

# WHAT IS THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

That the anointing of the Holy Spirit is a privilege exclusively reserved for a few chosen men among Christians is a revealed truth of the Holy Bible. The anointing confers on such ones the authority and power as spirit-begotten sons of God to understand and expound His mysteries for the enlightenment and blessing of all lovers of God's truth and righteousness in this kingdom age.

To anoint means to rub or smear oil on a thing or on the head or body. According to the Holy Bible, anointing in ancient times was the solemn religious ceremony in which the priest pours special oil on the head of a person being sanctified, ordained or consecrated by God to be a king or priest.

Many Christians believe that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is a gift that is available to all worshippers of God. Thus it is common to hear people describe themselves or introduced as "anointed men (or women) of God". Some also claim that they can confer the anointing spirit on others through prayer and fasting and laying on of hands.

## Origin

In the days of Moses, God told him to prepare a special anointing oil. The measures of the various fragrant materials were given to Moses. The purpose of the anointing was to sanctify things used in the temple service and to consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests. No stranger or one who was not a priest was to be anointed with that special oil else such a person will be killed. Moses' record states among other things "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you." Please read Exodus 30:22-25, 30-33. In Exodus 40:13-16 Moses was further instructed in respect of the consecration of Aaron and his sons. Also anointed were the tabernacle and all the vessels of the sanctuary in order to make them holy.

In course of time when the Israelites demanded a king, God, having chosen Saul, instructed Prophet Samuel to anoint him to be captain, or leader to the people. (1 Samuel 9:16). Samuel carried out the divine command after which followed positive signs confirming God had started using him. (1 Samuel 10:1,6,10-12). Thus anointing with oil became the mode of consecrating kings in Israel. Other Instances include that of David (1 Samuel 16:11-13), Solomon (1 Kings 1:39) and Jehu (1 Kings 19:16). It was because of the high regard which king David had for the anointing that he refrained on two occasions from setting his hand upon Saul when he had advantage over him. (1 Samuel 24:10; 26:9 see also 2 Samuel 1:14).

## The Holy Spirit

The Holy Bible makes it clear that the literal anointing with oil in ancient times as a way of consecrating people as kings and priests typified or foreshadowed the anointing of the Holy Spirit by which one is commissioned to testify to Jehovah's name and word. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is superior to that with holy oil. Speaking of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist testified: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy ghost, (holy spirit) and with fire..." (Matthew 3:11) Jesus Christ was the first to be anointed with the holy spirit which descended on him in the form of a dove (Matthew 3:16,17). With the anointing God commissioned him to do the work of his earthly ministry.

Earlier, Isaiah had spoken of the anointing of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 61:1-3) which the Lord himself in Luke 4:16-20 said fulfilled on him. The Holy Spirit that would be given to Jehovah's high priest, Jesus Christ would know no limit. John the apostle confirmed this in John 3:34 "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." St Peter testified in Acts 10:38 that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

Jesus Christ did not pour oil on his apostles since the oil was merely a type of the new covenant. Rather he promised them the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, the "spirit of truth", the "Teaching Spirit" – John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:13.

Christ assured the apostles that by reason of the anointing they would do valiantly in publishing and defending the truth. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

The expression "holy ghost" is a misnomer borrowed from paganism and should not be associated with Christianity. "Holy Ghost" is correctly rendered "holy spirit" in modern translations. According to the *The New Imperial Reference Dictionary*, "Holy Ghost" comes from the Old English word g`ast, itself derived from the German 'geist' meaning "a spirit appearing after death.", Writing on this point, John D. Davis says. "The word spirit now more correctly expresses the idea than does the term ghost, which has narrowed its meaning and commonly denotes a disembodied spirit wandering on earth." *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* – Page 253.

## Pentecost

In fulfilment of the Lord's promise, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the 12 apostles in the form of cloven tongues of fire, making them to speak distinctly in various foreign languages which they had never learnt. As it is written: "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia. Phrygia and Pamphylia in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." (Acts 2:5-11).

It is clear from the preceding account that the apostles spoke languages that were known to the people hence the pilgrims to Jerusalem were able to understand them. The charade commonly seen today in which some people in the guise of speaking in tongues utter meaningless sounds that could conveniently pass for demonic incantations is different from what happened on the day of Pentecost. As St. Peter eloquently explained, the event on the day of Pentecost was a fulfilment of prophecy of Joel. It served to establish the Church, which was then in its infancy. After the gift of speaking in tongues had served its purpose, it ceased. (1 Corinthians 13:8). Another point to note is that only the 12 apostles received the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is misleading to teach or believe that the 120 brethren, including women and children residing in the upper chamber in Jerusalem were all anointed at Pentecost

The people observing the event noted "these men are full of new wine" (verse 13) – meaning that those speaking in tongues were only men. No woman was among them. Moreover, St. Peter's reply to the scoffers also shows that only the 12 apostles were anointed. Dr. Luke's report in verse 14 states "But Peter standing up with the eleven..." Obviously he rose in defence of

himself and the other 11 apostles so falsely accused.

St. Peter explained convincingly that what happened was a fulfilment of what the prophet Joel had said would occur in the last days of the Jewish era. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." (Joel 2:28-31).

This text abounds with figurative expressions. The truth is that "all flesh" refers not to everyone but to the chosen ones of God, the apostles, known as the "the sons" of God and "daughters" of Zion. "(Zechariah 9:9). The apostles are called "sons" of God because they are men. (1 John 3:2; James 1:18; Revelation 14:4; Hebrews 12:23). They are called "daughters" or "handmaids" because they are married spiritually to Jesus Christ (the Bridegroom) in order to bring children to God by the propagation of the gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:2; Psalm 45:10,11; 1 Corinthians 4:15; Revelations 21:9; 22:17). "Young men" also refers to the apostles and denotes, strong, vigorous active ones in the Lord, regardless of age (Proverbs 20:29; 24:5; Ecclesiastes 7:12). It is those who are "young men" spiritually, the apostles, who see visions, in other words, who have clear understanding of the Lord's purpose. (Proverbs 29:18.) Thus the "young men" in the text under reference are the anointed Christians who are young and vigorous because of the knowledge of God which they have. Their strength is spiritual. Prophet Solomon stated: "A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength." – Proverbs 24:5

The anointed Christians are also called "servants" because they are wholly devoted to God and therefore completely obedient to Him. Hence the declaration in Isaiah 43:10 "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and establish the Church, which was then in its infancy. After the gift of speaking in tongues had served its purpose, it ceased. (1 Corinthians 13:8). Furthermore the designation "Old men" refers to the body members of Christ who are also called "elders".

### The Apostles

Not every Christian belong to the class of the anointed Christians, the apostles who are redeemed from among men even as Jesus Christ chose only 12 out of all his disciples and named them apostles, which means set apart for holy uses (Luke 6:12, 13) The 12 apostles were the foundation members of their class the complete number of which is 144,000. (Revelation 7:1-7; 14:1). One of the marks by which they are known is the truth they preach unmixed with lies. They are not taught by man. They are taught by God Almighty through Jesus Christ in Spirit. John the apostle makes the point clear in 1 John 2:27 "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." St Paul in his epistle to the Christians in Galatia spoke in the same vein when he declared: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.... But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with them fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother..." (Galatians 1:11-19).

Thus, the anointed servants of God need not attend, universities or pastoral schools to learn from human teachers in order to understand the things of God. Rather Jesus Christ teaches the anointed servants in spirit or in vision by which they understand the mysteries of God.

It should be noted that one does not buy the anointing with money. Simon the ex-sorcerer, learnt

that lesson the hard way when he offered money to get the anointing only to earn the stern rebuke from St. Peter. (Acts 8:18-22). Man cannot give it to man. There is no account in the Bible that anointed servants of God like Paul and Peter gave the spirit to a fellow Christian in their days. It is God himself that gives the spirit of anointing. The case of Cornelius is a ready instance. (Roman 8:29, 30; James 1:18; 2 Corinthian 1:1; Acts 10:34,35). Moreover one cannot get the anointing by prayers or any form of physical exertion. "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." -(Hebrews 5:4). "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Romans 9:16). One can pray for the ordinary spirit of God but not that of anointing which is entirely different. -Luke 11:13

By virtue of the anointing, the apostles preach the gospel without mixing it with lies. But what do we see among the so-called anointed men of today? They do not know basic Bible doctrines. They do not even attach importance to doctrines claiming that only belief in Jesus saves. But Jesus Christ emphasized doctrines pointing out that those who "teach for doctrines the commandments of men, worship in vain." -Matthew 16:6-12; 15:7-9,12-14.

Once anointed, such persons forsake every other calling and devote their lives entirely to the work of God as the early apostles did. (Matthew 5:11; Mark 10:28). As Jesus said, ye shall know them by their fruits. In other words, by the teachings, practices and works of the anointed ones it will be clear to all discerning minds that a prophet is among them. (Ezekiel 2:5; 33:33).

### The Holy Spirit

That the anointing spirit is reserved for the few chosen ones in the Christian era, does not mean that other worshippers of God do not have the spirit of God. The truth is that the spirit which God gives to his worshippers that enables them to practice righteousness is not the spirit of anointing. Differences exist between the two. The anointing spirit is the highest degree of God's Holy Spirit which sets the recipient apart for holy uses. Generally the Holy Spirit is given liberally to all those who are faithful in the work of God. As Jesus Christ said, the word which he preached and which we imbibe "are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63) And St. Paul said, "if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his (i.e. he is not a Christian)" (Romans 8:9; see also Romans 8:14) The fruits of the spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22,23.

As made bare in this sermon, the anointing spirit is not for all believers, just as the holy anointing oil in time of old was not poured on all the worshippers but on those who are priests, and kings, whose counterparts the apostles are. (Revelation 1:5; 20:4,6). For one to go about making claims he is not entitled to is sheer presumptuousness which will incur the wrath of God speedily on such one -Psalm 131:1,2; 19:13.