

THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PART 1

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Dear Fellow Church Leader:

This issue of ACTS Magazine on “Anointing” is designed to be an in-depth, biblical study on this subject. It will require of you some serious thought, study and effort in order to gain a better understanding of this critical topic.

It may require some extensive time to get through this study. You may study through only two or three pages each day. But I strongly urge you to apply yourself both in prayer and in diligent study. If you do, your life and ministry will be changed!

I was in ministry many years before I understood God’s desire for His Spirit’s anointing in my life and ministry. When I opened my heart and allowed God to “open the eyes of my understanding”, I was changed! My ministry was changed! The Holy Spirit’s presence and power were far more active and visible in and through my life and ministry.

Much more fruit became evident in my ministry. I experienced the presence of God in a more profound way than ever before. My life did not become easier; but there was a greater ability to live as more than a conqueror through Christ who loves me (see Romans 8:37).

I strongly encourage you to apply yourself as a diligent and steadfast workman in your study of this material. Here are some practical suggestions that will help you to do this:

First, I have given many Bible references throughout this teaching. Please take the time to **look up each and every Scripture reference**. This will serve several very important purposes: 1) As a church leader, you should never simply accept every teaching you read or hear, no matter the source. Always search the Scriptures for yourself (Acts 17:11); 2) As a church leader, it is important for you to advance in your knowledge, familiarity and understanding of the Scriptures (2Tim 2:15-18). This will protect you and those you lead from

error, as well as cause you to be a skilled workman with the Word of God; 3) Only the Word of God is backed up by the power of God (2Tim 3:16,17; Heb 4:12,13; 2Pet 1:20,21). It is only the combined action of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that can transform the human heart.

Second, keep a notebook or paper handy and write down notes, questions or scriptures for further study. God will speak to you and reveal truth to you as you study His Word. Let this study be a journey of *personal growth* for you, which will help you far beyond just receiving good teaching material.

Finally, my dear fellow-worker, I would strongly encourage you to accompany your study time with much prayer and waiting upon the Lord. For it is the Holy Spirit Who reveals truth and the nature and character of Christ (John 14:17,26). Do not let this study involve only your mind, for you will then be limited in what you can receive. Our minds **are** a gift from God, but they are still limited (see 1 Corinthians Chapters 3 and 4). Open your heart, and allow the Holy Spirit to teach *you* and to shape *you*. **You can only lead others where you, yourself, have been.** So pray, study and enjoy this teaching – and may you grow in God’s anointing power even as you read!

Also, please take note of the new feature we have added to this issue of ACTS Magazine. Throughout the teaching, there will be special notes from me to you. They are designed for you as a church leader to receive a more in-depth look at an important principle from the Bible regarding ministry or personal growth. These special notes are identified as “**Pastor To Pastor**” and are set in a grey background in order that you might readily identify them.

Pastor, I love you in Christ and I believe in the purposes of God for you. You are God’s chosen instrument, whom He desires to use for His Kingdom’s sake and glory, and to bless His Church. I bless you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now may God bless you, strengthen you and enlarge you, as you study and receive from His Word and His Spirit!

Your brother,

Rev. Frank R. Parrish

Director, World MAP

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PART 1

“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of Hosts” (Zech 4:6).

Before an effective, biblical study of “Anointing” can begin, we must establish some important foundational principles. These principles will form a biblical platform from which we can attain a proper view of anointing.

The beginning sections of this article will address those foundational principles. They may be new to you, or they may already be familiar. However, since it is critical that we have a common foundation from which to build this study, I would ask you to study the following principles carefully. Allow time for the Holy Spirit to reveal, convict, test and affirm how well these principles are established and lived out in your own life and ministry.

Fellow leader, this is not a study of easy “shortcuts” to maturity. Nor does it offer quick formulas or fancy techniques that can be used to make you a “success”.

Rather, this is a biblical study of how we as church leaders must grow and function within God’s Kingdom. The pathway to maturity is a necessary process in order to be truly fruitful, to have a lasting ministry that brings much glory to God!

Therefore, let us apply ourselves with diligence as we learn about this issue of anointing. God can only bless what He has established as His way and will. Thus, it is essential that we lay a proper foundation from His Word before we move on to the related issues of anointing (Isa 28:10).

UNLIMITED MINISTRY

The subject of ANOINTING is of great importance to **any** and **every** believer in Jesus Christ. However, understanding ANOINTING – what is it, how it functions, and how we can walk and grow in it – is **critical**. This is especially true for those who are called to full-time ministry.

Unfortunately, ANOINTING is often poorly understood or is a subject perhaps even avoided by some leaders. Though it is something that God desires to give us, many leaders do not know what it is or how to receive it. Thus, they try to replace the anointing of the Holy Spirit with other things.

Some leaders may become skilled in administration or organization. Perhaps they pursue education, adding degrees and titles before and after their names. They might attend many conferences and be inspired by great speakers. They might even develop their own speaking or singing skills in order to lead or motivate people more effectively.

These things mentioned above are not necessarily wrong, and may or may not prove helpful in ministry. **BUT THEY ARE NOT THE ANOINTING!** Nor can they replace the genuine anointing of the Holy Spirit in the minister's life.

Education and administrative skills can be good and helpful. However, they are limited in what they can help the leader to accomplish. When we rely upon our education, the best result we can hope for is the limit of our education. When we rely upon our eloquent speaking or other skills, we are limited to what those skills can accomplish.

However, **when we rely upon the Holy Spirit, we are limited only by what the Holy Spirit can do!**

Whatever we choose to rely upon, or place our trust in, in order to accomplish the call to ministry – that is what will set the limits of what we are able to do. How much limitation do you want on your ministry?

With God, there are no limits! (See Luke 18:27.) Therefore, if I put my trust and reliance upon God and His power and ability, my only limitations in ministry are God's will and His desires for me (Phil 4:13).

It is God's will for every born-again believer to show the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:16-26) in their behavior and actions. The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ. This same type of character is required especially of those who are called to lead others in the Body of Christ. It is the leader's role to model godly behavior for those whom they lead (1Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1Tim 4:12). There are no gifts, administrative skills or preaching or teaching abilities that can replace having Christ-like character and integrity.

It is also God's will – especially for those called to lead – that we have the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples, *"You did not*

choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (John 15:16).

From this passage we see that it is the desire of Jesus that the fruit of our lives remain. How can that happen? When our ministry is filled with God’s anointing power – the power of the Holy Spirit – **His** power *through us* enables us to influence the lives of people in a way that is fruitful and lasting.

It does not matter how talented or smart a leader is. Without the enablement of the Holy Spirit, a leader cannot fulfill God’s will in God’s way in ministry. Fortunately for us, God knows what we need far better than we do. And He has already provided for us His power and ability to help us fulfill His high call.

FORM WITHOUT POWER

Today, there are many churches and ministries where God’s presence and the power of the Holy Spirit have been limited. These ministries may have large crowds, sophisticated facilities or exciting events. But if the genuine presence and power of the Holy Spirit is not welcomed and evident, these gatherings can be just empty, religious ceremonies.

A large building or stadium can have huge crowds, sophisticated facilities and exciting events *for just a soccer game*. But these outward circumstances have little to do with making disciples who follow diligently after Jesus Christ!

In the history of the Church, there are many places in our world where God did great and miraculous works through yielded human vessels. Many of those churches, and even vast geographic regions, were once known for their dynamic Christian presence. Sadly, today they are spiritually darkened. Where the Church once thrived and had great influence, these places are now empty and without the light of the Gospel.

Of the more well-known in New Testament history are the churches of Asia Minor (now the nation of Turkey). These churches can be read about in the Book of Revelation. They are commonly known as the “Seven Churches of Revelation”.

These churches were once heralded as mighty fortresses of Christ’s redemptive work in the hearts of men. Many miracles had taken place there (read the Book of Acts). But today, tourists pay money to walk among the

ruins where great apostles once held forth the Word of Life. These places are now lifeless and void of the power of the Gospel.

What happened to these once-great churches and ministries? These empty ruins, now occupied only by birds of the air, stand as a warning and a lesson to us all.

Here is what we can learn: *Whenever church leaders begin to rely upon their own abilities, or upon traditions, titles, church politics, or even upon education and learning – instead of dependence upon the Holy Spirit of God and the timeless truths of His Word – that is when God’s life and power begin to depart from us as leaders, and from the ministries or churches that God has entrusted to us.*

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to address the condition of the church (see 1 Corinthians 3). The Corinthian church was being rebuked for their carnal, immature and selfish fighting with one another. They were dividing up into groups for the purpose of trying to assert their supposed superiority over one another (3:1-4). This was, and still is today, nothing more than puffed-up pride – the sin of the devil (1Tim 3:6). This *prideful behavior and self-dependent efforts* of men still hinder fruitfulness in the Church today.

Paul goes on to state clearly that God is the One who causes the Church to truly grow. *“So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase”* (1Cor 3:7).

There is only ONE FOUNDATION on which the Church can be built: Jesus Christ who is the Chief Cornerstone (1Cor 3:10,11; see also Ephesians 2:20-22). This is our Cornerstone for the Church today, as much as it was when the Church was born more than 2000 years ago!

THE CORE OF THE CHURCH

There is something very unique about the use of a cornerstone in the ancient world that will help us understand better why Jesus is called the *“chief cornerstone”* (Matt 21:42).

In the ancient Middle East, houses and buildings were all built the same way. One stone was carefully positioned first, that being the chief cornerstone. The rest of the building, including its size, layout and setting, was measured and lined up with that *one particular cornerstone*.

This is the illustration used by the Holy Spirit through Paul to show the preeminence of Christ in how the living Church is to be built. It is of living stones, growing and spiritually alive, all upon the Cornerstone of salvation through Jesus Christ (1Pet 2:4-10). Nothing else will line up properly without this Cornerstone at the very center of the Church.

As church leaders, we are called to partner with Christ in obedience to His purposes and plans to assist in building up the living Church of God. The New Testament Church – Christ’s Church – is made up of people who have come to the saving knowledge of faith in Jesus Christ. The term “church” in the New Testament does not mean organizational structure, titles, buildings or denominations. The “church” is ***the people*** who are saved and justified by faith in Christ, and who are maturing disciples.

TRUE FRUITFULNESS

Other terms used in the New Testament for describing the Church include: “*living stones*”(1Pet 2:5); “*the Body of Christ*” (1Cor 12:27); God’s “*field*”, “*building*”, or “*temple*” (1Cor 3:9,16,17). All of these terms have this in common: they all refer to *people* who are true believers in Jesus Christ. This is critically important to understand. As church leaders, we are called to more than administrating the church, overseeing new buildings, or coordinating church functions. We are called to partner with God in discipling and building ***people***.

We are called by God to pastor and nurture the living Church of the living God, the believing people – and to help them become growing disciples of Jesus Christ. We cannot adequately fulfill this stewardship role without God’s help and power (see Psalm 127:1)

God **will** hold us accountable for how we build upon the One Foundation of salvation through Christ (1Cor 3:12-23). Are we just drawing a crowd through our own ideas, strength and cleverness? This can appear to succeed for a time, but it will not produce the lasting fruit that God desires (John 15:5,8,16). Or are we, instead, daily yielding to the Spirit of God and surrendering to His will? Are we being led by Him as true sons of God (Rom 8:14), depending

upon Him for every moment of ministry He allows us to have? If so, then by His power and help, we can be truly fruitful, and our fruit will be of an eternal nature (John 15:16).

Please understand that *fruit* and *fruitfulness* are not defined by God in the same way that human wisdom might define them. Men might say that fruitfulness is having large numbers of people as followers, or becoming rich and influential. Human wisdom may define it as having fame, power or fortune.

But true fruitfulness from God's perspective is defined and measured by one criterion: *The lives of people being transformed into the image and character of Christ as they mature as His disciples.* Understanding the following principles will help you to grasp the truth of this definition.

RESTORED TO HIS LIKENESS

Humanity was created in the image of God (Gen 1:26,27). This is not necessarily a physical image, but one of abilities and capacities. "Image" in this scriptural context refers to qualities of reason, intellect, emotion, curiosity and the ability to make choices. We were created with the capacity to love, sacrifice and appreciate what is good and true and right.

Why did God make us this way? God made us for *one purpose*: For Himself, that we might have relationship with Him. That is truly our highest calling! God did not need or desire more angels, or He would have made more of them. Instead, we see throughout the whole of the Bible that God desired sons and daughters who would share an intimate and loving relationship with Him.

But the opportunity for relationship with God was ruined when sin entered the world through Adam and Eve's willful disobedience. Their disobedience brought sin to the whole human race (Rom 5:12-21). Yet, at that time, God's awesome plan for the redemption of His relationship with mankind was set into motion (Gen 3:15: "*her Seed*" refers to the eventual incarnation and virgin birth of God the Son, Jesus).

At the appointed time (Gal 4:4,5), Christ came to earth and died for our sins. His sacrificial act opened the possibility of restored relationship with our Creator God, which had been destroyed by sin. Through receiving Christ's

work of salvation and through faith in Him, our sins can be forgiven, and we can know God and commune with Him.

THE WORK OF TRANSFORMATION

But beyond that, God also wants to set us free from the *effects* of sin, and the damage it does in our lives. Thus, as a direct result of our salvation in Christ, God begins to work in our lives to transform us back into that “image” in which we were created.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29). This verse reveals that for those who come to Christ in salvation it is God’s foreordained will that we are to be changed, so that we would be *“conformed to the image of His Son”*.

This work of transformation begins at salvation and continues throughout our lifetime. God is infinitely wise. He designed His Kingdom to function a certain way for specific reasons. As we are changed more into the “image” of our original creation (the image of His Son), two critical things will happen:

1) We will be able to walk in an unhindered and ever-deepening relationship with God. It is sin that destroyed and can still destroy our relationship with God. Thus, as we are freed from sin and its effects, we then have a greater capacity to experience a more loving and profound relationship with our Creator.

2) We will be restored to God’s intended place and purpose for us. Man was not created in or for sin. We were created in holiness, innocence and purity. All of God’s original creation was good. *“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good”* (Gen 1:31).

We were not created with flaws, but sin destroyed the goodness of our original pattern. Therefore, as we are set free from sin and transformed to be further freed from its effects, the result will be a greater joy, peace and sense of freedom in our lives. We will then be far better equipped to fulfill God’s will and purpose.

Therefore, we can confidently say that **personal transformation is one of God’s highest priorities for each individual**. Transformation is best defined

in this context as, “being made more like Jesus in our thoughts, desires and actions.”

HOLY SPIRIT – EMPOWERED CHANGE

When we are saved, our old life passes away. We begin a life-long process of all things becoming new (2Cor 5:17). We are changed by the power of the Spirit and the Word of God into the “*image of His Son*” (Rom 8:29).

This marvelous work of change cannot fully be accomplished by our own strength or efforts (Jer 13:23). We can change ourselves in minor ways, and usually only outwardly. We can work very hard to try and discipline our lives and develop good habits.

But there is much deeper work that we desperately need, such as: healing from brokenness and pain; deliverance from rejection and other forms of bondage; freedom from our selfish and sinful ways. This kind of change is possible only by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:1-11; see also Matthew 19:23-26; Ephesians 2:1-10; Hebrews 9:13,14).

God requires us to grow and mature after coming to Christ as Savior. Though His grace and forgiveness are real and ever-present (1John 1:9), that is never an excuse for continuing on in sinful or selfish behavior. God does forgive a stumble or failure; however, one must **not** continue in that sin, but instead move forward in their walk with God (Luke 9:23-26).

Those who will not change or who resist the Holy Spirit’s process of transformation are actually in rebellion against God (Jas 1:21-25). God’s judgment upon rebellion is severe (Prov 29:1; Heb 3:8-11).

THE FRUIT GOD SEEKS

To be a **fruitful** minister of the Gospel means that the lives of the people to whom you minister are being transformed more into the likeness of Jesus. Remember that being fruitful has little to do with crowds or statistics. It is easy to get a lot of people in your church. Just offer free food, clothing or money and you can get a crowd! Or provide entertainment, tell them things that “tickle their ears” (2Tim 4:3,4) and make them feel good.

But a *crowd* does not make a *congregation*. A large gathering of people does not necessarily mean that you have a healthy New Testament church or that you are making disciples!

The question we must always ask ourselves about our ministry is this: “Are the lives of the people I minister to being changed to be more like Jesus?” Is your goal more people in your church, or is it making true disciples who are maturing and growing in Christ? It does not matter whether there are 10 people or 1,000 people – you are being fruitful if your flock is becoming more like Jesus!

THE RIGHT KIND OF WEAKNESS

We have established that being transformed into Christ’s likeness is God’s will for all followers of Christ. We know this cannot be fully accomplished by human effort, but only by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. So, what does this teach us about how we must conduct the ministry God has given us?

Simply put, we must understand this: **It is the evident and present power of the Holy Spirit working and moving without restraint through a yielded human vessel that will bring the greatest impact upon another person’s life.**

This may seem like such an obvious truth! But how often do our well-meaning human efforts take the place of the work of the Holy Spirit in our midst?

If we are honest as leaders and take a hard look at ourselves, we must admit that often **we are the problem**. It does not take long in ministry for us to recognize that we are insufficient for the task. So we get busy with programs, education and other means to be effective or successful. But the reality is that we do not have it within ourselves to accomplish all that God wants to do! Can you admit that about yourself?

As leaders, we want to be our best at all times. But our best human efforts are not enough to fully accomplish God’s will and purpose.

This may sound like bad news. But in reality – if we are willing to accept it and embrace it – our *insufficiency* is the beginning point of *good news*! Look at what one of the greatest apostles wrote about this seeming paradox:

*“Concerning this thing [Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh’ v.7] I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. **For when I am weak, then I am strong**” (2Cor 12:8-10).*

Paul did not accept an attitude of defeat, nor did he think he was being punished by God. Rather, Paul rejoiced in his revelation and personal experience of the overcoming grace of God!

It is by God’s grace that we have the life and victory of an overcomer (Rom 8:37). But it was Paul’s yielded surrender and open acknowledgement of his need that both opened the way for and released the power of the Holy Spirit in and through his life.

Paul did not try to hide or cover his weakness, but rather *“boasted in infirmities”* (v.9) and *“took pleasure”* (v.10) in his difficulties. For it was at these points that Paul was totally reliant upon God’s power and sufficiency – and he was able to *experience* that power which sustained and enabled him! (See also 2 Corinthians 3:1-6.)

Pastor To Pastor: The nature of Paul’s *“thorn in the flesh”* is unknown to us. But we do know that it was **not** sin or moral failure by Paul. God will never excuse our sin, but rather convicts and disciplines us to bring us to true repentance (Prov 3:11,12; 2Cor 7:9,10; 1John 1:9). There is nothing hidden from God. Though His mercy may allow a person time to come to repentance, He is not fooled when we try to hide sin. Our sin will eventually be found out (Num 32:23; Gal 6:7; 1Tim 5:24).

GOD USES THE HUMBLE

For the purposes of this teaching, let us define *weakness* as:

- recognizing our inability to perform God’s will on our own;
- yielding our hearts and utterly depending upon the power of the Holy Spirit;
- allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us to accomplish the things of eternal value in ministry – changed lives – by His power and not our own.

Church leaders often feel a great deal of pressure to be a “success” in ministry. Unfortunately, our ideas of success are often defined by the world’s standards or even by our own pride. We want to be important in the eyes of others. We want to be “great” in God’s Kingdom so that God will greatly use us!

But the reality is, and always has been, that *there are no great men of God – only **humblemen greatly used of God!*** (See Matthew 20:20-28.) Again, the key ingredient for truly fruitful ministry is ***the presence and working of the Holy Spirit!*** God is not opposed to people who have education, organizational gifts or many talents. But none of these are adequate to **replace** the anointing power of the Holy Spirit in ministry.

God can use our abilities and gifts to enrich our effectiveness. But He has made it very clear in His Word that *“without Me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5). It is *“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD of hosts* (Zech 4:6).

God knows what we need and has already made perfect provision for us. He has made available **the Anointing of the Holy Spirit** in order for us to be fruitful as we fulfill His call to ministry.

Therefore, let us now study together to gain a solid, Biblical understanding of ***The Anointing of the Holy Spirit.***

This study will seek to: 1) define the anointing, what it is and what it is not; 2) explain how the anointing functions in and through a minister’s life; and, 3) reveal how we can both *receive* and *grow* in that anointing.

HISTORICAL AND BIBLICAL BACKGROUND OF ANOINTING

A. ANOINTING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In order to fully understand the Old Testament, we must also use the New Testament. The New Testament scriptures are like a “lens” that often helps give focus and clarity to the *Old Covenant* (“Testament”) scriptures.

The New Testament explains that the Old Testament (the *Old Covenant* or *Old Agreement*) of the Law is the Word of God (Matt 5:17,18; 2Pet 1:20,21). However, we now live under the *New Covenant* (“testament” or “agreement”) of grace and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. We no longer live under the Old Covenant of Law and ***we cannot attain salvation through our own works*** (Gal 3:21-25).

The New Covenant has **superseded** the Old Covenant (see Hebrews Chapters 7-8). This New Covenant *fulfills* the Old Covenant (Matt 5:17,18; Luke 24:25-27) and establishes a “*new and living way*” (Heb 10:20) as a basis for man’s relationship to God.

However, the Old Testament scriptures are still part of God’s eternal Word (Isa 40:8). As we study the Old Covenant, we can still learn many important principles that can apply to our lives under the New Covenant.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians (1Cor 10:1-13), explains that the history, events and lessons recorded in the Old Testament should be studied, understood and applied to our lives as New Testament believers. “*Now these things became our examples...*” (1Cor 10:6).

Thus, we can gain valuable insights about the **anointing of the Holy Spirit** that is now available to New Testament believers by studying the pictures or “types” of anointing foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

1. ORIGIN OF THE WORD “ANOINT”

The Hebrew word for **anoint** in the Old Testament is *masah*, and is used 69 times. This word means to apply oil by pouring, spreading or smearing it upon the object or person being anointed.

The practice of anointing was common among many cultures and people of the ancient Middle East. This practice had both an ordinary and a sacred use. For instance, anointing guests as an act of hospitality was done even in Jesus’ day (Ps 23:5; Luke 7:46; John 12:3).

But the practice of anointing had a far more profound use in the Old Testament for the people of Israel. We encounter anointing for the first time when Jacob memorialized his first meeting with God. Jacob anointed the stone on which he had laid his head while he dreamed (Gen 28:10-18).

Later, oil was used to anoint the altar and other objects used in the worship of God in the Tabernacle (Ex 30:26-29; Lev 8:10,11). The Priests were also anointed with oil (Ex 28:41; 30:30; Lev 8:12). (There was also a ram's blood anointing for priests, which we will examine later in this article when studying Old Testament foretypes of anointing.)

The practice of anointing was also extended to kings (1Sam 9:16; 15:1; 16:3,12) and occasionally to prophets (1Kings 19:16).

Anointing was used for three important purposes in the Old Testament. First, it was used to *consecrate*: to set aside for a holy use, as in certain physical objects. This included *authorizing* the object for service to God (i.e., the implements used in the Tabernacle for worship, Ex 30:26-29).

Second, the act of anointing, though done by a human agent, was considered to be from God. A clear example of this is when Samuel anointed both Saul and David to serve as kings over Israel (1Sam 10:1; 16:12,13; 2Sam 12:7). This anointing represented God's choosing and calling of an individual to be His appointed servant.

Third, this anointing was, in some cases, accompanied by a divine enablement. This was from God and was directly associated with accomplishing the task that God had assigned to the person being anointed (see 1Samuel 16:1-13; 2Kings 2:9-15).

2. ORIGIN OF THE WORD "MESSIAH"

Taken from the root word *masah* of the Hebrew word *masiah*, this has been translated as **messiah**, and means "anointed one". It is used 39 times in the Old Testament to identify a wide range of individuals. The most obvious use is for **the Messiah** – Jesus, the Son of God (Isa 9:7; 11:1-5; Isaiah Chapter 53). But this word is also used to designate Israel's kings in 1 and 2 Samuel and the Psalms. It is used primarily to indicate the royal lineage of David (Ps 2:2; 18:50; 84:9; etc).

B. ANOINTING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Three different words are used in the New Testament for "anoint". Each of these words reveals a different aspect of anointing.

1. **Aleipho** (used 8 times): actual, physical rubbing on of oil or ointment (see Mark 6:13; Luke 7:38,46; James 5:14). In James 5:14, the anointing did **not** have a medical purpose. Rather, this anointing was symbolic of both the presence of the Holy Spirit and the sick person's consecration to ask in faith for God's healing.

It should be noted that it is not wrong to receive medical help. God created the elements from which medicines are made and the wisdom for doctors to use them properly. However, Christians should live by faith in all of life's decisions. We should not look to prayer as the *last* option when nothing else works. When there is sickness or injury, seek God *first* for healing. If God miraculously heals, then praise His Name! If God chooses to use medicine and doctors to heal, then praise His Name! If there is no healing, then still praise His Name – for, our ultimate healing and final home is in His presence when we will see Him face to face (1Thess 4:16-18). Our God is always trustworthy and faithful!

2. **Chrio** (used 5 times): indicates a special appointment or commission by God that sets the person(s) apart to fulfill a given assignment (see Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 1:21; Hebrews 1:9).
3. **Chrisma** (used 3 times): an empowerment by the Holy Spirit to know what is true and right; the power of the Holy Spirit working in tandem with the Word of God in the heart of the believer.

Both 1 John 2:20 and 2:27 refer to the ministry of the Holy Spirit revealing truth to the heart of the Christ follower (see also John 14:16,17,26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; Ephesians 1:17,18).

The Apostle John was writing this letter (1 John) to counter the heresy of a group of people who claimed to have a special knowledge of God. These false teachers denied that *God the Son* had come in the flesh [*incarnation*] (1John 2:18-23). They claimed that only *they* had a true knowledge of God and that all must follow them.

But John reassured the Christians that these others were operating under the demonic influence of the spirit of Antichrist (v.18). John counters these false teachings by reminding the believers that they already have the Holy Spirit and know what is true (v.20). He also points out that it is the Holy Spirit who "*teaches you concerning all things*" (v.27).

John is not lessening or disqualifying the ministry of teaching (see Romans 12:7 and Ephesians 4:11); rather, John highlights the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who guides us into understanding the Truth in God's Word (John 16:13).

THE ANOINTED ONE

We have learned that *messiah* means "anointed one". The Gospels of the New Testament leave no doubt that Jesus of Nazareth was (and is) THE Messiah, THE Anointed One! Jesus was (and is) anointed for a particular mission or purpose.

In the original Greek language of the New Testament, Jesus is called "*the Christ*" or "*Jesus Christ*". "Jesus" is a name. But the term "Christ" is a **title** that means "the anointed". The entire New Testament clearly reveals Jesus to be the Anointed One (John 1:41; 4:25,26).

The Jews were looking for a messiah (Hebrew for "anointed one"), a king in the royal line of David, who would restore national Israel to its former glory as in the days of Solomon. Because of this, many Jews rejected Jesus. He did not fit their faulty and incorrect preconceptions of the promised Messiah (Matt 11:1-19; John 6:26-29).

The Jews did not see that God had a much larger plan that extended beyond them (Isa 42:5-9; 49:5,6; Acts 4:8-12; 13:44-49). God gave them (and us) something far more than a temporary earthly king. He gave to the world the King of kings, a true Savior for all, for all eternity – Jesus, the Messiah, all glory to His name!

SUMMARY

Anointing in the Old Testament was a ritual of great significance. The anointing of physical objects, priests, prophets and kings consecrated them to God's purposes. However, we must note that this anointing was only a *type* or *foreshadowing* of what God would fulfill under the New Covenant. Under the New Covenant, there was to be a new and living way for relationship between God and man. This was first signaled by the sending of Jesus (John 7:28,29), the Son of God, the Anointed One, to carry out God's purpose and assignment (John 3:14-17). Jesus fulfilled this by dying on the

Cross for our sins, thus opening the door of salvation for all who would believe in Him (Rom 10:9-13; Eph 2:1-10; Heb 7:11-25; 9:11-15).

Part of God the Father's plan of salvation for mankind was the provision of divine help for those who would believe in His Son. Believers could have all the help and power they would need to fulfill God's will for them.

Thus, when Jesus had finished His God-appointed work on earth (John 17:4; 19:30), He promised to send us the "**Helper**" (John 7:37-39; 15:26; 16:5-15). That *Helper* (Comforter) is the **Holy Spirit** – God the Spirit.

What was foreshadowed by type in the Old Testament with the pouring or spreading of oil (anointing) was now to become a full reality for the believers in Jesus Christ in the New Testament (Covenant). This was begun when God the Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost (Joel 2:28-32; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-39).

THE NATURE, PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF ANOINTING

A. THE NATURE OF ANOINTING

There is a great deal of confusion about the subject of anointing, due to a lack of sound, biblical teaching and study on the subject. In this section, we will define anointing as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures.

Later in this section, we will define what anointing actually *is*; but for now, let us clarify what the anointing is **NOT**.

1. **Anointing** is NOT an impersonal force or mystical power. Anointing is not like electricity (a non-living force), nor is it some type of magical power. Simon the magician (Acts 8:9-25) had a type of power (demonic); but he soon realized that what he had was nothing compared to the power residing within the apostles. The anointing of God is supernatural and spiritual.
2. **Anointing**, as spoken of in Scripture, is NOT simple emotionalism, displaying a strong personality or a particular style of preaching. God often

does touch our emotions when we are moving in the power of His anointing. But just showing strong emotions does not mean God's anointing is present. People can display strong emotions when entertaining or playing sports. But, of course, that does not mean God's anointing is present!

Some people think that when a preacher is loud or gets excited and jumps about, he is anointed. But true anointing from God may or may not be manifest in outward, physical actions.

In the same way, the presence of God's anointing cannot be "earned" or obtained by education, knowledge or organization. Neither are great natural talents or abilities a sign of God's anointing. Though our natural, human talents are gifts from God, even an unsaved person can have and use their talents. Having talents and abilities must not be confused with anointing.

It is true that God can empower our abilities with His anointing to release them beyond what we could accomplish in our own power, as He did with Solomon (1Kings 4:29-34). But our talent and ability are *never* to replace dependency upon God for His divine enablement.

The anointing from God is divine and supernatural, and involves **His** power and abilities!

3. **Anointing** is not salvation. Every person who has repented of their sins and turned to Christ for salvation **has the Holy Spirit!** But that is not the same as the *anointing* of the Holy Spirit.

Let us look at the works of the Holy Spirit at salvation:

- A person can be born again only by the work and power of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8; Rom 8:9,16).
- A person is supernaturally joined to Christ's universal Body at salvation, Christ's Body being all of those who have faith in Him for salvation (1Cor 12:13).
- A person is "sealed" by the Holy Spirit at salvation (2Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13,14). The Greek word for "sealed" is *arrabon*, meaning guarantee or down-payment. But beyond those simple definitions is a deeper meaning. First, to be "sealed" means to be marked as belonging to God. It is a living symbol that God has accepted the payment made for us. That payment is the blood sacrifice of God's Son for our sins (Eph 1:7). Second, as we

come to Christ in faith for salvation (Rom 10:9,10) the Holy Spirit is given to us as a “deposit” or “first installment” of God’s investment in us. This investment is God’s guarantee (or promise) that we can increase daily in the life, joy, blessing and power of the Holy Spirit until the day when God receives us fully to Himself in heaven! (Phil 1:6; 2Pet 1:5-11).

The work and ministry of the Holy Spirit begins *in* us and *through* us at salvation. What we receive when we are first saved is but the first step in our maturing process. God’s will for **all** believers is that they become mature disciples as His sons and daughters. This requires a constant commitment on our part to personal growth and transformation. We must daily yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as He convicts us, disciplines us, encourages us and empowers us!

PASTOR TO PASTOR

As a pastor and leader of the church, **you are called by God to be an example** to the rest of the flock of a commitment to be ever-growing in the things of God. It is tempting to think that, as a leader, we no longer need to make our personal growth in Christ a priority. But the exact opposite is true! (See 1 Peter 5:2,3.)

Because we are leaders, we should all the more be examples of Jesus’ words: *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me”* (Luke 9:23). Every believer has been given the Holy Spirit at salvation; let us submit, then, to His work and influence in our lives every day!

4. **Anointing** is NOT the same as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This *baptism* is a distinct experience, available to all believers in Christ (Matt 3:11). Holy Spirit baptism is also not the same as the Holy Spirit coming to dwell within the believer at salvation.

The gift of the Holy Spirit was prophesied by the prophet Joel over 800 years before this gift was poured out on the Day of Pentecost (see Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:1-39).

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is designed to equip every follower of Christ to be more useful and power-filled for the work of the Master! It will lead the believer in Christ to:

- a deeper passion for souls;
- a greater power in and desire for prayer;
- a deeper love for Christ and His Body;
- an equipping for spiritual warfare;
- an increased insight into the Word of God.

All believers in Christ receive the *indwelling* gift of the Holy Spirit at salvation (John 3:5,6; Rom 8:15,16). The **Baptism of the Holy Spirit** is for an infilling and *overflowing* of God's Spirit. This baptism does **not** make you more saved or more loved by God. But it will better equip you to live a more effective and overcoming life in Christ!

If you have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, be reminded that this is not a one-time *experience* to simply *attain*; rather, it is a *lifestyle* to be *maintained*. We are to continually be filled!

PASTOR TO PASTOR

When studying the Holy Spirit, a word must be said also about the presence of other spirits in our world. There are three categories of spirits operating on the earth in this present day:

1) Demon spirits

Demon spirits are present on the earth today. Their self-given assignment is to lead all of humanity astray (Rev 12:7-9) and to blind them to the truth of who Jesus is (2Cor 4:4; 1John 2:22; 4:1-3). The demonic realm works primarily through false religions. They use deception as their most powerful instrument, working with the devil who is "*a liar and the father of lies*" (John 8:44 nasb).

Demon spirits have strong influence over non-believers (2Cor 4:3,4). But they also attempt to target true believers in Christ, those through whom the glorious light of the Gospel is preached (Eph 6:10-12; 2Cor 10:3-5; 11:3). The demonic realm, just like sin, has no power over Christians – **unless** a Christian willingly chooses to cooperate with their schemes or temptations. Satan will use human vessels (even some who claim they are Christians) to try to lead people astray (Matt 24:24; 2Cor 11:13-15; 2 Peter Chapter 2).

Demons will even speak **partial truth** on occasion (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 5:1-8; Acts 16:16-19), but will never do so to glorify God or advance His will.

Demon spirits know that God is real and true: *“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble”* (Jas 2:19). But demons are **not** repentant. They are working hard to deceive humanity, for they know that judgment is coming soon upon them (Rev 12:12).

2) Human Spirits

Each and every human that is conceived has a spirit. Man is made up of three parts: a body, a soul and a spirit (1Thess 5:23; Heb 4:12). Our spirit, however, is dead within us until we are made spiritually alive through faith in Christ (Eph 2:1-8).

The Bible teaches that once a human has died physically, their spirit leaves their body. Those who are in Christ go to be present with the Lord (2Cor 5:6,8). Those who die without Christ are held for the day of judgment (Heb 9:27; Rev 20:11-15). The spirits of dead humans are **not** allowed to wander about on the earth! Nor are they reincarnated into another human or any other form. Every person has but ONE life, then the judgment (Heb 9:27).

There are many religions that worship many kinds of spirits. Some even believe that they can communicate with the spirit of an ancestor or another dead individual. But these people are not communicating with dead humans; they are in reality communicating with demon spirits that are *masquerading* as the spirits of dead humans.

Do not be deceived by these counterfeits! The Bible teaches that Satan and his demons can even appear as *“an angel of light”* and try to imitate something godly (2Cor 11:14). If they can achieve that, it is not hard for them to mimic the voice or know the history of a person who is dead. Never attempt to communicate with the dead, or take part in any rituals or ceremonies attempting to worship or pray to ancestors or other dead humans. If you do, you are inviting demonic interaction!

3) The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, and is the only Spirit worthy of being called holy (Rom 1:4). **The Holy Spirit is fully God**, as the Father is God and Jesus is God (Matt 28:19; 2Cor 13:14).

Divine attributes are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in Scripture:

- He is called God (John 4:24, Acts 5:3,4; 1Cor 3:16; 2Cor 3:17)
- He is eternal (Heb 9:14)
- He is omniscient [all-knowing] (John 14:26; 1Cor 2:10)
- He is omnipresent [everywhere present] (Ps 139:7)
- He is omnipotent [all-powerful] (Luke 1:35; at creation, Gen 1:2)
- He has foreknowledge (Acts 1:16; 11:27,28)
- He has love (Rom 15:30)
- He inspired Scripture (2Pet 1:21; 2Tim 3:16)
- He is the Agent in divine guidance (Mark 13:11; Rom 8:14)
- He is a Person, as Jesus and the Father are Persons (John 14:16,17,26); He can be grieved (Eph 4:30)

A complete study of the Person of the Holy Spirit is far more extensive than this article will allow. However, both the Old and New Testaments reveal that: the Holy Spirit is real and is God; He is co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son; and He is the third Person of the Trinity.

4) Anointing is NOT the same thing as sanctification. Let us define and briefly study *sanctification* to gain a better understanding of this important biblical process.

SANCTIFICATION DEFINED

Sanctification has two important meanings. The first is *consecration* – a setting apart of someone or something for a specific and holy use.

We have learned from the Old Testament that this pertained to physical objects, such as: houses (Lev 27:14); a field (Lev 27:16); utensils used in the Temple (2Chron 29:18,19). These were all *sanctified* and set apart for a holy use.

People were also set apart for a special purpose: Israel's firstborn (Ex 13:2); priests (2Chron 29:4,5,15); Jeremiah the prophet (Jer 1:5); Jesus Himself, as the sinless Son of God (John 10:36; 17:19).

The second meaning of sanctification is *cleansing* – a cleansing or purifying from moral defilement. For instance, Paul when he addressed the condition of a believer's entire life (1Thess 5:23); the conscience of a believer (Heb 9:13,14), etc.

PASTOR TO PASTOR

These two definitions of sanctification help to highlight the difference between the Old Testament concept of sanctification and that of the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, that which was common was considered holy and sanctified when it was set apart specifically for God's use or service.

In the New Testament, that which was common was filled with God's Spirit and transformed to become a vessel fit for the Master's use (2Tim 2:19-21).

As leaders in Christ's Body, we have been called with a holy calling (2Tim 1:9). This calling separates us to Christ's service. Yet God is not finished at that point. He begins a "sanctifying" work within us, continuously transforming us by His Spirit and His Word. As we cooperate with this work and obey the Word, He transforms us into the type of person whose thoughts, words and actions in daily life reflect the One who is Lord within us.

THREE ASPECTS OF SANCTIFICATION

1. POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION – AN ACCOMPLISHED WORK

Jesus, while on this earth, was morally perfect and without sin. He was sent here by the Father to accomplish the purpose of coming to our fallen world and offering Himself as a sacrifice for the penalty of our sins. Through Him, and only through Him, can we have forgiveness, salvation and redemption to God.

When a person comes to faith in Christ and surrenders to Christ's Lordship, that person is sovereignly joined to the Body of Christ, the Church (1Cor 12:13). The Greek word for "church" is *ekklesia*, meaning the "called-out ones". This definition helps us to see how *every believer* in Christ is intended to be called out or **set apart** for God's use.

This type of sanctification – being set apart for a holy use – is known as **positional sanctification** (see 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). This *positional sanctification* is an accomplished work of God that is given to every individual at salvation (Acts 26:18; Rom 15:16; 1Cor 6:11).

Christ shed His own blood and gave His life for our sins. One of the finished works this accomplished was the *sanctification* of those who believe in Him. “*By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*” (Heb 10:10); “*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and **sanctification** and redemption*” (1Cor 1:30).

Being a “sanctified one” is why the believers in the Early Church were called “saints” (1Cor 1:2; Eph 1:1).

This sanctification is given freely to us because of Christ’s finished work at the cross. We can never do enough good works or religious efforts to earn it. We can never be “good enough” to earn God’s acceptance or salvation on our own merit.

When our sinless, morally perfect Heavenly Father looks upon us, He is aware of every imperfection and failure. And yet, He sees us through the covering (sanctifying) blood of Jesus, His Son. This “covering” for our sins is the only way we can ever be perfectly acceptable to a holy and righteous God (Eph 1:6,7). This is truly Good News!

Through the eternal blood of the Sinless Lamb, believers have been sanctified (Heb 10:11-14; 13:12). Christ’s offering of His shed blood is a once-and-for-all work of sanctification (Heb 9:28; 10:12). We do not need a “second work of grace” (as some teach) in order to be acceptable to God. The moment we believe in Christ and His sacrifice for our sins (Rom 10:9,10), God reckons to us the holiness of Christ and declares us “sanctified” (1Cor 1:30).

2. PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION – A PRACTICAL PROCESS

The second part of the three-fold meaning of sanctification is the **process** of sanctification that continues throughout a believer’s lifetime. It is often referred to as **progressive sanctification**.

We have already learned that *positional* sanctification is a sovereign act of God that grants to us the holiness provided only by Christ’s sacrifice. We

cannot earn this by any human effort, since the whole of humanity is hopelessly lost under sin (Rom 3:9-26).

But once a person comes to faith in Christ for salvation, the next great work of God is the *process* of “*being transformed into the same image [of Christ] from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord*” (2Cor 3:18). For it is God’s will that we “*be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*” (Rom 8:29).

This **process** of (or **progressive**) sanctification is different than the **positional** form of sanctification. *Positional* sanctification is a single, sovereign act done by God when we receive Christ’s saving work. But *progressive* sanctification involves our will, desires and effort on a consistent basis.

This action and lifelong commitment to being “transformed” is a divine/human partnership. Believers must partner with God and cooperate with His divine work of transformation in their lives.

The Bible is clear that all Christ-followers are to give every effort to becoming more like Christ, living holy and pure lives. “*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*” (2Cor 7:1).

We are told to “*put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*” (Eph 4:22-24). Please take a moment right now to read the following scriptures, which are just a few of the many exhortations on this subject: Romans 6:11-13; 12:1,2; 13:14; 2Timothy 2:20,21; 1Peter 1:13-19; 1John 3:3.

This is a vital aspect of our Christian faith. Yet it is also where many believers fail to become all that God would intend for them. They remain bound in anger, sin, bondage or fear, rather than allowing God to free them from those things. Though they may try in their own strength to break ungodly habits or practices, they are unaware of their need for God’s help to become totally free.

It is clear from Scripture that it is *impossible* to become holy and morally pure without the power of God to help us (Jer 13:23; 17:9,10; Rom 3:20,23; 7:18).

Yes, the blood of Christ provides the basis for our initial sanctification (Heb 10:29). But it is the constant working together of both the Holy Spirit and the eternal Word of God (Eph 5:26) which will continuously shape us more into the image of Christ (Rom 8:29,30; 2Cor 3:18; Phil 1:6; 1Pet 5:10). This work is a lifelong process that will continue until we at last see Him “*face to face*” (1Cor 13:12; 1John 3:2).

God desires to constantly work within us to shape us. Yet, He **also** must have our **full cooperation and effort** as aided by the Holy Spirit and God’s Word. We must choose to hear and obey, to listen and respond to the instructions of God’s Word and from the Holy Spirit.

This *progressive sanctification* is a lifelong transformation. We will never be perfect or sinless in this life (1John 1:8), but we can and must be continually growing into spiritual maturity.

3. COMPLETE OR FINAL SANCTIFICATION

Our sinless perfection awaits the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ or the moment when, at our death, we pass from this life into the presence of the Lord. That is when we will be delivered from this corruptible body of flesh and “*in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet*” (1Cor 15:52) be changed into incorruptible and immortal beings (1Cor 15:45-47; see also Philippians 3:20,21; 1 John 3:2).

At the cross, when Christ died for our sins, we were saved from the **penalty** of sin. As we grow in faith and holiness, we are freed more and more from the **power** of sin. And when Christ returns (or when we die in the Lord) we shall be saved from the **presence** of sin!

Sanctification is not anointing. Yet sanctification (especially progressive sanctification) is critically important to the subject of anointing. Living a holy and committed life has a direct impact upon the flow of anointing through our lives and ministries.

THE PATHWAY TO GROWTH

Christians are to be constantly growing. The Bible exhorts us to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2Pet 3:18; see also 2 Peter 1:5-11).

Progressive sanctification is a **process** requiring a partnership between God and each individual (Phil 2:12,13). God is in action on our behalf, since we must have His help to become Christ-like in character. But what is our part in the process?

We must:

1. **Have faith toward Christ.** Without faith, we can neither receive the gift of salvation nor receive Christ's gift of positional sanctification. At salvation, Christ becomes our sanctification (1Cor 1:30). We receive this gift from Him through faith in Him (Acts 26:18).
2. **Yield our lives to God.** This is how we begin our lives as Christians; this is how we must live daily as well. A continual yielding or surrendering to God is of primary importance. He is the One who knows what is necessary to shape us more into Christ's image. (See Romans 6:13,19-21; 12:1,2; 2 Timothy 2:21.) Daily surrender to God is also necessary for our faith to grow and be strengthened, as we choose to depend upon Him and trust in Him (Heb 11:6).
3. **Obey God's Word.** The Holy Scriptures are our final standard for faith and conduct. *"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word"* (Ps 119:9). The Holy Spirit will use the Word of God to speak to us and shape our character (John 14:26). The Word of God will equip us and make us useful tools for God's glory (2Tim 3:16,17). God's Word will cleanse us (Eph 5:26). The Bible also reveals to us our innermost motives and thoughts (Heb 4:12). We must read the Bible every day; and then we must **obey** it (Jas 1:22). God supplies all that is necessary for us to live and grow in godliness (2Pet 1:3,4). But we must give our willing cooperation and obedience!
4. **Make a personal commitment to pursue holiness.** *"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord"* (Heb 12:14; see also Matthew 5:8).

Peter exhorts believers to be sober and place our hope fully in the grace of God. We are to obey God and not be conformed to the former lusts that once controlled us. This divine expectation for our holiness is because God is holy in character and righteous in all His judgments (1Pet 1:13-21). The point of our lives and our destiny is not a life of happiness or ease, but **holiness**.

The pursuit of a holy lifestyle – in our actions, thoughts, relationships and words – is **not optional** for the follower of Christ. We should never tolerate what is not in keeping with a holy God! Our model and example is not what others do (Christian or not), or the compromises of behavior we may witness even in other leaders. Our final guide for life is not our culture, tribe or family. As citizens of Christ's Kingdom (Phil 3:17-20), we are responsible to follow first and foremost what God has revealed to us through His Word by the Holy Spirit; that is what we must strive to obey! (Luke 9:23-26)

If we will diligently live our lives by the holy standard of God's revealed character and Word, we are guaranteed to grow in sanctification. And as we grow in sanctification, we become a *“vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work”* (2Tim 2:21).

B. THE PURPOSE OF ANOINTING

Because there is some confusion regarding anointing, we have taken the time in the previous section to identify what anointing is **not**. Let us briefly review what we have learned:

1. Anointing is not a mystical or impersonal force.
2. Anointing is not gifting, ability, talent, emotionalism or a charismatic personality.
3. Anointing is not salvation.
4. Anointing is not the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
5. Anointing is not the sanctification of the believer.

So, what then is anointing?

Anointing can best be defined in this way:

*Anointing is none other than **the Person and presence of the Holy Spirit**, bringing with Him the necessary power, authority and gifts to fulfill the Father's will in a given moment of ministry or assignment.*

It must be said that the Holy Spirit is directly involved in each of the other five important items listed above. Without the presence and action of God the Spirit, those five critical aspects in the life of every believer could not take place.

However, this facet of the Holy Spirit's work called **anointing** has a unique and specific purpose.

POWER WITH A PURPOSE

1. **The primary purpose of the anointing of the Holy Spirit is to give the believer supernatural enablement.**

This enablement is given to whomever God wills, in order to help them to accomplish what God wants done. It may be to speak or preach, to do a work, to sing or play a musical instrument. It may be to lay hands on the sick for healing or for God to perform other signs and wonders. It can also help one to pray and intercede more effectively.

It is also important to note that God can anoint an individual for enhanced ability to lead or perform a skill even in business or a trade (see Exodus 31:3).

It is God's desire to anoint His people for ministry opportunities both within and outside His Church – but remember, it is for HIS purposes and glory, not our own!

Remember what anointing is: *It is God by His Spirit giving to a yielded human vessel whatever power, authority and gifts that are needed to fulfill the Father's will in a given moment of ministry or assignment.*

It is important to understand that **anointing is the Person of the Holy Spirit!** God's power is **not** separate from His Person and presence. When we say that someone is anointed, we mean that the Person of the Holy Spirit is uniquely present in their life to accomplish God's will through them.

2. **Who can experience this anointing?**

As you read the Old Testament, it is easy to recognize when the Holy Spirit came upon a prophet, judge, king, priest, etc.

However, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit was different in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. The apostle John wrote, *“But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified”* (John 7:39).

The Holy Spirit, who is fully God, exists from all eternity. He was active in creation (Gen 1:2) and throughout the Old Testament. But *God the Father* had not yet fully given *God the Spirit* until *God the Son* had opened the pathway of salvation through His sacrificial death on the cross (John 14:16,17; 16:7).

PASTOR TO PASTOR

As Bible-believing Christians, we do **not** worship three gods. Rather, we worship One God who expresses Himself in three Persons. Within God, there are three “persons” who are neither three gods nor three parts. These three are One, and each is co-equally and co-eternally God. Our limited minds have great difficulty comprehending God’s three-in-one nature. But Scripture does reveal this truth about Him.

There is one primary difference between the dispensation of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and the dispensation in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit *temporarily came upon* a chosen human vessel. The Holy Spirit would enable the individual (prophet, priest, judge, etc.) to perform God’s will at that moment. Then the Holy Spirit would lift off of them until the next moment of ministry assignment.

However, in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit was given to take up residence in human hearts and to live in an abiding relationship with them. Let us look at a few examples of the Holy Spirit anointing in the New Testament:

a. **Jesus**

The first person in the New Testament to be anointed by the Holy Spirit is – *Jesus!* Jesus received the empowering anointing of the Holy Spirit at His baptism in water (Matt 3:16). After Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, His first act of public ministry was to read Isaiah 61:1,2 in the synagogue. He then declared that these Messianic scriptures were now fulfilled (Luke 4:14-21).

You will note that the Holy Spirit’s anointing spoken of in Isaiah 61:1,2 was to enable the fulfillment of the Father’s will through Jesus’ earthly ministry.

Jesus was both fully God and fully man while in His physical body on earth (Phil 2:5-8). Yet He needed the power of the Holy Spirit to do the Father’s will. If Jesus, the Son of God, needed the Holy Spirit, how much more so do you and I? (See also Acts 10:38.)

b. The Early Church

1) The Leaders of the Early Church

On the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:12 – 2:4), the leaders of the early Church and the remaining disciples were praying in an upper room. Those present included the original 11 apostles (Judas being dead), the newest apostle chosen by lot to replace Judas, and a small group of other disciples (approximately 120 people in all). Suddenly, the promise of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-32) was poured out upon them (Acts 2:2-4).

The apostle Paul was later converted to faith in Christ. He, too, received the Holy Spirit and began to fervently preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:1-22).

Evangelists like Philip were filled with and led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:29). Those given the gift of teaching, such as Apollos, could not have taught with such authority without the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 18:24-28; see also 1 Corinthians 3:5-7). Those called to serve the rapidly growing Body of Christ were full of the Spirit, as in Stephen's case (Acts 6:1-10).

There are additional passages in the New Testament on this subject as well (i.e., Acts 4:13,33; 11:27,28; 21:10,11).

2) The Disciples of the Early Church

Those filled in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost were just the beginning of the many more believers who were filled and anointed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31; 5:32; 13:52, etc).

POWER FOR EVANGELISM

As the flame of the Gospel spread, so did mighty outpourings of the Holy Spirit. This fulfilled the words of Jesus given just before His ascension: *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in **Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea and Samaria**, and to **the end of the earth**”* (Acts 1:8).

Jesus' listing of geographical locations was not just poetic language. The Book of Acts reveals the fulfillment of this promise of the Holy Spirit being

poured out upon all those who believe in Him and the beginning of the evangelization of the world.

In Jerusalem... (fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost – Acts Chapter 2). It appeared that this new group of Jewish believers was going to stop their preaching at Jerusalem. This could have endangered Christ's purpose and mission for the Gospel to be given to *all peoples, at all times, everywhere*. But persecution began almost immediately after the Gospel began to be preached. God used this persecution to compel and scatter the early Church outward from Jerusalem, in order that they would fulfill the Father's will to bring the message of salvation to every person.

Then in Acts Chapter 8, we are introduced to a vicious persecutor of the Church – Saul. These assaults seemed like bad news, until we read in Scripture that *“those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word [Gospel]”* (Acts 8:4). This would include both **Judea** and **Samaria** (Acts 8:1-25).

THE OUTWARD MARCH OF THE GOSPEL

Note that the Holy Spirit was being poured out upon those who received the Gospel (8:16,17). There were also signs and wonders that attended the preaching of the Gospel (8:6,13).

But an even greater work was about to unfold for the early Church. God wanted the Gospel preached *everywhere*. Jesus commanded that believers *“go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mark 16:15). A similar word was recorded in Acts 1:8, even *“to the end of the earth”*. This outward march began when Philip encountered an Ethiopian eunuch, who was soon converted to Christ (Acts 8:26-40). This same Ethiopian is credited in Church tradition to be the first one to introduce the Gospel to the continent of Africa!

Soon afterward, Saul was radically changed by his encounter with Jesus (Acts 9:1-19), and he was called to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). But the focus of much of the Gospel preaching was still to the Jewish people – until God did something radical!

We read on in Acts about Cornelius, a Roman (Acts 10:1-48). Peter is sent to Cornelius to begin to share the Gospel with the Gentiles. This was a difficult thing for Peter to do as a Jew (Acts 10:9-16).

But as Peter was preaching, the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and his entire household – right in the middle of Peter’s sermon! (Acts 10:44) Even so, the Jewish brethren who were present still struggled with the fact that the Gospel and the Holy Spirit were being given to the Gentile people (Acts 10:45-48).

Finally, there was an important meeting of the apostles in Jerusalem, with Peter being called upon to testify (Acts 11:1-15). They finally came to understand and accept that which Jesus had clearly spoken to them: The Gospel was to be preached to every person – even **“to the end of the earth”** (Acts 1:28).

GOD’S PLAN REVEALED

It is of critical importance to note something about the Book of Acts. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was **NOT** simply a new religion or a new version of Jewish doctrines. Everything that had transpired between mankind and God since the Garden of Eden – all of Old Testament history – had led up to this point in time.

God had a divine strategy that was set in motion after man chose sin (Gen 3:15). That plan was salvation from the death penalty of sin, by grace through faith (not of works) in Jesus Christ. This was made possible only by the sacrificial death and subsequent resurrection of Jesus. We read about this provision of Christ in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John).

But God’s purpose went beyond a new faith and restored relationship with Him. God wanted (and wants) to live within us, to give us the assurance and power we need to live in victory and to fulfill His will in this life.

Therefore, in His infinite wisdom and love, God poured out the Holy Spirit, who would dwell within every believer (Joel 2:28,29). Christ did not come to bring a new religion or theology. Rather, He came to fulfill all of what God had promised for the salvation of mankind!

Yes, Christ’s sacrifice allows us to be restored again to intimate fellowship with God. But God also intends for the living power of the Almighty God to **dwell within us** in the Person of the Holy Spirit. This is a power that the world cannot ignore or explain away. They can mock, criticize or condemn, even as they did on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5-13). But they cannot stop the work and power of the Holy Spirit through the yielded life of a believer!

What we see throughout the Book of Acts concerning signs, wonders, miracles, salvations, healings, etc., is as possible and relevant for us today as it was for the early Church (Joel 2; Acts 2:33,38,39). We need the Holy Spirit's presence and power no less today than 2,000 years ago! Thank God that "*Jesus Christ [and the Holy Spirit] is the same yesterday, today, and forever*" (Heb 13:8).

c. All Believers In Christ At All Times

Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares that the promised gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit is "*to you and to your children [signifying future generations], and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call*" (see Acts 2:33,38,39).

Those identified as "*all who are afar off*" would certainly include not only future generations, but also all the Gentile tribes and every other tribe, tongue and race of the earth (Eph 2:11-19; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11).

A LIFELONG RELATIONSHIP

The gift of the anointing presence of the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in the heart of each Christ-follower. This is a *general anointing* that **every** believer in Christ receives at salvation.

The apostle John gives us some insight into this general anointing in his first epistle. John reminds the early Christ-followers of an important fact: "*But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things*" (1 John 2:20). From the structure of the Greek language in this original text, it is clear that John was not referring to a religious ceremony of being anointed with oil or another substance. Rather, this anointing was from the "Holy One" who is Jesus Christ the Son of God (John 6:69; Acts 3:14; 4:27).

In other words, "THE Anointed One" (Jesus Christ) gives His followers a gift from Himself; that gift is the Holy Spirit to live in us and abide with us (Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5; John 14:16,17,26; 16:7). This *anointing* is for every believer who puts their hope in Christ for salvation by grace through faith.

Then John, by the Holy Spirit, continues: "*But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him*" (1 John 2:27).

This anointing is not a one-time experience; rather, it is to be a lifelong and growing relationship with the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who leads us into the truth, teaches us all things and reminds us of what Jesus taught (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the truth and glorify Jesus (John 16:13,14).

Obviously, John is **not** implying that teaching ministries are unnecessary (God gives us teachers – see Romans 12:7; Ephesians 4:11). But John is referring to the revelation and understanding that the Person of the Holy Spirit will bring to the individual as they respond to Him in their life (1Cor 2:10-16; Eph 1:17,18).

So we see from the Word of God that there is an anointing which every follower of Christ receives at the time of salvation.

PASTOR TO PASTOR

What the Holy Spirit illuminates or reveals concerning the truth will **always** be in agreement with what He has already revealed in the written Word of God (John 16:13,14). There is NO new revelation that will ever add to or disagree with the Bible!