

# The Anointing of God's Spirit

*“The Spirit of the  
Lord GOD is upon  
me; because the  
LORD hath  
anointed me to  
preach good  
tidings unto the  
meek; he hath sent  
me to bind up the  
brokenhearted, to  
proclaim liberty to  
the captives, and  
the opening of the  
prison to them  
that are bound.”*  
—Isaiah 61:1

**THE SYMBOL OF ANOINT-**ing is based on the ancient custom of pouring oil on the heads of priests and kings to signify their divine appointment to office. (Exod. 30:30; I Sam. 16:1-13) This ceremony was called anointing. The symbolic anointing of the Holy Spirit is, therefore, that function by which God's consecrated people are designated, or authorized, to occupy an official position in his plan for the recovery of man-

kind from sin and death.

In the synagogue at Nazareth, near the beginning of his ministry, Jesus read from the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the anointing of the Spirit, and explained, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” (Luke 4:16-21) The Apostle Peter confirms this, saying, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth

with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”—Acts 10:38

The significance of the anointing symbol is again indicated in Hebrews 1:7-9. The apostle says, speaking of God, “Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” From these inspired statements, we learn that Jesus was not only anointed to “preach good tidings,” but also to be the highly exalted king in his kingdom, an anointing to such a high position of dignity and authority that “all the angels of God” are commanded to worship him.—vs. 6

From the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus was faithful to the service for which he was anointed. As Peter testified, he “went about doing good.” Jesus said, “I must work the works of him that sent me.” (John 9:4) Jesus knew that he had been authorized to preach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. He proclaimed these glorious truths both by precept and example. We read that Jesus “went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.”—Luke 8:1

## **CHURCH ALSO ANOINTED**

In II Corinthians 1:21 we read, “He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed

us, is God.” The “us” class here refers to those who are in Christ—that is, members of his symbolic body. (Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 12:27) All those “in Christ” share in the anointing of the Holy Spirit that came upon Jesus, the “head of the body,” at Jordan. (Col. 1:18) In I John 2:27, the apostle speaks of the anointing which we have received of God and confirms the fact that it is part of the “same anointing” which came upon Jesus, and which has taught us, “ye shall abide in him.”

When Jesus promised his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit, he said it would teach them all things. (John 14:26) In the above scripture, John similarly states that this “anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie.” (I John 2:27) In this same verse, the apostle also says, “Ye need not that any man teach you.” This seems to be a reference to human philosophies present in John’s day, and he is emphasizing that the Holy Spirit teaches the anointed ones everything they need to know concerning God’s plan in order to serve him properly and to abide in Christ.

The Holy Spirit of God miraculously revealed to Jesus an understanding of those truths previously written “in the volume of the book,” that is, the Old Testament scriptures. (Ps. 40:7; Heb. 10:7) A similar miraculous revealing occurred in the minds of the apostles at Pentecost. Through the ministry of Jesus and the apostles, the New Testament was subsequently provided to supplement the Old, bringing understanding to the remainder of the body members concerning the essential elements of God’s plan. Thus, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and all that it implies of instruction for the church as a

whole, provides for us a correct knowledge of the written Word. In addition, God, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, has provided pastors, teachers and evangelists as helpers in our understanding of the Holy Scriptures.—Eph. 4:11

## **STUDY AND PREPARATION**

The authority given to the New Creation by the Holy Spirit is in some respects like a doctor's certification. When we see such a certificate in a doctor's office, we realize that it not only signifies authority to practice medicine, but also implies qualifications acquired through years of study and training. So it is with those who are anointed to preach glad tidings, and to eventually reign as kings and priests. It is not merely that they are honored with this authority, but it also denotes essential study and preparation. This is why both Jesus and John associate being taught "all things" with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [Greek: expound correctly] the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15) Notice how the matter of correctly understanding and expounding the word of truth is essential to being a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed." Many will perhaps be ashamed who thought they were working for God by preaching eternal torture for the wicked. This illustration emphasizes that those who are truly anointed to serve God must be qualified because they have, through the power of the Holy Spirit, come to a correct knowledge of the Scriptures.

## THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

The “anointing” authority to represent God and the privilege of doing so also reaches us through the written Word. Jesus said, “Ye are the light of the world.” He further exhorts us, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:14,16) These are texts put in the Bible by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to authorize and encourage us as Christ’s body members to proclaim the Truth, and to do so faithfully.

Jesus testified of himself, “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) He said this by the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, one of which is found in the words of our opening text. When he said to his disciples, “I am the light,” and then “ye are the light,” the Master indicated that the anointing authority to serve God in the capacity of a “light” in the world would be passed on to them at Pentecost.

The Apostle Paul explains this in more detail. He wrote, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.”—II Cor. 5:17-20

This is another passage concerning our anointing, provided through the Holy Spirit, which gives assurance that all those in Christ share in the “ministry of reconciliation,” and are “ambassadors

for Christ,” working together with him. While the baptism of the Spirit emphasizes immersion into the divine will, the symbol of anointing emphasizes that one aspect of God’s will is recognition of the honor of serving as his ambassadors, and the manifestation of the same zeal which consumed Jesus as he went about doing good and preaching the “gospel of the kingdom.”—Matt. 24:14

Another Old Testament scripture related to our anointing is Psalm 145:10-12. It reads, “All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.” This is undoubtedly one of the inspired passages that encouraged Jesus to faithfulness as he went from place to place preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom. It should be an equally motivating power in the lives of God’s consecrated people today.

## **GLAD TIDINGS**

The kingdom message that the saints are commissioned to preach is one of “glad tidings,” or good news. This is shown in our opening text, which Jesus applied to himself, and which also applies to every member of his symbolic body, for the one anointing covers all. It is a commission to preach “good tidings unto the meek.” Our anointing is that we might proclaim the message to those who are meek—that is, the teachable. Truly, we are to “sow beside all waters,” but we are not to force the Truth upon anyone. (Isa. 32:20) The meek, after hearing a little of the message, will more readily seek for

more, and these are the ones to whom we should give special attention.

We are to proclaim “liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” The whole world is in bondage to sin and death. The meek who respond to the good tidings should be told that, through faith, demonstrated by a full dedication of themselves to God, they can be free from the bondage of sin and death, and enjoy liberty in Christ. (Rom. 8:1,2; Gal. 5:1) Those who are in the great prison-house of death cannot hear the good tidings, but we can assure their living friends and relatives that this prison house will, in God’s due time, be opened and all death’s captives set free. What a message this is to bind up the brokenhearted!

In the verse following our opening text, other aspects of our anointing are mentioned: “To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.” (Isa. 61:2) The “acceptable year of the LORD” is a reference to the Gospel Age call to service and sacrifice in the footsteps of Jesus. When explaining this feature of God’s plan, we are to assure those interested that in presenting their bodies a “living sacrifice,” they will be counted “holy and acceptable” to the Heavenly Father. (Rom. 12:1) Jesus, our Head and Exemplar, incorporated this aspect of the gospel in his message when he invited his disciples to deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow him. (Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23) The Lord knew that beginning with Pentecost their sacrifices would be acceptable in God’s sight.

Another part of the Holy Spirit’s commission is to proclaim “the day of vengeance of our God: to comfort

all that mourn.” Notice that these two proclamations are vitally connected. We should never preach about God’s vengeance without also giving equal or greater time to proclaim the comforting message of the kingdom, which will do away with mourning and crying in the earth forever.—Rev. 21:1-4

There is much said in both the Old and New Testaments concerning the day of vengeance. The Apostle Paul describes it as the “day of the Lord” in which, while the nations are saying “Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child.” (I Thess. 5:1-4) Daniel foretold it to be a “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation,” and Jesus, referring to Daniel’s prophecy, described this period as one of “great tribulation.”—Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21,22

It is this day of God’s vengeance upon Satan’s world that brings the present age to a close. Beyond it will come the manifestation of Messiah’s kingdom through which all the families of the earth will be blessed. We are now living in the midst of this day of vengeance and trouble. It is this fact that explains why now there is an almost continuous “distress of nations, with perplexity,” and why the world is filled with fear.—Luke 21:25-28

It is noteworthy that when Jesus quoted Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the commission of the Holy Spirit for service, and indicated that he had been anointed thereto, he did not make mention of the “day of vengeance of our God.” He understood that this day of vengeance was, at that time, many centuries into the future, and thus it would be a misapplication of scripture to announce that it was upon the nations in his day. However, since we are now living



in this climactic “time of trouble,” we are commissioned to proclaim the facts concerning it, and the glorious kingdom which will follow.

This does not imply that we have some special authority to pronounce vengeance upon the world. This is the prerogative of the Lord alone. Our commission is merely to announce the meaning of this period of severe distress among the nations—that a world order is coming to an end because of its sin and selfishness, and that in its place Messiah’s kingdom will be established. Thus, we emphasize again the fact that coupled with the commission to proclaim the day of vengeance is the requirement to comfort all that mourn. The whole world is mourning because of this time of distress and trouble, and a proper explanation of what is taking place becomes a great comfort to those who have faith to believe the promises of God.

Another text of the Old Testament pertaining to our anointed commission reads, “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.” (Isa. 35:4) Here again is indicated that proclaiming the day of vengeance is, in effect, explaining to those who have a hearing ear that the present trouble upon the world is because the Lord has come “with vengeance,” but that his objective is not vindictive, for he “will come and save you,” the prophet says. Therefore, we can say to those who will listen: Do not fear, for the kingdom of Christ is about to be manifested for the blessing of all mankind, and in that kingdom “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”—Isa. 52:10

## MOURNERS IN ZION

Isaiah 61:3 mentions another aspect of service commissioned by the Holy Spirit. It is the comforting of those in Zion who mourn, “that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.” Zion is one of the symbolic names that the Scriptures give to the spiritual phase of Christ’s kingdom, and aptly applies to God’s consecrated people who are now being prepared for the kingdom. These are the Zion class, and the way of sacrifice in which they walk is a narrow, difficult one.—Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1,4

We read these words from the Apostle Paul: “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” “Consider him [Jesus] that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” (Gal. 6:9; Heb. 12:3) We also have the statement of the Apostle James, “The prayer of faith shall save the sick [Greek: faint, weary], and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”—James 5:15

“The Lord shall raise him up,” James says of those who are faint and weary. Isaiah 61:3 states that those who are given the “oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” shall be lifted up and called “trees of righteousness.” We are commissioned to do all we can to assist those who mourn, who are weary in well doing or in any way are spiritually faint. Where the heart is right, God will give strength, so that the “lame” will not be “turned out of the way; but ... rather be healed.”—Heb. 12:13

## **ALL BODY MEMBERS ANOINTED**

The anointing of the Holy Spirit of Truth which came upon Jesus reaches down to include all the members of his body. (I Cor. 12:12-14,27) Abilities to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, as well as various other features of the Christian's commission, may differ from individual to individual, but each one is to be faithful and zealous according to the ability possessed. The fact that all are members of the same body suggests cooperation, just as the various parts of a natural body work together harmoniously under the direction of the head.

In I Corinthians 12:12-27, the Apostle Paul goes into considerable detail concerning the symbolism of the body, stating that "the body is not one member, but many." In another of his epistles, Paul explains that God has arranged special services for some who are in the body. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets [expounders or speakers]; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." (Eph. 4:11-16) Not all are anointed to serve in these capacities. Aside from the twelve apostles, who were chosen directly by the Lord, these special servants are selected through the vote of his people, the body members, in their local groups, or ecclesias. (Acts 14:23, *Weymouth New Testament*) To have the Lord's approval, however, they must meet the qualifications set forth by the Scriptures.—I Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9

## **FUTURE SERVICE**

In Hebrews 1:9, we are told that Jesus was anointed with the "oil of gladness above thy fellows," signifying a position of honor and service above angels, principalities, and powers. This indicates that the

anointing of the Holy Spirit carries over to the work of Christ and his church in glory, when together they will reign as kings and priests for the blessing of the world with peace, health, life, and joy through the agencies of the kingdom. This means that all the texts of the Bible which give assurance to the faithful that if they suffer with Christ they will reign with him, depict our anointing as including an invitation into a glorious partnership with the Heavenly Father and with his beloved Son to collaborate in his great project of restitution.

One of the texts pertaining to the future work to which all the faithful have been anointed is Isaiah 49:8,9, which reads, “Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.” In II Corinthians 6:1,2, Paul quotes a portion of Isaiah’s prophecy and applies it to those who are in Christ, adding that we have been called to be “workers together with him.”

In the foregoing passage from Isaiah, we are given the assurance, not only that the Lord will help and preserve his people during this time when they are being prepared for kingdom glory, but also that he has authorized them to “establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.” Man’s original inheritance was to live on the earth, and to have dominion over it. Through sin he lost both his life and dominion. His “inheritance”

became “desolate.” However, through the Messianic kingdom arrangement, mankind will be given the opportunity to regain their earthly inheritance and dominion. To the worthy ones of the next age, the Lord will say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”—Matt. 25:34

We are also anointed to say to the prisoners of death, “Go forth.” (Isa. 49:9) During the present Gospel Age, all the anointed have the blessed privilege of proclaiming the message that in the Messianic kingdom the great prison-house of death will be opened, and that all who are bound therein will be set free. (John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15) However, those during the present age who prove worthy to live and reign with Christ when his kingdom is established, will in fact help to fulfill what they said would take place. Then, instead of merely giving the message that the dead will be raised, they will have the wonderful privilege of actually saying to the prisoners of death, “Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.”

No wonder the apostle said the symbolic “oil” of the Holy Spirit which anointed Jesus to his high position in glory and in the kingdom was the “oil of gladness.” Since we share in the same anointing it will be gladness for us also, joy unspeakable, as we participate with our Lord in wiping tears from the faces of all who mourn. Together with our Head, we will share in destroying the cause of mankind’s mourning, by destroying sin and death, and all the evils which, throughout the ages, have continued to plague a sin-sick and dying race. What a glorious prospect to which we have been anointed! ■