

(Continued)

(3) To abstain from it was one token of mourning (<2 Sam 14:2>; compare <Mt 6:17>), and to resume it a sign that the mourning was ended (<2 Sam 12:20, 14:2>). It was a customary part of the preparation for a feast <Eccl 9:8; Ps 23:5>. One way of showing honor to a guest was to anoint his head with oil <Ps 23:5; Lk 7:46>; a rarer and more striking way was to anoint his feet <Lk 7:38>. In <James 5:14>, we have an instance of anointing with oil for medicinal purposes.

**B. Religious Use:** Anointing as a religious rite was practiced throughout the ancient East in application both to persons and to things.

(1) It was observed in Canaan long before the Hebrew conquest, and, accordingly, holds that, as the use of oil for general purposes in Israel was an agricultural custom borrowed from the Canaanites, so the anointing with sacred oil was an outgrowth from its regular use for bathing purposes.

(2) The primary meaning of mashach in Hebrew, which is borne out by the Arabic, seems to have been "to daub" or "smear." It is used of painting a ceiling in <Jer 22:14>, of anointing a shield in <Isa 21:5>.

(3) The most significant uses of mashach, however, are found in its application, not to sacred things, but to certain sacred persons. The oldest and most sacred of these, it would seem, was the anointing of the king, by pouring oil upon his head at his coronation, a ceremony regarded as sacred from the earliest times, and observed religiously not in Israel only, but in Egypt and elsewhere (see <Judge 9:8,15; 1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 2 Sam 19:10>). (4) Among the Hebrews it was believed not only that it effected a transference to the anointed one of something of the holiness and virtue of the deity, thus the profound reverence for the king as a sacred personage, "the anointed" (Hebrew, messiah YHWH), which passed over into our language through the Greek Christos, and appears as "Christ".

(5) In what is known today as the Priestly Code, the high priest is spoken of as "anointed" <Ex 29:7; Lev 4:3, 8:12>, and, in passages regarded by some as later additions to the Priestly Code, other priests also are thus spoken of <Exo 30:30; 40:13-15>. Elijah was told to anoint Elisha as a prophet <1 Kin 19:16>, but seems never to have done so. <1 Kin 19:16>.

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