 2:443

⁸⁶ A similar concept of reliance on the king for national prosperity seems to be reflected in "The Legend of King Keret" from Ugarit (*ANET*, pp 142-49). In contrast to any Israelite concept of kingship, however, Keret is portrayed as a god in the epic (p 147, KRT C, i, 10-23).

⁸⁷ *Ibid*

Abbreviations

ANE Ancient Near East

ANET J B Pritchard (ed),

Ancient Near Eastern Texts

BDB B Brown, S R Driver and C A

Briggs, Hebrew and English

Lexicon of the Old Testament

B Sac Bibliotheca Sacra

HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature

JTS Journal of Theological Studies

PTR Princeton Theological Review

TB Tyndale Bulletin

TS Theological Studies

VT Vetus Testamentum

ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche wissenschaft

The anointed is dependent on God's person, is to depend on prayer, and is to honor God's house.