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Anointing and Anointed

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Thirty-eight times in the text of the Old Testament the word *mashiah* appears. While it is translated "Messiah" in Daniel 9:25-26 by both AV and NASB, its most frequent translation is "anointed one." *Mashiah* is the word from which the term Messiah, the *Christos* of the New Testament, comes.

"The New Testament, the tradition of the church, and traditional apologetics all assume that in the Old Testament the messiah is awaited and his coming is proclaimed in advance."¹ Thus C A Briggs has written that: "Messianic Prophecy is the most important of all themes; for it is the ideal of redemption given by the Creator to our race at the beginning of its history, and it ever abides as the goal of humanity until the divine plan has been accomplished. There is no lack of works upon this subject."²

The latter statement correctly asserts that the subject of Messianic prophecy is broad, including several lines of revelation such as the Abrahamic covenant, the Shiloh prophecy of Genesis 49, the Balaam oracle, the Davidic covenant, the messianic psalms, the suffering servant of Isaiah, etc. And much more has been contributed today than in 1886 when Briggs wrote.

In spite of all that has been written, however, relatively little attention has been given to the concept of *mashiah*, the source from which the terms "messiah" and "messianic" come. The purpose of this investigation is to endeavor to determine the significance of the term *mashiah* as it is used in the Old Testament.

The word *mashiah* is used as both adjective and substantive. Although it is often mentioned in discussions of Old Testament messianism, the claim most frequently made is that the term always refers to a contemporary personage and never to an eschatological figure. Rowley says, for example: "It should be remembered that though in that age Messiah had become a technical term for the expected figure, that term is not used in this connection in the Old Testament. The word itself is indeed found; but it is applied to kings and priests, and even to the Persian king Cyrus. It is not in the Old Testament a technical term for the expected deliverer, and it is wiser in dealing with the Old Testament to avoid, as far as possible, the use of the term."³

Hand-in-hand with this view are presented the related theories of a yearly enthronement festival, divine kingship, a dying and rising-god myth, and other ANE phenomena applied to Israel. Such concepts must be rejected on the basis of belief in the unique God and His unique revelation. Gundry has pointed out, regarding these theories, that: "The philosophical presupposition is anti-supernaturalism. Since the evangelic tradition is steeped in the supernatural, it must be rejected. One can only say that antisupernaturalism prejudices historical enquiry and is theologically and scientifically out-of-date, for it rests on the rationalistic concept of a closed universe and a rigid concept of natural law."⁴

Dogmatic statements such as that of Rowley must also be questioned. Yet there does not seem to be any definitive study from a conservative perspective of the occurrences of *mashiah* in the Old Testament to provide a basis for deciding the ultimate significance of the term. It is the goal of this investigation to provide an initial step toward such a study.

Messianic prophecy is not being considered in full scope. Because of the magnitude of the subject of messianic prophecy, this survey will be limited primarily to the thirty-eight appearances of *mashiah* in the Old Testament. Some attention will be given to the use of the related verb *mashah* in determining the significance of the rite of anointing in ancient Israel, but specific attention is directed to *mashiah*. Each passage will be considered only with respect to its contribution to an understanding of the significance of *mashiah*.

Similarly, this study is limited to the ideas of "anointing" and "anointed" only in the Old Testament. Evidence from the ANE will be considered, but not exhaustively. Messianic materials from the Pseudepigrapha and from Qumran are also not included. Even reference to the New Testament has been largely omitted, although not completely.

The origin, background, and foundational meaning of anointing are essential to a comprehension of the ultimate significance of the *mashiah*. Although the basic meaning of the word is undisputed, it will be valuable to examine the philological and historical evidence relating to its use and significance in the ANE generally, as well as in the Bible record. The immediate goal then is to establish first a clear meaning for *mashiah* from philological evidence drawn from both Hebrew and the cognate languages. Historical evidence will then be considered from the ANE and from Israel. Finally, the basic significance of anointing and the one anointed will be investigated.

PHILOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Evidences from language can be conveniently grouped to treat first those extant indications of usage among the Hebrew and then to evaluate cognate words among other Semitic people.

Evidence from Hebrew

Mashiah is a masculine singular noun. It comes from the verb, *mashah*, which means "to smear" (Jer 22:14) or "to anoint" (I Kgs 19:14).⁵ *Mashah* appears some 69 times in the Old Testament, mostly in the Pentateuch and historical books. It seems most often to indicate ceremonial anointing as opposed to the idea of anointing for a physically beneficial purpose.⁶ Four notable exceptions to this general principle are II Samuel 1:21, Isaiah 21:5, Jeremiah 22:14, and Amos 6:6. In II Samuel 1:21 and Isaiah 21:5 the reference is to the rubbing of a shield with oil. The purpose of this was probably practical,⁷ although the practice may have originated with a ceremonial significance.⁸ In Jeremiah 22:14 *mashah* refers to the everyday concept of painting a house, while in Amos 6:6 it signifies the application of oil to the body in a purely physical sense.⁹

The absolute use of *mashiah* in the Old Testament is rare, occurring only in Daniel 9:25-26. It appears ordinarily either as an adjective, with the masculine singular suffix, or in construct with Yahweh.¹⁰

Mashiah means the same as the qal passive participle, *mashuah*, "anointed." Because the noun form emphasizes the character or state of being anointed, while the participle stresses more the action which brought about the state,¹¹ the noun is felt to be stronger than the participle when used independently.¹² The participle form is used of both persons and objects, while the noun form is rarely used of other than persons.¹³

Evidence from the Cognate Languages

The philological evidence available from cognate languages in the ANE clearly supports the idea of "smearing, wiping, or anointing" for *mashah*. Related forms appear in the Arabic meaning "to wipe or stroke with the hand,"¹⁴ the Aramaic meaning "to anoint,"¹⁵ the Ugaritic meaning "to anoint,"¹⁶ the Ethiopic meaning "to anoint, feast, or dine,"¹⁷ and the Accadian meaning "measure."¹⁸

The language of anointing, then, is found in several of the cultures surrounding Israel. The exact force of the anointing may vary, but the basic act seems to involve the application of an oil or grease to an object or person. The suggestion of Smith that the practice is associated with an Arabian form of homage which involved the passing of the hand over an idol¹⁹ is possible, but unproven. It seems highly unlikely that such an idolatrous practice is the basis of anointing in Israel.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

After surveying the philological evidence relating to *mashiah*, it is next important to evaluate the historical evidence relating to the practice

of anointing in the ANE and in Israel. This will involve the use of archaeological data from the various parts of the ANE and analysis of the Biblical text for Israel.

Anointing in Egypt

The common kind of anointing employed to care for the body was known in Egypt from early times. It was also practiced in the cult as a symbol of purification for the divine image. Further, it was evidently used in connection with the preparation of the deceased for burial.²⁰

Anointing does not, however, seem to have been practiced in connection with the selection and coronation of the king of Egypt. He anointed other high officials at their induction into office,²¹ but did not submit to such himself. He also seems to have anointed vassal kings upon their installation. This is attested by an Amarna letter, in which Hadad (or Ramman)-nirari of Nuhassi, near Aleppo, says that Thutmose III installed his grandfather as king and "poured oil upon his head."²²

The suggestion of Bertholet,²³ Smith,²⁴ and North²⁵ that the significance of the rite of anointing in connection with the king originated in Egypt remains unproven. Evidence for it in connection with the Pharaoh is non-existent. The further suggestion of Bertholet that the significance of the rite was protection for the one anointed²⁶ is especially interesting in view of the Egyptian concept of the king as divine. This idea of a deified ruler, with its corollary of an absolute rule by such a king, would support a protective arrangement between vassal and pharaoh which could have been symbolized in the anointing ceremony. It would also fit well with what is known of the ruler-vassal relationship in the ANE. While this significance cannot certainly be proven, it is possible.

Anointing in Mesopotamia

The evidence of royal anointing in Mesopotamia is not much more plentiful than for Egypt. Although it is uniformly accepted that kingship ideology in Babylon and Assyria conceived of the king as the god's representative,²⁷ there is no conclusive evidence that the rite of anointing was involved in symbolizing the god's choice of that one.²⁸ The evidence which does exist seems to point in that direction however.

The most significant text which might be quoted is a passage in an Assyrian account of a coronation. The text is damaged and therefore of dubious value, but Frankfort concludes that "it seems likely that the king was anointed with the oil brought in the gold bowl."²⁹ Engnell offers a further bit of evidence in suggesting that the Babylonian king could be referred to as *pashishu*, "anointed."³⁰ This is slim support on which to rest any theory of royal anointing in Mesopotamia. It seems best to conclude with North that "so far no certain evidence of anointing as a coronation rite is forthcoming from Babylonia and Assyria."³¹

Anointing among the Hittites

The clearest examples of anointing outside of Canaan come from the Hittite empire. In a text which describes an attempt to deflect a predicted misfortune to the king by installing a substitute for him, the substitute, who is a prisoner, is first "anointed with the fine oil of kingship."³² This suggests that anointing was also an essential part of the real ceremony of coronation.

In addition to this text, there is a letter from Hattusilis III to the King of Assyria. In it, he complains that the king was negligent in sending him the usual presents upon his accession. These included "the royal vestments and fragrant oil for the coronation." Gurney concludes that "it is evident that the accession of a new king was solemnized by a ceremony which included anointing with oil."³³

The significance of the Assyrian oil in this ceremony seems not to have been validation of the enthronement, but rather recognition of the new sovereign.³⁴ Finally, de Vaux suggests that the Hittite kings included "the Anointed" as one of their titles.³⁵

Anointing in Canaan

Out of the milieu of city-states and petty kings of Canaan comes evidence which suggests a knowledge and at least occasional practice of anointing. Amarna letter #51, mentioned above with regard to anointing in Egypt, indicates that the vassal kings of Canaan were established in that position and made kings through the act of anointing by the Pharaoh.

One of the texts from Ras Shamra mentions anointing in connection with Baal, perhaps alluding to his anointing as king.³⁶ The exact meaning is uncertain, however, because the text is damaged.³⁷ The further deduction of Hesse that the king of Jebusite Jerusalem was included in the anointed kings of Canaan is unproven.³⁸ It is also uncertain whether the practice of anointing in Canaan was a native custom or was introduced by the Egyptians.³⁹

The command of God to Elijah to anoint Hazael king over Damascus (IKg 19:15) is the only evidence of knowledge of such anointing in Syria. The initiation of the act came from Yahweh, but it seems unlikely that it could have been without significance to Hazael.⁴⁰ While the regular practice of anointing in Damascus cannot be shown, some knowledge of

Accession of a new king was solemnized by a ceremony which included anointing with oil.

it is implied. Furthermore, it seems evident that anointing was not an unfamiliar phenomenon in the area of Canaan and Syria.

Anointing in Israel

In contrast to the rest of the ANE, there is a considerable amount of evidence to evaluate with regard to anointing in Israel. It is the intent here to survey the recipients, initiation, and executor of anointing, with an eye to arriving at a conclusion regarding its basic significance. It is on this initial import of the practice that any higher significance must necessarily be built.

Recipients of anointing

The earliest example of anointing in the Old Testament is the record of Jacob's anointment of the pillar which he had used as a pillow at Bethel. Genesis 28:18 says that he "poured oil on top of it," while in 31:13 God describes that action as anointing (*mashah*). A like action of Jacob is described in Genesis 35:14 as the patriarch stops at Bethel on his return into the land. The force of this anointing of a pillar is commemoration of the appearances of God to him in both cases. The anointing seems to consecrate the location to God because of those appearances.

Other objects connected with the worship of Israel were also anointed. These include the altar (Exod 29:36; 40:10; Lev 8:11; Num 7:1, 10, 84, 88), the utensils of the altar (Exod 40:10; Lev 8:11; Num 7:1), the tabernacle with its furnishings (Exod 30:26; Lev 8:10; Num 7:1), the ark (Exod 30:26), and apparently even part of the offerings (Exod 29:2; Lev 2:4; 7:12; Num 6:15).⁴¹ The reference in Daniel 9:24 to a future anointing of "a holy of holies" is best understood as referring to a future Temple-complex rather than to the body of Jesus Christ as a most holy place.⁴²

The significance of these anointings is clearly set forth in several of the verses cited (Exod 29:36; 40:10; 11; Lev 8:10, 11) by the insertion of an explanatory phrase such as "and he sanctified it" or "to sanctify it." By the rite of anointment, then, these objects were removed from secular usage and consecrated to the service and purpose of God.

It is in connection with persons, however, that *mashah* most often occurs in the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, *mashiah* is used only with reference to persons. In light of the fact that in other ANE cultures there is record principally of the anointing of kings and deity, it is interesting that in Israel several categories of persons either submit to anointing or are called "the anointed of Yahweh." These categories include priests, kings, prophets, and the patriarchs.

By anointment objects were consecrated to the service of God.

Priests. Chronologically, the first persons to be anointed in the Old Testament were priests. The only other example of anointing of priests and priestesses in the ANE is at Ebla.⁴³ Although elsewhere in the ancient world the union of the priestly and regal functions in the person of the king seem to have been quite usual,⁴⁴ in Israel the two remained mutually exclusive. Neither Moses, Joshua, or the judges were priests (Samuel was), nor was the kingship later given to descendants of Levi. In fact, when King Uzziah endeavored to act as priest (II Chron 26:16-21) God struck him with leprosy, effectively ending his kingship.

Of course, the chronological priority of the anointing of priests in Israel presupposes the reliability of Mosaic authorship and of a unified authentic early origin for the Pentateuch. This view is contrary to current critical scholarship,⁴⁵ but is demanded by an authoritative and inspired scriptural record.

Of the sixteen times that anointing is connected with the priesthood, fifteen are found in the Pentateuch.⁴⁶ Thus, while the anointing of priests was stressed early in Israel's history, there is virtually no mention of it subsequent to the conquest. Practically all of these references to the anointing of the priesthood deal with Aaron and/or his sons (Exod 28:41; 29:7; 30:30; 40:13; 15; Lev 6:30; 7:36; 8:12; Num 3:3). Although in the immediate context Aaron must have been in view, the four occurrences of *mashiah* (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:22) are all in the form of general regulations for the Levitical high priests, as is the reference in Leviticus 16:32. Numbers 35:25, found in the context of the regulations for the cities of refuge, is also applied to any high priest. Finally, I Chronicles 29:22 notes the anointing of Zadok, the apparent fulfillment of I Samuel 2:35.

It is clear, then, from scriptural evidence that Aaron and his sons were initially anointed. Several verses direct the anointing of both, while Leviticus 8:12 records the fulfillment to Aaron and Numbers 3:3 implies the same for his sons. Whether only the high priest or all successive priests were anointed is open to question. Exodus 29:21 and Leviticus 8:30 provide the only actual record of the anointing of Aaron's sons.

The fact that the anointing there is not pouring but sprinkling supports the contention of Kurtz that the anointing of oil (*mishhah*) was sprinkled on both Aaron and his sons, while the oil was poured on the head of Aaron alone (Lev 8:12).⁴⁷ This would explain the absence of any specific mention of oil being poured on the heads of Aaron's sons. It would also clarify the frequent designation of the high priest as "the anointed priest" (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:22; 16:32), distinguishing him from the

*Anointing in Israel applies to prophets
and to patriarchs in addition to priesthood
and kingship.*

common priests. Further, the two difficult alternative possibilities, that Moses either did not carry out the command of God to anoint his sons or that he failed to record that anointing in the scriptural record, are avoided.

As in the case of the anointed objects discussed above, several of the contexts of priestly anointing offer help in discerning the significance of the rite. In Exodus 28:41, 30:30; 40:13; and Leviticus 8:12, the verb *qadhash*, meaning "to set apart, dedicate, or consecrate"⁴⁸ appears.⁴⁹ The presence of *qadhash* in the verses, and especially its force in Leviticus 8:12, makes it certain that at least one significance if not the primary significance of priestly anointing was consecration to the service of God.⁵⁰ Even more specifically, the emphasized anointment of the high priest involved leadership in that service.

Finally, with regard to the use of *mashiah* in connection with the priesthood, it is worthy of note that the word appears only as an adjective and never as a substantive. The reference is always to "the anointed priest." He is never called "the anointed of Yahweh" or "His anointed." This fact can only serve to reiterate the proposition that the priesthood, although a consecrated leadership position, was distinct from the throne.

Kings. Easily the most frequently mentioned anointing in the Old Testament is royal anointing. Almost half of the occurrences of *mashah* refer to the king's anointing⁵¹ and 33 of the 38 times that *mashiah* appears, it is in connection with a king, Zadok is the only priest whose anointing is mentioned after the advent of the monarchy, and the title *mashiah* is reserved almost exclusively for kingship for the duration of the monarchy.⁵² This usage corresponds more closely to anointing in the rest of the ANE as noted above.

Although the actual anointing of kings was not practiced until the institution of the monarchy and the installation of Saul, there was apparently some knowledge of royal anointing prior to that time. In the Jotham fable of Judges 9, the concept of anointing a king surfaces (Judg 9:8, 13). Given the spiritual declension of the Judges period in general and of the time following Gideon's idolatry in particular, this may well be a reflection of the influence and practice of Canaanites. In any case, it does indicate the existence of the concept of royal anointing in Israel in premonarchical times. This is also suggested by the reference in the prayer of Hannah to God exalting "the horn of His anointed" (I Sam 2:10).

The relationship reflected and symbolized by the anointing of kings in Israel and by the usage of the title *mashiah* is quite distinct from that of the priesthood.⁵³ While *mashiah* occurs as an adjective in every reference to the priesthood, it is almost always substantival when used in reference to the king. This substantival usage is seen in forms such as "the anointed of Yahweh," "his anointed," "mine anointed," and "thine anointed." This suggests a close relationship between God and His chosen ruler, as well

as a special identification with God's plan and program. *Mashiah* seems to have become practically synonymous with "king"⁵⁴ during the monarchial period in Israel.

Anointing is not specifically mentioned in connection with all of Israel's kings. In fact, Scripture tells only of the anointing of Saul (I Sam 10:1), David (I Sam 16:13; II Sam 2:4; 5:3), Solomon (I Kgs 1:39), Joash (II Kgs 11:12), Jehoahaz (II Kgs 23:30), and Jehu⁵⁵ (II Kgs 9:6). Thus, although anointing may have happened to all the kings of Israel and Judah, it is "strongly attested only in relation to the Southern Kingdom of Judah and with reference to David and his successors."⁵⁶ The usage of *mashiah* is even more selective, being certainly identified only with Saul (I Sam 12:3), David (II Sam 23:1), Zedekiah (Lam 4:20), and Cyrus (Isa 45:1). Two of these usages deserve particular attention at this point.

Lamentations 4:20. In the book of Lamentations, written shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the captive Davidic king, the Lord's anointed, is called "the breath of our nostrils." Whether only Zedekiah⁵⁷ or the whole concept of the theocratic king⁵⁸ is in view here, it illustrates the measure of the relationship between the king and the Lord. The extent to which Israel's hopes were placed in the king is revealed in the second half of the verse: "Of whom we had said, Under his shadow we shall live among the nations." Here is the identification of the king with the purpose and program of God pushed to the extreme of trusting the representative instead of the God whom he represents.

Isaiah 45:1. The application of *mashiah* in Isaiah 45:1 is unique. It is the only scriptural usage of the word to describe a heathen king. While it is obvious that there are fundamental differences between the anointed kings of Israel and Cyrus of Persia, the parallel lies in the fact that God chose and enabled both to fulfill their part in His overall plan and purpose. In this awesome passage there is no implication that Cyrus became a true worshipper of the God of Israel or that the Spirit of God came upon him.⁵⁹ What is clearly shown is the omnipotence of God to move any man to do his part in the providential movement of history. For this reason Cyrus is declared by God to be "His anointed," not literally but figuratively, for the restoration of His captive people.⁶⁰

Prophets. There is no conclusive evidence in the Old Testament regarding the anointing of prophets. Neither is there any known parallel to such an anointing in the ANE. Two passages suggest the possibility that prophets were anointed, however. They are I Kings 19:16 and Isaiah 61:1.

I Kings 19:16. Of the three anointings commanded in this passage, only one is known to have been accomplished: II Kings 9:6 tells of the anointing of Jehu. But no account of the anointing of either Elisha or Hazeal surfaces in the historical record. In spite of this absence of confirmation, the anointing of prophets remains a distinct possibility.

Morganstern points out that "it is beyond all question that these professional prophets were inducted into their office or guild with some formal ceremony of consecration; and since the spirit of the Deity was undoubtedly thought to rest upon the prophet...and this was so intimately associated with the rite of anointing, it becomes fairly probable...that the professional prophet...was formally consecrated by the rite of anointing."⁶¹

In light of the non-literal force of *mashah* in Isaiah 45:1, a literal anointing is not necessitated in the cases of Elisha and Hazael. But the fact that the three anointings are mentioned together and that the only known fulfillment of the three is a literal one, suggests literal anointing for the other two as well. Even if such is not the case, however, the fact remains that Elisha was set apart by God for service in His program. Furthermore, it is worthy of note that the Holy Spirit is closely connected with the passing of Elijah's prophetic place to Elisha (II Kings 2:9, 14-15).⁶²

Isaiah 61:1. This verse is one of the few occurrences of *mashah* or its derivatives in the prophetic writings. It is set in a context of future blessing for Israel. In light of Luke 4:21, it is certain that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy contained here. Yet it also seems sure that Isaiah, in some lesser, typical way, was able to say the same thing of himself as he proclaimed the message in his day. For that proclamation must have had some meaning and application to Isaiah's contemporaries as well as the generations of its ultimate fulfillment. The supreme and final consoling ministry of God in Christ may also be discerned in the lesser ministry of Isaiah.⁶³

Whether this is a metaphorical or literal usage of *mashah* is impossible to determine. There is no record of literal anointing with oil of either Christ or Isaiah.⁶⁴ The point in either case, though, is that the prophetic office is in view here and some type of anointing (signified by the use of *mashah*) is associated with the setting apart of a particular man to the ministry of that office. It is obvious in this context as well that the "Spirit of the Lord God" is closely connected with the anointing and with the ministry of the office in view.

Prophets, then, were never referred to with the title *mashiah* in the Old Testament, nor were they ever historically known to have been literally anointed. The concept of anointing does appear twice in connection with the prophetic office, however, thus implying the

Anointment involved a special ministry to be accomplished for God and the presence of His Spirit to provide divine enablement.

existence of such a rite. Further, the anointment seems to have involved a special ministry to be accomplished for God as well as the presence of His Spirit to provide divine enablement.

Patriarchs. The usage of *mashiah* in Psalm 105:15⁶⁵ is distinct for two reasons. It is the only occurrence of the term in a plural suffix form and it is the only time the word is used with reference to the patriarchs, a group not ordinarily associated with the rite of anointing. The psalm is a kind of synopsis of sacred history in which successive periods of Israel's history are represented. Verses six to fifteen deal with God's goodness to the patriarchs,⁶⁶ whose names appear six times in this section. Thus, there can be no doubt about the identification of these "anointed ones" with the patriarchs.

The explanation of the use of *mashiah* in this context is not certain, however. The force must be metaphorical because the patriarchs are never clearly stated, nor even intimated, to have been literally anointed. The suggestion of Hesse that the patriarchs were viewed as kingly figures, the early manifestation of the Davidic line,⁶⁷ gives unwarranted priority to royal anointing. Plumer and Leupold suppose that the anointing is that of the Holy Ghost,⁶⁸ yet there is nothing in the context and little in the patriarchal narratives to support such a view. It is also difficult to see how these, who are called prophets in the same verse, could by that association also be called "anointed ones." The patriarchs could not be called prophets in the same sense as Elisha or Isaiah,⁶⁹ nor, as has been shown above, was anointing of prophets in the time of Elisha or Isaiah a clearly proven fact in the Biblical record.

The designation of the patriarchs as "anointed ones" does indicate that these were chosen for and consecrated to a special task by God. In other words, what was true of other anointed offices was also true of the patriarchs.⁷⁰ A second clear implication of being an "anointed one" in this context is the inviolability which accompanied the anointed office. This protection of the "anointed ones" is the very point that the Psalmist is making in Psalm 105:14-15 and finds parallels elsewhere in connection with the *mashiah*.⁷¹

Initiation of anointing

Given an historically reliable Old Testament, there can be no doubt that the initiator of anointing (both generally and specifically) in Israel was Yahweh.⁷² The suggestion of Hesse that the stories of Yahweh's anointing of Saul and David were instituted to legitimize what the Israelites had already done⁷³ has no objective basis in the text. Indeed, there is no intimation of contradiction between the various accounts of anointing with regard to their initiation.

Frequently Yahweh is named as the initiator of the anointing. Such is the case for the priests (Exod 28:41), Saul (I Sam 9:16; 10:1; 15:1, 17), David (I Sam 16:3), and Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha (I Kgs 19:16). It was

David who initiated the anointing of Solomon (I Kgs 1:34, 39, 45), but he was himself the Lord's anointed and viewed Solomon as God's choice (I Kgs 1:45), possibly indicating direction from the Lord in the matter. The anointing of Joash by Jehoiada (II Kgs 11:12) may be argued in the same manner.

Three times the people are recorded as having initiated anointing. In the case of Absalom (II Sam 19:11), they were clearly out of God's will. When David was anointed for the second and third times by Judah (II Sam 2:4) and Israel (II Sam 5:3) respectively, the people appear only to be ratifying what Yahweh has already declared to be His choice. The one remaining example of the people anointing a king is Jehoahaz (II Kgs 23:30). This incident took place near the end of the Southern Kingdom in a time of general spiritual declension and involved the next son in the Davidic line.⁷⁴ It would be tenuous to come to any firm conclusion except that this is scanty evidence upon which to contest the historicity of anointing by Yahweh.⁷⁵

Executor of anointing

The difficulty in arriving at a pattern regarding the executors of anointing in Israel suggests that perhaps there was not any. A list of those who administered the rite of anointing includes Moses (Aaron and his sons), Samuel (Saul, David), Nathan (Solomon), Zadok (Solomon), Jehoiada (Joash), a young unnamed prophet (Jehu), and Elisha (Hazel). It is safe to conclude that the act of anointing was carried out by one who was himself a divine representative, most often a priest or prophet. Whether one of the two offices had priority is impossible to determine given the relatively small number of anointings recorded in scripture. In the end, the position of the anointer does not seem to be nearly as significant as the One who authorized and initiated the act. Hence the anointed one is designated His, Yahweh's, anointed.

Significance of anointing

The important question remaining to be considered concerns the significance of the anointing practiced in Israel. This significance is not singular, but plural, involving several areas of truth. These seem to build one upon another, and so will be considered in logically ascending order.

The primary and basic significance of anointing is the indication of an authorized choice of the anointed one for God's service. This has been most clearly shown in the cases of Aaron, his sons, the tabernacle and its associated implements of worship by the inclusion of a phrase using *qadhash*, "to set apart or consecrate," to explain the purpose for the anointing.⁷⁶ At the anointing of Saul (I Sam 10:1), Samuel indicates that this is God's choice for a ruler over His people. At the anointing of Solomon as well, he is said to be anointed "to the Lord" (I Chr 29:22). Thus, anointing first signifies one chosen and consecrated to the service of God.⁷⁷

Every anointed one was to be dependent upon Yahweh for direction and authority.

Second, because the anointed one is chosen by God, he is understood to belong to God. He is the Lord's representative. He is spoken of as one whom the Lord Himself has anointed (I Sam 10:1; II Sam 12:7). One ramification of this special relationship is dependence. Every anointed one was to be dependent upon Yahweh for direction and authority. The king was to be the theocratic vassal of the Lord,⁷⁸ a position of absolute dependence. The prophet was to speak the message that God gave to him. A second ramification is inviolability. Particularly in the case of the king, the anointed one was considered so much the representative of Yahweh that to harm him would be an act against God Himself (I Sam 24:10; 26:9). Thus, even to curse the king would be a capital offense (II Sam 19:22).

In the third place, the act of anointing seems to have signified an endowment with, and leading by, the Spirit of God for the one anointed. The Spirit is clearly declared to have come on David at his anointing (I Sam 16:13), while the first experience which Saul had following his anointing was that Yahweh's Spirit came upon him (I Sam 10:6, 10). The narrative portrays this as a natural result of the anointing.⁷⁹ Isaiah 61:1 further supports the connection between anointing and endowment with the Spirit of God. Thus the chosen representative of Yahweh was divinely enabled to accomplish his task through the presence of the Spirit of God.⁸⁰

This endowment with the Holy Spirit leads many writers to the untenable position that the king in Israel was considered divine by virtue of his office. Mowinckel says, for example, "the idea which is central and fundamental is that he is a superhuman, *divine* being. The king is also an *'elohim*, a powerful, superhuman being. He is a god... Like the deity, he is also called 'lord' (*'adon*); and he is called 'Yahweh's son.'" ⁸¹ Although other writers hold the same view,⁸² "the arguments adduced are extremely flimsy."⁸³ It is biblically best to conclude with de Vaux that: "The Israelite idea is that while the king is not just like other men, he is not a god... Granted that the king is adopted by Yahweh, this does not by any means imply that he is equal to him or deified... Israel never had, never could have had, any idea of a king who was a god."⁸⁴

Summary and Conclusion

The preceding survey of philological and historical evidence for anointing in the ANE suggests a rather uniform understanding of legal anointing throughout the area. Although such evidence is not abundant from countries surrounding Israel, that which is available points to a knowledge of royal anointing among the Egyptians, Hittites, and

The anointed one was viewed as belonging to God, dependent upon Him, protected by Him, and endowed with His Spirit.

Canaanites. Borrowing by Israel of the concept of anointing from her neighbors is not likely. Parallels may be best explained by the common culture, while distinctions are due to the revelation and direction of Israel's God.

One of these distinctions lies in the area of the recipients of anointing. In addition to the royal and priestly anointing of other parts of the ANE, recipients of anointing in Israel were found to include prophets, as well as various objects associated with Israel's worship. The patriarchs may be included metaphorically with those anointed in Israel.

In spite of this variety of applications of anointing in Israel, however, the most prominent use of both the act and the title are in connection with the king. This fact is shown by the more frequent usage of *mashiah* and *mashah* with the kings, as well as the substantival usage and possessive relationship which ties the king more closely to God as "His anointed." The initiation of anointing came from God Himself, although at times the people also anointed the king in ratification of His choice.

The basic significance of anointing lies in the idea that the anointed one was chosen and consecrated by God to represent Him in some avenue of service, empowered and accompanied by the Holy Spirit.

The fundamental meaning of *mashiah* is a consecrated leader in the service of Yahweh. The basic idea of "one who has been anointed with oil" is supported by philological evidence from both Hebrew and cognate languages. Examples of anointing in the ANE, though not plentiful, are usually connected with kingship. One example of priestly anointing exists.

Anointing in Israel is distinct for the fact 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 both priests and 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. It also signified endowment with the Spirit of God for accomplishment of the service. It did not signify divinity.

Footnotes

¹ Joachim Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament*, trans David E Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977) p 11

² C A Briggs, (*Messianic Prophecy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886) p vii

³ H H Rowley, "The Day of the Lord" *The Faith of Israel* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1956) pp 187-88

⁴ Robert H Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1967) p 192

⁵ BDB p 603

⁶ Other words signifying anointing in the Old Testament include: *suk* (the word signifying physical anointing; used in Deut 28:40; II Sam 12:20; 14:2; II Chr 28:15; Ezek 16:9; Dan 10:3; Mic 6:15); *dashen* (seems to signify anointing in Ps 23:5 where it is used with "oil"); *balal* (used only in this sense in Ps 92:10). Although the translation and interpretation of the passage are disputed and difficult, *miphne-mashen* does not seem to signify anointing in Isa 10:27.

⁷ Edward J Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 3 vols (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publ Co, 1969) 2:67

⁸ W O E Oesterley, *The Evolution of the Messianic Idea* (New York: E P Dutton and Co, 1908), p 190

⁹ In a secular sense, anointing was used in the ANE and in Israel as part of the daily toilet of the wealthy. It was practiced for medicinal purposes (Isa 1:6; Ezek 16:9). It also seems to have been used in preparation for festal occasions and to bestow honor (Ps 23:5; 92: 10). See further *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, s v "Anoint" by S Szikszai.

¹⁰ TDNT, s v "mashah and mashiah" by F Hesse, 9:502

¹¹ E Kautzsch and A E Cowley, editors, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1910) p 356

¹² Hesse, p 502

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ BDB, p 602

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ KB, p 573; Cyrus Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*. Analecta Orientalia Series, No 38 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965) p 439

¹⁷ BDB, p 602

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp 602-603

¹⁹ W Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956) p 233

²⁰ Manfred Lurkur, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thomas and

Hudson, 1974) p 27

²¹ Hesse, p 497; also Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol 1 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co. 1961) p 104

²² J Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarnatafeln* (Leipzig: Vorderasiatische Bibliothek, 1915) p 319. The tablet referred to is #51.

²³ Alfred Bertholet, *A History of Hebrew Civilization*, trans A K Dallas (London: George G Harrap & Co Ltd, 1926) p 113

²⁴ L P Smith, "The Messianic Ideal of Isaiah" *JBL* 36 (1917): 201 n

²⁵ C R North, "The Religious Aspects of Hebrew Kingship" *ZAW* 50 (1932): 14. The Amarna letter that North refers to for proof of his statement may be better taken as a reference to the anointing of festive occasions rather than a royal anointing. Indeed, if the Pharaoh were already reigning as the letter suggests, it would be chronologically impossible for the oil sent to be used in a coronation ceremony.

²⁶ Bertholet, p 113

²⁷ Bertil Albrektson, *History and the Gods* (Lund, Sweden: CWK Gleerup, 1967) p 45; Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948) p 243

²⁸ Frankfort, *Kingship*, p 243, "The Mesopotamian king derived his authority from divine election, but we do not know how the choice of the gods was recognized."

²⁹ *Ibid*, p 247; compare Roland de Vaux, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, trans Damian McHugh (Garden City: Doubleday & Co Inc, 1971) p 163

³⁰ Ivan Engnell, "The Messiah in the Old Testament and Judaism" in *A Rigid Scrutiny*, trans and ed by John T Willis (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ Press, 1969) p 223. The term was also used with reference to certain priests and priestesses at Ebla as noted by Giovanni Pettinato *The Archives of Ebla* (New York: Doubleday & Co Inc, 1981) p 252

³¹ North, "Hebrew Kingship" p 14

³² ANET, p 355

³³ O R Gurney, "Hittite Kingship" in *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, ed S H Hooke (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958) p 164

³⁴ de Vaux, *Bible and ANE*, p 164

³⁵ de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, I:104

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ ANET, p 142

³⁸ Hesse, p 497

³⁹ Smith, "Messianic Ideal" p 201

⁴⁰ Cf Hesse, p 497

⁴¹ The exact significance of the anointing of the unleavened wafers mentioned in these passages is unclear. Consecration is not stated as a purpose in these contexts, nor is

the cooperation of the Holy Spirit which is suggested by J H Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament*, trans James Martin (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1863; reprint ed, Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1980) p 294

⁴² Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ House, 1973) pp 250-251. For a survey of various views see John Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971) p 223; and C F Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, trans M G Easton in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publ Co, 1949) pp 345-349

⁴³ Pettinato, *Ebla*, p 252

⁴⁴ A J B Higgins, "The Priestly Messiah" NTS 13 (1966-67): 211

⁴⁵ Hesse, pp 500-501; Oesterley *Messianic Idea*, p 192; D S Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971) p 38; de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, II:399-400

⁴⁶ *Mashah* occurs 11 times; *mashiah* occurs 4.

⁴⁷ Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship*, pp 329-30

⁴⁸ BDB, p 873

⁴⁹ In three of the verses (Exod 38:41; 30:30; 40:13) the verbs are Piel perfects, found in clauses parallel to the anointing. In Lev 8:12, the form is a Piel infinitive construct with a lamedh indicating purpose.

⁵⁰ This is further supported by the fact that priestly anointing is also included in the same verse (Exod 28:41; Lev 16:32; Num 3:3) or context (Exod 29:7, cf 29:9; Lev 7:36, cf 7:37; 8:12, cf 8:33) with other terms implying consecration such as "filling the hand" (Exod 28:41; 29:9; Lev 8:33; 16:32; Num 3:3), and "installation" (Lev 7:37).

⁵¹ *Mashah* occurs 65 times in the Old Testament: 32 of these references are clearly in connection with the king.

⁵² The one probable exception is the reference in Ps 105:15, "Touch not mine anointed."

⁵³ This distinction may be seen most clearly in I Sam 2:35, where a clear contrast is made between the "faithful priest" and "My anointed."

⁵⁴ ISBE, s v "Anointing" by G B Eager, 1:138

⁵⁵ Jehu is the only monarch of the Northern Kingdom said to have been anointed.

⁵⁶ Hesse, p 499

⁵⁷ Theo Laetsch, *Bible Commentary: Jeremiah* (St Louis: Concordia Publ House, 1952) p 399

⁵⁸ C F Keil, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, trans James Kennedy in *Commentary on the Old Testament* (reprinted, Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publ Co, 1973) p 443

⁵⁹ Young, *Isaiah*, 3:195

⁶⁰ Although he is not referred to as *mashiah*, there is one other reference in the Old Testament to the anointing of a heathen king. This appears in I Kgs 19:15 with reference to Hazael of Damascus. Although the evidence is not conclusive, it appears likely that Hazael was literally anointed.

⁶¹ *The Universal Hebrew Encyclopedia*, s v "Anointing" by Julian Morganstern, 1:332

⁶² The request of Elisha for a double portion of Elijah's spirit seems best understood as a desire to have the firstborn son's inheritance in relation to the power of Yahweh's Spirit which was so clearly on Elijah's life and ministry. See C F Keil, *The Books of the Kings*, trans James Martin in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (reprinted Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publ Co, 1970) pp 292-3

⁶³ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, 4:303 (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publ Co, 1948) p 303

⁶⁴ If the force of *mashah* is figurative, then in the case of Christ the anointing referred to may have been at His baptism (Lk 3:21-22).

⁶⁵ The use of *mashiah* in Ps 105:15 is also quoted in I Chr 16:22 as part of a song of praise which David gave to Asaph and his brothers. Thus what is said of Ps 105:15 is taken to be true of both references.

⁶⁶ H C Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (The Wartburg Press, 1959; reprinted Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969) p 735

⁶⁷ Hesse, pp 504-505; cf C A Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 2 vols ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1907) 2:345

⁶⁸ William Plumer, *Studies in the Book of Psalms* (Philadelphia: J B Lippincott and Co, 1866) p 933; Leupold, *Psalms*, pp 736-37

⁶⁹ The patriarchs may be called prophets because they were admitted to confidential conversation with God, and thus were entrusted with His word. Abraham was even called *navi* by God in Gen 20:7.

⁷⁰ Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms*, 3 vols, *Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday and Co Inc, 1970) 3:55; Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 3 vols, trans F Bolton in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publ Co, 1970) 3:144; Alexander Maclaren, *The Psalms*, 3 vols, *The Expositor's Bible* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co, 1900) 3:131.

⁷¹ II Sam 19:21; Ps 20:6; 28:8; see Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ Press, 1979) p xxii; Hesse, p 504

⁷² de Vaux, *Bible and ANE*, p 152

⁷³ Hesse, p 499

⁷⁴ See de Vaux, *Bible and ANE*, p 153

⁷⁵ Hesse, p 499

⁷⁶ See Lev 8:10-12 for this usage with both objects and priests. The form in verses 11 and 12 is a lamedh prefixed to an infinitive construct indicating purpose.

⁷⁷ See S H Hooke, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship" in *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, ed S H Hooke (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958) p 207; Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, trans W F Stinespring (New York: Macmillan, 1955) p 7; Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, trans G W Anderson (New York: Abingdon Press, n d) p 63; Russell, *Jewish Apocalyptic*, p 304; *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, s v "mashah" by V P Hamilton, 1:530

⁷⁸ de Vaux, *Bible and ANE*, p 152, 165-66; Szikszai, "Anoint" p 139

⁷⁹ Mowinckel, p 66

⁸⁰ The suggestion of Hesse (pp 497, 499) that anointing signified the conferring of *kavodh* (power, strength, or majesty) by Yahweh upon the king mistakes the result for the cause. While it cannot be denied that the king derived power, strength, and majesty (*kavodh*) from his anointed position, it was a secondary result of his relationship to God and His Spirit.

⁸¹ Mowinckel, p 62

⁸² John L Mackenzie, "Royal Messianism" *CBQ* 19 (1957): 26-27; Morganstern, "Anointing" p 332; Solomon Zeitlin, "The Origin of the Idea of the Messiah" in *Messianism in the Talmudic Era*, ed Leo Landman (New York: KTAV Publ House Inc, 1979) p 449

⁸³ de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 1:112

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, pp 112-113

Abbreviations

ANE	Ancient Near East
ANET	J B Pritchard (ed), <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</i>
AV	Authorized Version of the Bible
BDB	B Brown, S R Driver, and C A Briggs, <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ISBE	International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
KB	L Koehler and W Baumgartner, <i>Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros</i>
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NTS	New Testament Studies
TDNT	G Kittel and G Friedrich (eds), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche wissenschaft

*Anointing was initiated by Yahweh
and executed by priests or prophets.*

dangers, the range of counseling ministries, the realistic goals, and the route of promotion, training and supervision.

Reasons for Local Church Counseling

The very nature of the church is the first reason for counseling in the local church. The word for church (*ekklesia*) appears in the New Testament 114 times (Moulton and Geden, 1950, pp 316-317). Over ninety appearances (Kuen, 1971, p 51) refer to a called-out body or gathering of born-again believers who have assembled in a local area for preaching, teaching, edification, and observance of the ordinances in order to present themselves as lights (Matt 5:14-16, Eph 5:8) and salt (Matt 5:13) to the lost community (I Tim 3:15). As a royal priesthood (I Pet 2:9), the church members have the liberty and responsibility to counsel.

Gary Collins (*Christian Counseling*, 1980, p 20) points out: "As an example of the need for helping, note the number of times that the words 'one another' appear in the Bible. We are instructed to build up, accept, admonish, be devoted to, be at peace with, serve, bear the burdens of, be kind to, teach, encourage, confess our faults to, pray for, and love one another (Rom 14:19; 15:7, 14; 12:10, 18; Gal 5:13; 6:2; Eph 4:32; Col 3:16; I Thess 5:11; James 5:16; I Jn 4:7). While this clearly extends beyond counseling, it also includes much of what is involved in the counseling process."

In Hebrews 10:24-25, the believers are encouraged to provoke (fix the eyes of the spirit on) one another to love and good works. This is done while exhorting (*parakalountes*—calling along side of). One scholar says, "it has the idea of shaking loose things in the other person's life that otherwise might stay put" (*Matters*, Adams, 1977, p 162). This is done through careful, prayerful study, discussion and application of the Scripture. This is accomplished with assembled believers.

The mandate given to the church in the great commission (Matt 28:19-20) is the second reason for the local church to be involved with counseling. The command is to "disciple." A part of discipling is to "teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Because counseling may be remedial, preventive and/or educational, it falls within the scope of teaching in the local church.

God gave authority and power to the officers of the church to change believers' lives through the ministry of the Word (Matt 28:18; Lk 24:49; Acts 1:8). This is a third reason for counseling in the local church. Jay Adams notes: "Both *exousia* (externally conferred authority) and *dunamis* (internal power and capability) are granted these officers by virtue of their calling to the work of ministering the Word. The *exousia* authorizes them to command respect and obedience (I Thess 5:13; Heb 13:17); the second empowers them to carry on their work (II Tim 1:7)"

Christ's followers showed that they were His disciples by how they loved one another.

(*More Than Redemption*, 1979, p 278).

A fourth reason is the sufficiency of the Word of God by the Holy Spirit to change lives through counseling believers (II Tim 3:16-17; II Pet 1:3-9). Christians are commanded to grow spiritually (II Pet 3:18). This is progressive sanctification.

Another reason for counseling in the local church is the model of the apostolic church. Christ's followers manifested love as the bridge between Christ and the lost (*The Measure of a Church*, Getz, 1975, p 55). They showed that they were his disciples by how they loved one another (Jn 13:34-35).

A further reason for local church counseling is the gifts to the church and to individual members. Ephesians 4:11,12 speak of certain gifted men as gifts to the church. The word for "perfect" in verse 12 means to "equip," "train," "discipline" (Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p 419). These men were given to the church for the equipping of the believers.

Also given to individual members are spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6-8; I Cor 12:4-11, 28). Some of these gifts were temporary for the founding of the church and the accrediting of Christ and of the apostles and associates who wrote the Scriptures (I Cor 13: 8-10; II Cor 12:12). One of the gifts is the gift of exhortation or counseling. Although some have the gift of evangelism (Eph 4:11), every Christian is to be a witness, seeking to win men and women to Christ. In the same way, although all believers are to be burden-bearers and people-helpers, some have the gift of exhortation or a special ability to counsel ("Friend-to-Friend Helping," Collins, 1979, p 13).

An additional reason for counseling in the church is the example of Christ. He spoke to multitudes, but he ministered to individuals. Jesus is the "Wonderful Counselor" (Isa 9:6) in whose steps believers are to walk (I Pet 2:21).

A concluding reason for counseling in the local church is the Christian's responsibility to avoid the counsel of the ungodly (Ps 1:1). Counseling in the local church provides Biblical advice and direction which is sufficient for all problems of a spiritual nature (II Tim 3:16-17; II Pet 1:3-4).

Responsible People

The pastor is to be responsible for counseling which is going on in the local church. The Greek word *katartidzo* which appears in Ephesians