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The Coming Mashiah/Messiah

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Thirty-eight times in the text of the OT, the word *mashiah* appears. It is translated "Messiah" only in Daniel 9:25-26 by AV and NASB. The most frequent translation is "anointed one." It is from *mashiah* that the term Messiah (the *christos* of the NT) comes.

The fundamental meaning of *mashiah* is a consecrated leader in the service of Yahweh.¹ Anointing in Israel is distinct in that it appears in relation to the prophetic office and even the patriarchs in addition to the priesthood and kingship. Such anointing was initiated by Yahweh, at times ratified by the people, and executed by priests or prophets. Anointing signified that the recipient was set apart for service by, and for, Yahweh. This one was viewed as belonging to God, dependent upon Him, and protected by Him. He was endowed with the Spirit of God for accomplishment of some service.

With the advent of David as king, a second meaning was added to *mashiah*: the Davidic ruler.² Both David's person and the covenant that Yahweh made with him influenced and specified the significance of the title "anointed."

A third and ultimate usage of *mashiah* in the OT appears in reference to the future Messiah. Five passages in which *mashiah* seems to have reference to a future, eschatological Messiah are being considered in this present article. The OT predicts that this Messiah is to reign with Yahweh forever (I Sam 2:10, 35). As the begotten son of Yahweh, He will be opposed by the nations of the world (Ps 2:2), but will ultimately destroy such nations and save His people (Hab 3:13). Even the extent and chronology of His work is foretold (Dan 9:25-26). People of God of all ages may surely rejoice that this ultimate Messiah, Jesus Christ, has come, and will come again to rule the earth in righteousness.

The common declaration of critical scholars has been that the word *mashiah* never signifies a future, eschatological Messiah in OT usages. To the statement, for instance, of Russell that "the word *mashiah* is never used in the Old Testament as a technical term for the 'Messiah' nor is it used with reference to the future ideal king"³ can be added the agreement of such scholars as Campbell,⁴ Crichton,⁵ Gressman,⁶ Engnell,⁷ Klausner,⁸

Orlinsky,⁹ and von Rad.¹⁰ Such a widespread consensus of opinion is impressive, but must be questioned on the basis of careful exegesis of several OT passages.

This survey will seek to evaluate five passages, interpreting them in the light of grammatical, contextual, historical and theological principles. These principles will be applied objectively, but also with the underlying assumption that the Bible is the authoritative and infallible Word of God. For convenience, the word Messiah will be used to refer to the concept of the future, eschatological figure, Christ.

I Samuel 2:10 and 2:15

It is fitting that in the first substantival use of *mashiah* in the Old Testament there is a veiled reference to the ultimate Messiah. The two verses in I Samuel 2 are treated together because of their similar time period and historical context. Admittedly the interpretation suggested is not absolutely clear, and for that reason, as well as chronology, I Samuel 2 is considered first.

The Psalm of Hannah

"The song of Hannah describes Jahveh as the all-knowing judge, who espouses the cause of the weak and executes justice in the earth."¹¹ The mention of a king in connection with the actions described has caused some, however, to suggest that the passage is not authentic and is the work of a later monarchial author.¹²

There are at least two answers to the question of how Hannah could refer to the king, God's anointed, when there was no king in Israel at the time. In the first place, the desire of the nation for a king, evidenced later in Samuel's life, probably did not spring up overnight. As a godly woman, it is not likely that Hannah shared the feelings that ultimately brought the elders to Samuel to demand a king, but she must have known both God's provision (Deut 17:14-20) and the nation's growing desire.

A more important point, however, is the fact that this hymn of praise and thankfulness is of the character of prophecy. There seems to be no good reason to deny to this godly woman, whose prayer God had miraculously answered, a second miracle of prophetic utterance.

In verse 10, the psalm concludes with a description of the defeat of Yahweh's enemies, the judgment of "the ends of the earth," and the strengthening of His anointed king. The universal tone of Hannah's words may possibly be explained by the hyperbole of poetic expression, as a reference to David, or even kingship in general. In view of her godliness, and the blessing of

God on her life, however, her statement may also be taken as prophetically looking beyond David to a future Messiah, who will consummate the victory and judgment of God over His enemies.¹³

The Judgment of Eli

I Samuel 2, which opens with Hannah's song of praise, "closes with a painful narrative—the visit of a man of God to Eli, reproving his guilty laxity in connection with his sons, and announcing the downfall of his house (vv 27-36)."¹⁴ In the eight to ten years that passed between the two events,¹⁵ the narrative indicates that Samuel prospered while Eli's own family became increasingly perverted. The prophetic message immediately precedes the account of God's first communication through Samuel in I Samuel 3.

The content of this prophetic announcement is both negative and positive. Negatively, Eli's family was to be judged with broken power (v 31), shortened lives (vv 31, 32, 33), loss of the sanctuary (v 32), and wasted substance (v 36). As a sign, Hophni and Phinehas would both die in one day (v 34). On the other hand, positively, God would raise up a faithful and obedient priest, giving him an enduring line of descendants, and cause him to "walk before" the anointed of God "always."

The commentators are divided as to the historical fulfillment of the promise in verse 35. To the suggestion that the "faithful priest" was Samuel,¹⁶ it may be replied that Samuel was never the high priest,¹⁷ nor were his descendants priests after him. In fact his initial call, in the following chapter, is distinctly prophetic, and not priestly. All arguments for Samuel fail on this one point. The further theory that an original reference to Samuel was later edited to support a Zadokite priesthood¹⁸ must be rejected on the grounds that it violates the doctrine of inspiration.

The initial fulfillment of the faithful priest must be the person of Zadok (I Kgs 2:27), whose historical line was maintained until the destruction of the temple (I Chr 6:8-15). To the objection that there was nothing sufficiently outstanding about Zadok to qualify him as the faithful priest,¹⁹ it may be replied that the mention of his line in connection with the eschatological temple (Ezek 44:15; 48:11) is sufficient qualification. This eschatological aspect may be hinted at here by the references to a "continuing house" and to his service "all the days." It is also this promise which the Lord, through Jeremiah, identifies with the eternal aspect of the Davidic covenant (Jer 33:20-21).

The identification of "My anointed" (*meshihi*) is connected historically and eschatologically with the identification of the

faithful priest. The term must here signify a royal figure, for it is contrasted with a priestly one. Thus, the initial fulfillment in the Davidic line in history must foreshadow an ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah. This is indicated again by the reference to an unending relationship in verse 35. It is also suggested by the use of the phrase "to walk before." Ten of the eleven other times that the phrase occurs in the Old Testament, it is used of the relationship of man to God,²⁰ rather than of man to man.²¹ On the one hand, this may suggest the close identification of God and the anointed king. On the other hand, it also points to the divinity of the ultimate Messiah.

Psalm 2:2

Psalm 2:2 was considered earlier²² in the light of its contribution to an understanding of the relationship of the Davidic ruler to Yahweh. It is the consensus of critical scholarship that the significance of *mashiah* ends with the Davidic ruler. Engnell states that "one thing is certain: there are in the Old Testament absolutely no eschatological psalms (or messianic psalms, to use the most common expression.)"²³ Mowinckel concurs that "they do not speak of a future, much less an eschatological, Messiah, but of the contemporary, earthly king of David's line."²⁴ In this regard, Dahl warned years ago that:

There seems to be abroad a strangely perverted and sadistically exaggerated sense of honesty in estimating our sacred writings, according to which one ought always to choose the less worthy and less religious of two possible interpretations of any given passage. Whenever in the Psalms the word "Messiah" appears, every nerve is strained, and every device of a forced exegesis utilized, in order to make it refer merely to the secular king and his mundane affairs...it behooves us to re-examine both our premises and our conclusions.²⁵

It has already been shown that Psalm 2 must be attributed to Davidic authorship.²⁶ There is also a significance above the mere historical in this psalm.

Messiah in Psalm 2

There are several features of the second psalm which suggest its application to the coming Messiah.

First, the scope of the language of the psalm indicates a significance beyond David and Israel. The magnitude of the opposition (v 2, "the kings of the earth"), the universality of the promised reign (v 8, "the nations as Thy inheritance and the ends of the earth as Thy possession"), and the application of the

concluding command (v 12, "do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way") all suggest that something greater than David's immediate circumstance is in view here.

At no time in the reigns of David or his descendants did the whole world come under the control of Israel or Judah. This has been viewed as an example of *Hofstil*, a foreign pattern of court etiquette, copied in Israel,²⁷ but there is no objective evidence of such copying. Neither is there any evidence that the psalmist has in view only a potential universal reign on the basis of the power of Yahweh behind the human king. There is clearly a universal reign attributed to the *mashiah* in this psalm.

The ascription of sonship to the anointed also points to an application beyond David. The statement in verse 7 that "Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee" is undoubtedly an allusion to the statement to David in I Samuel 7:14, but there is a significant difference. In the II Samuel passage, spoken of Solomon, God said, "He will be *for (lamedh)* a son to Me," or "He will become a son to Me." Psalm 2:7, however, says "Thou art My Son" with no *lamedh*, and then reinforces it with "Today I have begotten Thee."²⁸ In II Samuel 7, a judicial adoption of the Davidic king is promised. But in Psalm 2 a true sonship is implied, hence a veiled reference to the coming Messiah.

Finally, New Testament use of Psalm 2 supports an application beyond David. In Acts 4:25-28, the first two verses of the psalm are cited as foretelling the opposition which would be brought against Jesus Christ.²⁹ A second New Testament reference to the second psalm in Acts 13:33 is also applied to Christ. There a declaration of sonship in verse 7 is made to signify the resurrection.³⁰

There is, then, both within the psalm itself, and in its use in the New Testament indication of a future, eschatological Messiah, whose reign and relationship to Yahweh would fulfill the language of Psalm 2 in an ultimate and unique sense.

Messianic Prophecy in Psalms

The question of the relationship between the historical setting and the Messianic application of many of the psalms arises at this point. Delitzsch discerns five categories of Messianic psalms in his excellent discussion,³¹ but these can be reduced to two basic divisions.

*Psalm Two announces a universal
reign of the coming Son Messiah.*

There are, first, a few psalms or portions of psalms which can be classified "directly eschatologically Messianic."³² In these the historical situation provides a framework for composition, but the poet is clearly and primarily looking beyond his own age to a fulfillment by the Messiah. The contents of these psalms cannot be applied to David, but speak directly of Christ.³³

There is a second general division of Messianic psalms, those that are typically Messianic. In these psalms, of which there is much larger number, the author speaks of his own situation and experiences. His experiences were rooted in historical fact, but are also typically true of the Messiah. Delitzsch says:

Such psalms are typical, in as much as their contents are grounded in the individual, but typical history of David; they are, however, at the same time prophetic, in as much as they express present individual experience...which point(s) far beyond the present and (is) only fully realized in Christ.³⁴

Although, in the Old Testament, the lives of several other men "have divinely intended typical prefigurements in Christ,"³⁵ David and the royal psalms are an especially rich source of typology because of the organic connection between the Davidic king, the human, temporal, and historical theocratic representative of God, and Christ, the divine, eternal, and eschatological theocratic king.³⁶ This organic relationship is symbolized in the term *mashiah*.

The appearance of *mashiah* in Psalm 2 draws on this relationship for its Messianic significance. The psalm undeniably reflects an actual historical situation which confronted David. In the face of adversity, David relied upon his relationship to Yahweh as set forth in the covenant of II Samuel 7. The typical, organic connection between David and Christ, however, means that what is said of the human king in Psalm 2 will be ultimately and uniquely fulfilled in the eschatological, victorious reign of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Habakkuk 3:13

Context

"Habakkuk is eminently the prophet of reverential, awe-filled faith. This is the soul and centre of his prophecy."³⁷ Of the prophet himself there is little known. Because of the reference to the Chaldeans in the first chapter, however, he appears to have lived "during the last days of Josiah (640/39-609 BC) and the earlier part of the regime of Jehoiakim (609-597 BC)."³⁸ Because the Chaldeans first became a serious threat to Judah after the battle at

Carchemish in 609 BC, Habakkuk's prophecy is best placed sometime between 607 and 600 BC.³⁹ The comment of Pfeiffer that the book is composite because "there is no valid reason for attributing both parts of the book to the same author"⁴⁰ begs the question. The valid reason to accept Habakkuk as the author of the whole book is his claim to it in 1:1 and 3:1.

The message of the prophecy deals with the subject of "the affliction of the righteous amid the prosperity of the wicked."⁴¹ The book divides naturally into two parts.

The first two chapters are made up of five short prophetic utterances in the form of question and answer dialogue between God and the prophet. Habakkuk predicts the punishment of the corrupt leaders of Judah by the Chaldeans (1:2-11), then questions the destruction of Judah by a nation more wicked than they (1:12-17) and is assured that the wicked will certainly be punished (2:1-5). To this Habakkuk responds with a series of five woes upon the Chaldeans (2:6-20).

The second part of the book is "a beautiful poem of confidence that God will deliver his people."⁴² The poem takes the form of a prophecy of a future redemption pictured under figures taken from past events.⁴³

The change in character between the two parts of the book should not be taken to suggest that it is not a literary unit. There is no substantive proof for the critical conjecture along that line. Even the fact that chapter 3 was left out of the Qumran Commentary on Habakkuk may be explained by the fact that the poem contained "nothing suitable for their particular exegetical purposes."⁴⁴

Content

In the midst of the psalm of praise in the third chapter, Habakkuk refers to the Lord going forth "for the salvation of Thy people, for the salvation of Thine anointed" (v 13). Three different identifications have been suggested for the anointed in this verse: the nation of Israel,⁴⁵ the ideal of Davidic kingship,⁴⁶ and the Messiah.⁴⁷ A number of factors make the Messiah the preferred interpretation here.

The anointed does not seem to refer to the nation of Israel for two reasons. First, there is no clear instance in the Old Testament of *mashiah* ever signifying the nation. Psalm 105:15 was earlier shown to refer to the patriarchs,⁴⁸ not the nation as is sometimes supposed.

Second, although the two clauses in verse 13a are parallel, the constructions are not parallel and thus the second line should be

translated "the salvation with Thine anointed,"⁴⁹ rather than "the salvation of Thine anointed." That *eth* here is to be taken as the preposition and not the sign of the direct object is shown by the fact that it is not included in the first clause, where the construct relationship has the force of an objective genitive. If the two clauses were meant to be absolutely parallel, it would seem most natural to omit the *eth*. Pusey comments:

It is not likely that the construction would have been changed, unless the meaning were different. Had *eth* been only the sign of the object, there was no occasion for inserting it at all, and it would probably have been avoided, as only making the sentence ambiguous.⁵⁰

Further, although *eth* may be used after a verbal noun, there is not clear instance of its use as the sign of the direct object with *yesha'* in the Old Testament.⁵¹

It also seems inadequate here to interpret the anointed to refer to an idealized concept of the whole line of anointed Davidic monarchs. The major objection to this view is that from this time on in Judah's history, no Davidic monarch was ever forthcoming in victory with Yahweh. To the suggestion that this line culminates in the Messiah,⁵² it may be answered that it is best then to see the Messiah directly and solely here.

The anointed, then, must refer to the Messiah. He is presented as appearing with Yahweh for the salvation of His people and the destruction of their enemies (3:13b-15).

The Ideal King

Before leaving this passage, a word should be said regarding the concept of an ideal king as mentioned above. It is often referred to as a goal to be held up as an ultimate pattern for the current Davidic monarch to emulate. Baab says, for example:

What was deemed to be good in the character of a living king was incorporated into an ideal for judging all kings and for describing the coming messianic leader of the kingdom of God.⁵³

Certainly such an ideal figure must have been divinely revealed rather than humanly conceived, but beyond that, this ideal was all the time a person, not an impersonal standard. To speak of the development of an ideal standard of kingship in Israel may be valid

*The Messiah will appear with Yahweh
for the salvation of Israel and to destroy
their enemies.*

in terms of the progress of revelation, but ultimately the pattern held up in the psalms and prophets did not culminate in Messiah, it *was* Messiah in the highest sense. Christ will fulfill that ideal eschatologically because He has been the ideal historically. There is no distinction between the ideal of Davidic kingship and the Messiah; they are one.

Daniel 9:25-26

The interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 is of great importance to several areas of theological study. It is basic to an understanding of God's prophetic plan.⁵⁴ It is fundamental to a dispensational interpretation of Scripture. Chronologically, it is the last occurrence of *mashiah* in the Old Testament. A proper comprehension of the significance of the term here is essential, for it is probably the most specific with regard to the coming Messiah.

The great volume of material written on the passage bears witness to the importance and difficulty of its interpretation. It is both unnecessary and impossible to consider every aspect of the prophecy in this treatment. Thus, the discussion will be confined to that which has a bearing on the identification and significance of *mashiah*.

Context

The critical attack on the integrity and unity of the book of Daniel is neither recent⁵⁵ nor relenting.⁵⁶ Although a Maccabean date for the composition of the book around 165 BC is practically a tenet of critical scholarship, this seems to be due more to an overall approach to Scripture, than to compelling evidence.⁵⁷ Since, as Baldwin has pointed out, "the date of the book is inextricably linked with its place of origin and unity of authorship,"⁵⁸ the composition of the entire work should be credited to the sixth-century Daniel who claims it in the first verse.⁵⁹ His authorship is supported by Christ's intimation that the book was genuinely prophetic of a future program which still lies ahead (Matt 24:15-16; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20). The attitude of Jesus that Daniel is prophetic certainly fits best with the sixth-century date.

"The basic theme of this work is the overruling sovereignty of the one true God, who condemns and destroys the rebellious world power and faithfully delivers His covenant people according to their steadfast faith in Him."⁶⁰ The immediate context of the verses in question involves all of chapter nine. The first part of the chapter records the prayer of Daniel (vv 3-19). This prayer is notable for its occasion and content.⁶¹

*Gabriel announces the appearance of
the Messiah to be nearly five hundred years
after his message to Daniel.*

The occasion of the prayer was Daniel's study of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning seventy years of exile (probably Jer 25:11). Realizing that the period was nearly expired, Daniel confessed the sin of the nation (vv 3-14) and prevailed upon the forgiveness and compassion of God to deliver His people and His city (vv 15-19). The rest of the chapter records the immediate answer which came by the angel Gabriel (vv 20-27). The basic thrust of this complex and disputed answer was that "what Daniel sought for his nation was yet a long way off."⁶²

Content

Although, as has already been pointed out, a detailed discussion of the content of verses twenty-four and twenty-five is not possible here, it is necessary to consider several points of interpretation upon which the identification of *mashiah* must hinge.

The Nature of the Weeks. Several things are notable regarding the seventy weeks (or sevens) of verse twenty-four. First, they specifically pertain to Daniel's people, the Jews, and to his city, Jerusalem, not to Gentiles or the church. Second, these seventy weeks, and the full blessing which their course will bring to Israel, speak of the accomplishment of God's entire purpose for that nation in history.⁶³ Third, there seems to be little doubt that the time units involved are years,⁶⁴ not days, for 490 days would scarcely be sufficient for the activities listed in the remainder of verse twenty-four.⁶⁵ Finally, the division of the seventy week period into parts of such diverse proportions suggests literal and precise, not round, numbers.

The Division of the Weeks. The time span in the text is divided into three periods of unequal length. The first period is seven weeks (49 years), the second is sixty-two weeks (434 years), and the last is one week (7 years). The first and second periods are pertinent to this discussion.

Although Gabriel divided the first sixty-nine weeks into two periods, he only describes the first period. To this first forty-nine years he attributes a decree, the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, and "times of distress."

That the activities of verse twenty-five are to be applied to the first time period is shown by: 1) logic (the actual building would logically follow most closely a decree to that effect), 2) history (the experiences of the Ezra-Nehemiah period closely correspond to the "times of distress"), and 3) grammar (the infinitive construct, "to rebuild," is closely connected by a waw conversive to its fulfillment, "shall be built," in the end of the verse: thus the actual rebuilding was to follow the decree to do so rather closely).

It appears then, that the periods of seven and sixty-two weeks are to be treated together as one sixty-nine week period which must pass before Messiah the Prince comes. The objection of the critics that the two periods are distinct, with Messiah coming at the end of the first seven weeks and the activities described occurring during the sixty-two week period, rests mainly on the *athnach* appearing under the word seven.⁶⁶ Two answers may be given: 1) the punctuation was not a part of the original text,⁶⁷ and 2) the *athnach* may, at times, be used for "emphatic accentuation."⁶⁸ Thus the critical allegation that the Messiahs in verses twenty-five and twenty-six cannot be the same individual is not substantiated.⁶⁹ Gabriel says, rather, that after a total of sixty-nine weeks, Messiah the Prince will come (v 25), only to be cut off at a later, undetermined time (v 26).

The Chronology of the Weeks. Two basic determinations must be made with regard to the chronology of the sixty-nine week period. Both the decree which began the period and the "coming" of Messiah which ended it must be established. There are four possibilities suggested for the decree:⁷⁰ 1) the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC, 2) the decree of Darius in 520 BC, 3) the decree of Artaxerxes in 458 BC, and 4) the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 BC. Likewise, there are four possibilities suggested for the "coming" of Messiah: 1) the birth of Christ in late 5 BC, 2) the baptism of Christ in 26 AD, 3) the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem in 30 AD, and 4) the advent of some high priest prior to the period of the Maccabees (170 BC).⁷¹

A normal interpretation of Scripture would suggest that among the various possibilities listed above, one of the decrees should precede one of the "comings" by 483 years. Most important for the purposes of this study is the fact that the proposed "coming" of Messiah in the second century BC, as suggested by the critics, does not seem possible if one is to maintain the inspiration and veracity of Scripture. 484 years prior to any second century date (such as 170 BC) is too early for any known decree. Thus, the critic destroys the accuracy of Scripture.⁷²

In consideration of the other available combinations of decrees and "comings," most conservative scholars arrive at one of two choices. Some,⁷³ starting from the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 BC, calculate, on the basis of "prophetic years," the termination of 483 years at the triumphal entry in 32 AD.⁷⁴ The major objection to this view is that the triumphal entry and crucifixion of Christ seem to have taken place in 30 AD rather than in 32 AD.⁷⁵ Others⁷⁶ start from the decree of 458 BC and arrive at 26 AD and the baptism of Christ for the "coming" of Messiah. A difficulty with this view is that the decree in 458 BC does not seem to have any direct bearing on the rebuilding of that city.

Since it would not benefit the particular goal of this study, a complete discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of these two views does not seem advisable. This author holds the latter position, understanding it to best account for the available biblical and chronological data.

The Identification of Mashiah. In view of the preceding discussion, it seems clear from chronology that the Messiah cannot be any high priest of the second century BC. Several other features of Daniel 9:25-26 also support that conclusion. The combination of "Prince" (*nagid*) with *mashiah* is often taken to signify the high priest.⁷⁷ The use of *nagid* in the Old Testament, however, is frequently in connection with the anointed king. It is used of Saul (I Sam 10:1), David (II Sam 7:8), and Solomon (I Kgs 1:35). This, coupled with the fact that when *nagid* is used of the high priest it is frequently modified by a phrase connecting that leadership with God's house (cf I Chr 9:11; 31:13; Neh 11:11), shows that there is no automatic identification of the high priest here.

Further, if the continuity of the first sixty-nine weeks is accepted, as has been shown above, there is no reason to identify two separate Messiahs in verses twenty-five and twenty-six. Although the specific chronological computation may be disputed, the fact that the identification of Messiah is Jesus Christ in both cases is undisputable.

Significance

Although it certainly cannot be said that the prophecy of Daniel 9:25-26 is without controversy, virtually all conservative scholars would agree that the reference of *mashiah* is to none other than the ultimate Messiah, Jesus Christ. This conclusion is based on historical and chronological evidence, coupled with the conviction that Scripture is historically reliable. Here, then, is a particularly specific and significant occurrence of *mashiah* with

clear reference to the future eschatological Messiah. Even the extent and chronology of His work are foretold.

Summary and Conclusion

Investigation of five passages to determine whether they revealed a significance for *mashiah* beyond the human concepts of a consecrated leader or Davidic ruler revealed that, with increasing certainty, the term Messiah does take on and signify the person of the future eschatological Messiah. These five usages are spread out over more than five hundred years. In an attempt to treat them in a chronological fashion, a logical progression from general and simple to specific and complex was noted.

In the earliest occurrence in this group, the Psalm of Hannah portrays the *mashiah* consummating victory and judgment in the power of Yahweh. The identity of this *mashiah* is somewhat vague, but the best interpretation was held to be the Messiah, in view of the universal tone of Hannah's words and the prophetic character of the entire poem.

In the well-known "faithful priest" passage in the end of I Samuel 2 is a second reference in which *mashiah* was taken to refer to a coming Messiah. This is the prophecy which foretold the end of Eli's house. It was held that Zadok must be the faithful priest, especially in view of the eternal nature of the promise and the mention of his line in connection with the Millennial temple of Ezekiel. The *mashiah* here must be a royal figure by virtue of the contrast with the faithful priest, and must be identified as the Messiah by virtue of the unending relationship between the two figures.

Psalm 2 was taken to be a "typically Messianic" psalm. Although composed in a real historical context and reflective of David's own experience as the "anointed" of Yahweh, the psalm is also typically prophetic of the reign and sonship of the future ultimate Messiah by virtue of the organic connection between David and Jesus Christ. Identification of *mashiah* in Psalm 2 with Christ was supported by three lines of proof. They are: 1) the universal nature of the language, 2) a distinct statement of sonship, and 3) New Testament usage of the psalm. The language of Psalm 2 will one day be ultimately and uniquely fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

In a prophecy which most likely dates from 350 years after Psalm 2, Habakkuk speaks of the *mashiah* in a psalm of praise for Yahweh's judgment of the ungodly and for His salvation of the faithful. In the midst of the third chapter, praising God for future deliverance in pictures of past acts of deliverance, the *mashiah*

*This Messiah has come and will come
again to rule the earth in righteousness.*

appears with Yahweh for the salvation of the nation. That the future Messiah is in view here is evident from grammar, comparative usage, and subsequent history.

The final occurrence of *mashiah* was found to be in the exilic book of Daniel. In chapter nine, the angel Gabriel brings a prophetic message in response to Daniel's prayer of repentance and petition for the deliverance of his nation. The message basically was that Daniel's desire was still a long way from reality. In view of the complexity of the seventy-week prophecy, only those points which are vital to the identification of the *mashiah* were considered.

It was shown that the weeks refer to seven year periods, totalling 490 years. It was also determined that the decree, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the "times of distress" were to happen during the first 49 years, rather than the following 434 years. These two periods were shown to be parts of a larger unit of 69 weeks, or 483 years. A major break between the two parts is not warranted by the text: neither is it necessary to see two different individuals for the two occurrences of *mashiah* in verses twenty-four and twenty-five.

The identification of the decree and the "coming" of Messiah referred to in the passage is difficult and involved. The specific determination of the chronology of the prophecy would not be vital to this study, and so was not discussed. What was noted, however, was that an identification for *mashiah* in the second century BC is not chronologically compatible with any known decree. Further, the compound title *mashiah nagid* was shown by parallel usage to be more likely to signify a royal office than a priestly one. Thus it was held that both *mashiah* and *nagid* signify the ultimate Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ and that the prophecy sets forth both the extent and chronology of His work.

In conclusion, the declaration that *mashiah* in the Old Testament is never a reference to the future eschatological Messiah is not supported by an exegetical investigation of the appearances of the word. As revealed in Scripture, its significance builds from consecrated leader, to Davidic ruler, to one unique coming Messiah. People of all ages may rejoice that this Messiah has come in the person of Jesus Christ, and will come again to rule the earth in righteousness.

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Notes

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⁹ Harry Orlinsky, *Ancient Israel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ Press, 1954) p 161

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³⁰ *Ibid*, pp 54-56

³¹ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 1:68-70

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³⁷ C L Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1951) p 205

³⁸ Harrison, *Introduction*, p 931

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- ⁴⁴ Harrison, *Introduction*, pp 935-36
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- ⁴⁷ Frank E Gabelein, *Four Minor Prophets: Obadiah, Jonah, Habakkuk, and Haggai* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970) p 186; Pusey, *Minor Prophets*, 2:217; Robinson, *Minor Prophets*, p 126
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⁷⁷ See for example, Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p 398

Abbreviations

AV	Authorized Version of the Bible
B Sac	Bibliotheca Sacra
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ISBE	International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
NASB	New American Standard Bible

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