

The Anointing

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Part I

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In the early 1950s a missionary named Joseph Mattsson-Bose was preaching to a crowd at an outdoor crusade in Kenya. Soon after he began speaking a demonized woman started demonstrating and disrupting the meeting. Mattsson-Bose told the people, "This woman has a demon. See that large tree there?" he asked, pointing to the tree. "I'm going to command the demon to leave her and go into that tree. After that I'm going to send it to the bottom of the sea."

He then commanded the demon to leave the woman and go into the tree. The people watched in amazement as immediately the woman collapsed into peaceful rest and the large tree began shaking wildly as if a violent wind were blowing it even though there was no wind! The people had never seen such a demonstration of the power of God before. The Kenyan Christian brother who witnessed this incident told a friend of mine, "From that day on, we knew we had authority over demons!"

What enabled Mattsson-Bose to do this? The anointing of God.

The Anointing Defined

I have given careful thought to defining the anointing. I have not relied on a dictionary because I see the anointing, at least in the sense we Christians speak of it, as a spiritual reality. Its definition and understanding surpass any secular or natural definition.

My definition of the anointing is: ***the supernatural enablement of God which He gives to a person, through the Holy Spirit, to accomplish His purpose.*** In other words, it is the power of God, given through the person of the Holy Spirit, to an individual. The anointing may be to *do* something, to *say* something, to *preach*, to *heal*, to *sing*, to *play* an instrument, to do *wonders*, or *miracles*, to skillfully *craft* or *build* something, or even to *wage war*. I am absolutely convinced that this supernatural anointing of God is available to every believer today to accomplish what God wants done.

Biblical Words for Anointing

Old Testament

Whatever we learn of the anointing must have its roots in Scripture. We find two Hebrew words in

the Old Testament that are translated as *anoint*. They are *kh* and *mshah*.

Secular or Ordinary Anointing

kh is the Hebrew word used for common body anointing for cosmetic or medical purposes. This is the word used to describe the application of oil, ointment, or perfume to one's body. Ruth 3:3 is an example of this application of oil when Naomi told Ruth to present herself to Boaz. She said, "Wash and *perfume yourself*, and put on your best clothes."

The practice of such anointing was common throughout the Old Testament. Indeed, to abstain from such daily anointing was considered a sign of mourning. Psalm 23:5 indicates that a way of showing honor to a guest was to anoint his head with oil. Apparently the practice was still in force in Jesus' day. Jesus admonished a Pharisee, in whose house He was a guest, for rebuking the sinful woman who was washing Jesus' feet. Jesus said, "You did not *put oil on my head*, but she has poured perfume on my feet." (Lk 7:46 NIV, emphasis added.)

Sacred Anointing

The other Hebrew word, *mshah*, is the Old Testament word used for sacred anointing. (Although *mshah* was also used in Scripture for non-sacred purposes, the majority of its Old Testament usage is to indicate the divine purpose of anointing sacred persons). One of the oldest and most sacred examples of this anointing was of the king by pouring oil on his head at his coronation. (See 1Sam 10:1 where Samuel anoints Saul with oil.) Another example of such anointing is when the Lord told Elijah to anoint Elisha as a prophet. (1 Ki 19:16)

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia states, "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 in whose name and by whose representative the rite was performed, but also that *it imparted a special endowment of the spirit of Jehovah.*" (See 1 Sam 16:13 and Isa 61:1.)⁽¹⁾ As we will see, this transference of power continues among believers today.

The Old Testament word *mshah* is also the root word for Israel's Messiah. Thus, when Old

Testament Scripture speaks of the Messiah the root word comes from *mshah*.

The Anointing Oil

Early in the Old Testament God set strict rules regarding His sacred anointing oil and its use. He gave Moses a specific formula for preparing the anointing oil and then said, "Make these into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer. It will be the sacred anointing oil." (Ex 30:25 NIV) God also gave Moses instructions as to what and whom he was to anoint. Then the Lord excluded His anointing oil from use for any other purpose. He said, "Say to the Israelites, 'This is to be my sacred anointing oil for the generations to come. Do not pour it on men's bodies and do not make any oil with the same formula. It is sacred, and you are to consider it sacred. Whoever makes perfume like it and whoever puts it on anyone other than a priest must be cut off from his people.'" (Ex 30:31-33 NIV)

The New Testament word for the anointing is *chrisma* which literally means "anointing oil."

New Testament's *Aleiph*

The two Hebrew words, *kh* and *mshah*, have corresponding New Testament Greek words; *aleiph* and *chri*. The New Testament word *aleiph* corresponds to *kh* for common cosmetic or medical use. *Chri* corresponds to *mshah* for sacred anointing.

However, in the New Testament, *aleipho* seems to have a dual application. The common, cosmetic use of *aleipho* is broadened in its application beyond the common into the sacred. For example, we read in Mark when Jesus sent the disciples out, "They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed [*aleiphon*] many sick people with oil." (Mk 6:12,13 NIV) We see the sacred use again in James: "Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint [*aleipho*] him with oil in the name of the Lord." (Ja 5:14 NIV)

But we also find that *aleipho* was used for medical purposes. The Good Samaritan, when he was taking care of the man robbers had beaten and left on the road he " . . . bandaged his wounds, pouring on [*aleiphon*] oil and wine." (Lk 10:34 NIV)

New Testament's *Chrio*

The word *chrio* is the word from which we get the name Christ, as in Jesus, the Anointed [*chrio*]. In the New Testament *chrio* is often written as Christ Jesus, or Jesus Christ. But *chrio* is also the word used to describe the sacred anointing. So not only did *chrio* continue the same concept as *mshah* from the Old Testament, but writers of the New Testament added a dual usage specifically encompassing Christ as the anointed one of God. This reference to Christ was in addition to its use to describe the sacred transference of God's power.

We see this in Luke's Gospel when Jesus read from Isaiah 61. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has *anointed* me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (4:18,19 NIV, emphasis added.) (See also Acts 4:27; 10:38.)

Who Has God's Anointing?

1. Old Testament Individuals

We know that God chose certain individuals throughout the Old Testament period to receive His anointing in order to accomplish something He wanted done. To pick just one example, God chose Isaiah to be His spokesperson and anointed him with the supernatural power to deliver God's directives to the Israelites. Indeed, every prophet of the Old Testament, as well as certain kings, judges, women in key positions, and so on, were chosen and anointed by God to carry out an aspect of His eternal plan.

2. Jesus as The Anointed One

As we have already seen, Jesus knew He was anointed of God and He told us so when He read the Scripture from Isaiah and called Himself the one referred to in that writing. In fact, Jesus is our pattern and role model for all that is anointed in this day and age.

3. New Testament Anointing of All Believers

All New Testament Christians have an anointing. Let's read a quote from theologian Walter Grundermann⁽²⁾ who wrote about Isaiah. "The prophet is to discharge a specific task assigned to him by Yahweh. He is anointed for this. Thus, the act of

anointing confers power. Perhaps the Spirit of Yahweh is regarded as the "matter" of anointing. If so, the gift of the Spirit and the anointing are one and the same. Possession of the Spirit is permanent; hence the rite confers a *character indelebilis*." Grunderman is saying in part that *anyone* who has the Spirit has a permanent anointing!

We know that everyone who is born again receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of rebirth. Thus, anyone who is born again has God's anointing because he or she has received the Holy Spirit. But often we think, "I don't *feel* anointed." Well, this is certainly one case in which our feelings lie to us. The fact is, if you are born-again, you *are* anointed. Remember, in the Old Testament only selected people were anointed such as kings, priests, and others who were specifically selected by the Lord. But in the New Testament, *all believers are anointed*.

Paul explicitly tells us that *we* are God's anointed. He wrote, "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He *anointed* [*chrío* in verb form] us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." (2 Co 1:21,22 NIV, emphasis added.)

The Apostle John also confirms our anointing. He wrote, "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth . . . As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him." (1 Jo 2:20, 27 NIV)

The Significance of God's Anointing In Today's World

We know God's purposes are eternal. We also know from personal experience and observation that the anointing of God on individuals continues today. This anointing or empowerment is one of the main ways God accomplishes His plans and purposes today. Thus, the anointing of God on one's life is extremely significant. It makes a marked impact on his or her abilities. It releases a supernatural power through him. It enables him to do things that would be impossible without it.

In order to help us understand the true meaning of God's anointing, I have taken the following

three points from the *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*.⁽³⁾

1. One is Set Apart for God

When one is anointed by the Lord, he or she is set apart, or consecrated, for God's use. He no longer is permitted or allowed to indulge in activities not pleasing to God. In New Testament language "he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Co 5:17 NIV) In the Old Testament sense, he is sanctified, that is, set apart and dedicated exclusively for God's use.

2. Divine Empowerment

God empowers, or enables, those whom He anoints. As we have seen, God's anointing empowers an individual *to do* something. For example, in the Scripture quoted above by Jesus, He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me *to preach* good news to the poor. He has sent me *to proclaim* freedom for the prisoners and *recovery of sight* for the blind, *to release* the oppressed, *to proclaim* the year of the Lord's favor." (4:18,19 NIV, emphasis added.)

We see another example of this divine empowerment when God was directing Moses in the construction of the tabernacle. "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts--*to make* artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, *to cut* and set stones, *to work* in wood, and *to engage* in all kinds of craftsmanship." (Ex 31:3-5 NIV, emphasis added.)

Note that each anointing was given specifically to accomplish God's purpose.

3. Divine Protection

God's anointing also comes with a built-in protection plan. This is not to say that His anointed servants cannot be harmed or will not suffer. Quite the contrary, as we look at the Apostle Paul's life, we see that he was harmed on occasion and he suffered greatly for the gospel. But what it does mean is that God *protects* His anointed servant from harm that would prevent that servant from accomplishing His purpose.

For example, when the Jews rioted against

Paul in Jerusalem even though they were determined to kill him, God protected Paul. (See Acts 21.) When the Jews in the Temple picked up stones to stone Jesus, He walked away unharmed. (See Jn 8:59.) Paul could not die before he preached in Rome, neither could Jesus die before the appointed time.

I know a man who had received a divine commission from God that was to take some years to complete. One day he sat next to a very nervous man on a plane who was afraid the plane would crash. The Christian brother told the man, "Don't worry. This plane can't crash." The man asked, "Why?" He told him, "God has given me a task to do, and it isn't completed yet. Therefore, I cannot die before the job is done."

The writer of Hebrews tells us, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb 1:14 NIV)

Benefits of the Anointing

Now let's look at a few verses that tell us how God treats His anointed servants.

"It is not by strength that one prevails; those who oppose the LORD will be shattered. He will thunder against them from heaven; the LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to his king *and exalt the horn of his anointed.*" (1 Sam 2:9,10 NIV, emphasis added)
"He gives his king great victories; he shows un-

failing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever." (2 Sam 22:51 NIV) We who believe in Jesus are "in Christ" and thus we are descendants of David just like Jesus.

"Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand. (Ps 20:6 NIV)
"My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever. (Ps 45:1,2 NIV)

It would seem that the powers bestowed on God's anointed servants are boundless! From these Scriptures we see that God guards the feet, gives strength, exalts the power [horn], gives great victories, shows unfailing kindness, saves, answers him with the saving power of His right hand, makes us stand firm in Christ, sets His seal of ownership on us, puts His Spirit in our hearts, and promises us that the anointing abides in us and that it teaches us all things!
What more do we need?

In Part II we will continue our study of the anointing by examining the three different kinds of anointing and what we can do to increase our own anointing.

1. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mi., Vol 1, Page 138.

2. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Volume IX, Page 501.

3. *The Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Walter A. Elwell editor, Baker Book House Co., Grand Rapids, MI 49516. Page 26.

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