

THE ANOINTING

By Denver Cheddie

The anointing is one of the most misunderstood terms in the Bible. This misunderstanding spans many denominations from Spiritual Baptists to Catholics, and ironically even Charismatics.

Nowhere in the Bible is the anointing ever portrayed as a mystic force that sends people hurling to the floor, into convulsions, fits of hysterical laughter, or episodes of "holy rolling"; yet today these phenomena are readily attributed to the "anointing". Neither is it presented as physical sensation which can be "felt". Due to ignorance many Christians mistake the anointing for common sensations such as goose bumps or adrenaline rushes, which even the ungodly experience. Not a few preachers prey on this ignorance by the over use of crowd control techniques to stir people in their emotions, and then claim great anointing upon themselves.

But what is this anointing that is so much talked about today? To *anoint* means *to smear on* or *to rub*. In the Old Testament, people, animals, and objects were literally anointed or rubbed with oil. This was done for many purposes. Sheep were anointed to protect them from blood sucking insects. A shield would be anointed to maintain its physical properties. Officials were anointed as a sign of consecration. In a different sense, anyone used by God for any purpose was referred to as God's anointed. This included prophets, priests, rulers and even pagan kings like Cyrus. Jesus is referred to as the Christ or the Anointed One. Thus the anointing was related in part to function performed as well as office held. In other words God anointed those whom He appointed.

It is against this backdrop that the New Testament understanding of the anointing best finds its meaning. Jesus began His ministry not by being

anointed with oil but by the Holy Spirit. His office was that of Messiah and His anointing was to perform functions associated with that. It is that concept of the anointing that applies today. Government officials are still called God's anointed in the sense that they are appointed for a specific task, but the church can experience a deeper anointing by the Holy Spirit.

The anointing is a Divine enablement for us to accomplish God's purposes on earth. God's work cannot be done through human might and power, only by His Spirit. However we are co-laborers with Him. His Spirit works in us and through us by anointing us. The anointing has a two-fold purpose. It works in us and through us. Firstly the anointing works in us by teaching us God's ways and conforming us to His likeness. Secondly it works through us by giving supernatural ability to do God's work (witnessing, preaching, teaching, etc.). It is useful to note that since different believers have different purposes, they are anointed and equipped differently. An evangelist is equipped to win the lost, a pastor to lead his flock, and a singer to minister comfort, etc.

If every one ministered with their anointing there would be no mental burnout or fatigue. Those things happen only when people take too much upon themselves. In the same way a car without oil would eventually shut down, a human being can not do God's work without God's help. With the anointing preachers would not have to force people to take heed, and singers would not have to prod a crowd to worship. These are automatic responses to the anointing. Evangelists would not have to fabricate figures to make their ministries look impressive, people would be genuinely saved. The anointing would also save a church from formalism. Formalism is the destiny of any organization that attempts to do God's work through human strength alone.

The first step to ministering with the anointing is being filled with the Holy Spirit. Then as one begins to obey God's perfect will, one becomes more entrusted with the anointing. Man is never commanded to be anointed, neither is he rebuked for not being powerful enough. But he is told to obey. The anointing is God's job, not man's. He will anoint those whom He appoints, as they submit to His will in humble obedience.

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