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**31 USES OF
ANOINTING OIL
IN THE BIBLE**

ARCHBISHOP E. BERNARD JORDAN

The Uses of Anointing Oil in the Bible

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CHAPTER

1



MARK FOR BEING HOLY

Love cannot endure indifference. It needs to be wanted, Like a lamp, it needs to be fed out of the oil of another's heart, or its flame burns low.

— Henry Ward Beecher

POWER TRUTH

Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.

James 5:14 NRSV

MARK FOR BEING HOLY

“You shall make of these a holy anointing oil, a perfume mixture, the work of a perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. (Exodus 30:25)

In the Bible, the religious significance of oil as a symbol and marker of holiness was as old as the Mosaic tabernacle. Interestingly, its sacred representation came from God Himself when He instructed Moses to build a special space

where His holiness is recognized and revered. Exodus 30:22-33 gives the details of divine instruction about the making of the holy anointing oil.

The holy oil was an exclusive possession of God and of the tabernacle.

Oil Principle # 1

Based on the instructions, Moses will get the finest aromatic spices in the land to produce a holy oil for the Lord. The basic ingredients are 250 ounces of pure myrrh, 125 ounces of sweet cinnamon, 125 ounces of sweet aromatic cane, and 250 ounces of cassia (Ex. 30:23-24). The cassia that is mentioned here is the sweet aromatic cassia oil that we have today; it smells like cinnamon. The apothecary of that day would carefully extract, mix, and distill the oils from the spices and present them as sweet aromatic oil dedicated for holy anointing. Again, we must take note that it was the Lord who gave these ingredients to Moses to produce such a holy oil.

The Lord of nature chose those spices, not Moses nor the expert perfumers of Israel. Thus, it was perfectly called an oil of holiness. It's the only oil that God chose for the anointing of the things inside the tabernacle (Ex. 30:25-28). More importantly, God prohibited Moses and the Israelites from making a counterpart of this oil or using it for other purposes. The holy oil was an exclusive possession of God and of the tabernacle. Those who violated this prohibition would suffer serious consequences (Ex. 30:37-38).

The Lord of nature chose those spices, not Moses nor the expert perfumers of Israel. Thus, it was perfectly called an oil of holiness.

Oil Principle # 2

In the physical realm, this oil marks and signals the touch of divine holiness. Without its anointing, there is no holiness. Also, the stunning thing is, according to verse 29, “You shall also consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be holy.”

We understand that it was a fatal move for the common people to touch the Ark of the Covenant even if they have a good intention (2 Samuel 6:1-8). But pertaining to things like the altar and laver where the priests offered burnt offerings to God, both the priests and the animal sacrifices that touch these things were being made holy by virtue of God’s anointing declaration. It is a solemn and critical matter that God is approached with holiness. Yet, since man, due to his sinful nature, cannot do this by himself, God allowed him to come under religious anointing. In this case, it was by God’s declaration that the priests and the Israelites were sanctified to approach Him. Most importantly, the sacrifices laid on the altar, symbolize atonement. Hence, from this ceremonial perspective, holiness is essentially redemption. Repentant sinners are made holy because God declares and makes them holy by atonement. This was the redemptive backdrop of the holy anointing oil in the tabernacle.

God’s people should never be afraid of God’s holiness as if it kills their joy. Rather, it is good in a sense that it’s the sole pleasure of the soul.

Oil Principle # 3

Furthermore, from the psychological perspective, through the sweet aroma of the holy oil, God somehow made His spiritual presence to be perceived by the physical senses. He wanted the Israelites to understand that His presence is sweet and delightful, that there's no other place in the world that can give them cleansing and pleasure but His sweet holy presence alone. Just imagine the fragrance that permeates and emits from the tabernacle. The smell of holiness is so delightful that it excites you to think that God's holiness is truly good. The principle is, God's people should never be afraid of God's holiness as if it kills their joy. Rather, it is good in a sense that it's the sole pleasure of the soul.

Moreover, with regards to the priestly ministry, the holy anointing oil was also the oil that Moses used to ordain priests to their office (Ex. 3:32-33). As servants of the Most High God, they have a high and holy responsibility to represent the fragrance of God's purity and goodness. As the holy oil is poured out upon the head of the priest and its sweet aroma permeates his head, in the same manner, the priest is set apart to a holy service. It was a religious mark of his holy identity and ministry. The desires and occupation of the world should never be seen and sensed in him. The priest's desires and focus should become like the sweet aroma of the holy oil. As a representative of the people, he is tasked to offer a sin-offering for himself and for them. Yet, on the other hand, as a representative of God, he is expected to represent the holy presence of God. He is expected to bring with him the aroma of God's presence. The priest's presence in the Israelite community was to become a living testimony that God was among the people. That was his mark as a holy minister of God.

CHAPTER

2



BURIAL

God anoints those he favors and favors those he anoints.

— Michael Pitts

POWER TRUTH

They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Mark 6:13 NRSV

BURIAL

So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. (John 19:40)

The use of oil for burial is a typical Egyptian custom since ancient times. In the Hebrew custom, “the Old Testament does not give us a direct mention”¹ of its use for burial. But when we go the New Testament, the burial of Jesus implies a customary practice in Jewish burial. There are “five passages in the Gospels where the use of essential oil for burial is mentioned.”² The first one is in Matthew. 26:6-13.

The use of oil for burial is a typical Egyptian custom since ancient times.

Oil Principle # 4

This passage tells us the story of a woman who came to Jesus to anoint his head with costly perfume, which is actually an essential oil. This scenario is also found in Mk. 14:3-8 and in Jn. 12:3-8 with different emphasis. While in Lk. 23:50-56 and Jn. 19:31-42, expensive essential oils were used for the actual burial of Jesus. We will only use the details of these two passages to deduce the significant use of oil in Jewish custom during the time of Jesus.

In Luke 23:50-56, the passage tells that Jesus had a wealthy secret follower who occupied a political position in the Jewish Council. The name of the “good and righteous man” was Joseph (Lk. 23:50). When Jesus died on the cross, this man unmasked his true identity and courageously risked his political position when he went to Pilate requesting for the body of Jesus (Lk. 23:51). Actually, in the account of St. John, Joseph had also with him a reputable Pharisee whose name was Nicodemus (Jn. 19:39). Nicodemus was the one who came to Jesus by night in John chapter 3. Like Joseph, he was also a secret follower of Jesus.

In Jn. 19:39, we are told that he brought “a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.” The Bible has a list of twelve essential oils noted for their aroma, healing capacity, and religious significance. The aloes and myrrh that Nicodemus brought were part of the twelve essential oils. If we calculated or compared the value of these essential oils to present currency, studies tell us that, “it is between \$150,000 and \$200,000.”³ A stunning cost indeed!

The aloes and myrrh that Nicodemus brought are part of the twelve essential oils.

Oil Principle # 5

There are two things to infer here. First, Joseph and Nicodemus – considering their social positions –were indeed very wealthy men. Probably, they shared the cost to buy these oils. Second, even though they were secret disciples, “their regard and reverence for their Lord and redeemer was very great.”⁴ In the end, compared to the Apostles who scattered away, they risked their face and social status when they expressed their true devotion to Jesus on his death. Judging by the cost of their gift, they were acknowledging Jesus as their king, for “only kings received such extravagance in burial.”⁵

Going back to Luke 23, we see that the women followers of Jesus since his Galilean ministries, had also prepared essential oils for his burial, which Luke calls “spices and perfumes” (v.56). Studies tell us that there are a lot of essential oils that the Jews employed in their burial since Old Testament times. Popular and affordable essential oils were frankincense, cedar, and myrrh. “But during the times of the New Testament, sandalwood became common in usage.”⁶ It is likely that added to the expensive oils that Joseph and Nicodemus bought, sandalwood, cedar, myrrh, and frankincense, were the “spices and perfumes” that Luke mentioned. Considering Mark. 16:1, naturally these aromatic spices “were used to expel an ungrateful savor from a dead body.”⁷ But in this case, the careful and loving preparation of these spices was also a reverential expression of their “affection to Christ, but seemed to have no faith in his resurrection.”⁸ This view is interesting to note. On the negative side, it seems that their lavished anointing for the dead body of Jesus somehow implies that all their hope in Jesus was gone forever. Surely, their

deep reverence was duly noted, but their desperation somehow betrays their faith in Jesus' words.

Aside from embalming purposes, these oils are also effective in soothing the emotion of the bereaved. They stimulate the pineal gland that helps the griever to cope with the sadness within him and to find rest despite a sad loss.

Oil Principle # 6

Research tells us that all the essential oils that they used for Jesus was “known for stimulating the pineal gland.”⁹ In the medical world, this small endocrine gland is mysteriously labeled as the “third eye” or “the intuition gland.”¹⁰ That’s because whenever and wherever a person enters into a religious mode, particularly in prayer, this gland is stimulated. Perhaps, this is the reason the ancients used the said essential oils in burial ceremony. Aside from embalming purposes, these oils are also effective in soothing the emotion of the bereaved. They stimulate the pineal gland that helps the griever cope with the sadness within him and to find rest despite a sad loss.

CHAPTER

3



PURIFICATION

It may be difficult to understand why a test comes our way, but we must never forget that the test is accomplishing refining and purification.

— Billy Graham

POWER TRUTH

Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him; he said, “The Lord has anointed you ruler over his people Israel. You shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their enemies all around. Now this shall be the sign to you that the Lord has anointed you ruler over his heritage:

1 Samuel 10:1 NRSV

PURIFICATION

“Purify me from sin with hyssop, and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.” (Psalm 51:7).

Among the twelve popular essential oils in the Bible, hyssop is notable for its “purifying properties.”¹¹ It is mentioned ten times in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament. In this study, we will only highlight two verses, namely Psalm 51:7 and John 19:29.

Hyssop oil is used as an herbal medicine to relieve respiratory congestion and to boost the immune system.

Oil Principle # 7

Hyssop oil is “extracted from its stems and leaves.”¹² The smell of hyssop oil is like a “combination of mint and pine.”¹³ It is used as an herbal medicine to relieve respiratory congestion and to boost the immune system. Today, it is known for its properties “to reprogram miswritten information in the DNA and thus promote permanent healing at the cellular level.”¹⁴ In common sicknesses, it is an effective herbal medicine to relieve anxiety, arthritis, asthma, parasites and sore throats. It can even metabolize fats, increase perspiration, and is very good for body detox.

In ancient times, it was a highly sought herbal medicine to “heal skin irritations, frostbite, wounds, and bruising.”¹⁵ In religion, the ancients used it for “spiritual cleansing, meditation, and repellent for evil spirits.”¹⁶ In fact, during the Passover in Exodus, the Israelites put a branch of hyssop on their doorways, “releasing its aromatic oils, along with the lamb’s blood, as protection from the death angel.”¹⁷

This is the Old Testament background showing us the effectiveness of hyssop as a purifying oil and medicine.

Oil Principle # 8

In Psalm 51:7, in humble repentance before God, David pictured his spiritual condition like a man beaten and wounded by the wickedness of sin. He felt disgusted to see himself besmirched and defiled by the pollution of sin as he sunk down in its miry clay. Thus, in desperation, he cried out to God for purification. He humbly asked the Lord to “purge me with hyssop” (Ps. 51:7), believing that with God’s cleansing, he would “be whiter than snow.”

This is the Old Testament background showing us the effectiveness of hyssop as a purifying oil and medicine. Interestingly, when David used the picture of hyssop here, he was going back to the Levitical regulations for cleansing a person of leprosy and those who have accidentally touched a dead body (Lev. 14; Num.19). In other words, when David asked God to cleanse him with hyssop, he was considering himself like a leper or a person who defiled himself with bacteria by touching a dead body. Of course, the language of David here was in a metaphorical sense; even so, the picture that he used was real in the priestly medical world.

The soldiers who heard him gave “a sponge with vinegar and put it upon a hyssop” and put it on his mouth (Jn. 19:29).

Oil Principle # 9

Going to the New Testament, in John 19:29, the use of hyssop was mentioned during the agonizing hour of Jesus on the cross. It was given to Jesus because he said, "I thirst." The soldiers who heard him gave "a sponge with vinegar and put it upon a hyssop" and put it on his mouth (Jn. 19:29). Surely, as death lingered upon Jesus at that moment, thirst grievously tormented him. But even in that very painful, dry, and thirsty moment, he was fulfilling a tiny, gritty prophecy in Psalm 69:21. But then, why there was hyssop in that scenario? Was it just a coincidence? No. Rather, it was highly likely that the Roman soldiers or the people watching and passing by brought hyssop oil or plants with them. Since, the crucifixion was death by slow suffocation, breathing the scent of hyssop was offered "to help ease congestion and provide some relief both physically and emotionally."¹⁸

Moreover, the interesting significance of hyssop in the dramatic scenario of Jesus' death on the cross is that it was used as a signal of redemptive fulfillment (Jn. 19:30). Indeed, as a symbol of purification, hyssop associated itself in the very hour of great human redemption. As a laurel wreath was a symbol of Roman victory and honor, hyssop at the hour of Jesus' death scene became also a wreath of victorious purification for the people of God. When Jesus cried out, "It is finished," the oil of divine purification for God's people flowed graciously and powerfully over their lives. Like David, the believers can sing with praise and thanks, "Purify me from sin with hyssop, and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow."

CHAPTER

4



HEALING

All healing is first a healing of the heart.

– Carl Townsend

POWER TRUTH

You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

Luke 7:46 NRSV

HEALING

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil. (Psalm 23:5)

From early Egyptian civilization down to the late Arabic medical studies, oil is always mentioned and discovered as a natural, valuable remedy. Aside from the famous olive oil in Israel, the twelve essential oils mentioned in the Bible also possess their own unique healing benefits. Perhaps a quick survey of their healing capabilities will give us a taste of divine goodness revealed in nature.

From early Egyptian civilization down to the late Arabic medical studies, oil is always mentioned and discovered as a natural valuable remedy.

Oil Principle # 10

The aloe oil mentioned in Numbers 24:6 is “known for its benefits as “skin care and supportive of female reproductive and endocrine systems.”¹⁹ The cedar oil in Leviticus 14:4, which was used for cleansing lepers, is now known today for its relaxing benefits. It “enhances deep sleep, emotional releases and promotes mental clarity.”²⁰ The cypress oil in Song of Solomon 1:17 can be used as “antibacterial”²¹ oil. The frankincense in Exodus 30:34 is both useful as “antimicrobial and immune system booster.”²² The galbanum oil, also mentioned in Exodus 30:34-36, exhibits “antimicrobial effects and potential for use in oral health.”²³ The hyssop that we studied in Psalm 51:7 and 9 is an effective “antifungal and antibacterial.”²⁴ Interestingly, along with hyssop, essential oils like myrrh, myrtle, onycha, spikenard, and the Rose of Sharon also have strong antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties.

These are just the basic healing benefits that we can mention here. Experts are still in the process of experimentation to discover more the uncharted healing properties of these essential oils. But then as readers of the Bible, the oil mentioned in Psalm 23:5 might call our curiosity to study it more.

Thus, when David mentioned that the Lord “anoints his head with oil,” the context tells us that it has to do with healing.

Oil Principle # 11

As we all know, David, as the composer of this Psalm, magnificently compared the Lord to a good shepherd. Under His care, we as His followers are well-fed and well-protected even “before the presence of mine enemies” (v.5) or when “we walk in the valley of shadow of death” (v.4). This is the motif of this Psalm. Thus, when David mentioned that the Lord “anoints his head with oil,” the context tells us that it has to do with healing. So, the question now is, What is the oil that is mentioned here? Is it an olive oil or part of the twelve essential oils? Commentators tell us that this oil refers in general to the “oil of gladness”²⁵ which is supposedly a combination of myrrh, cinnamon, cassia, calamus, and olive oil. Interestingly, among the twelve essential oils in the Bible, myrrh is most frequently mentioned. It is one of the gifts that the Magi gave to the child Jesus. It is an “effective insect repellent.”²⁶ It can “reduce anxiety and facilitate calmness.”²⁷ It is also a good “heat absorber”²⁸ commonly used by desert travelers. Cassia, calamus, and cinnamon are known for their aromatic smell that makes the healing oil even more desirable. Moreover, their healing properties “support respiratory system, help kidney congestion after intoxication, and help to relax the muscle.”²⁹

Then regarding the olive oil, the Bible tells us that, “it can be used to anoint the sick or tend to their wounds.”³⁰ For instance, in Isaiah 1:6, it is implied that this oil can heal “bruises, sores, and fresh wounds.” It is also used here in Psalm 23:5, considering the metaphor that the sheep was hurt while walking in the valley or while fleeing from a dangerous predator. In Mark 6:13, the disciples used it after they delivered the people who had been possessed by evil spirits. Perhaps it connotes a spiritual significance that expresses divine protection and ownership. In the famous story of the Good Samaritan in Luke chapter 10, it was the oil used to clean the wounds of the poor man who was beaten almost to death by robbers while on his way to Jericho.

And in Jas. 5:14, it was the oil referred to for the anointing of the sick while the elders of the Church pray over him.

Interestingly, among the twelve essential oils in the Bible, myrrh is most frequently mentioned. It is one of the gifts that the Magi gave to the child Jesus.

Oil Principle # 12

Hence, with these descriptions in mind, we can understand better the metaphor of anointing oil in Psalm 23:5. The oil is not only for healing the physical wounds, but even more so for restoring the health and joy of the soul – an oil of gladness indeed. Of course, it is possible that the oil of gladness was not only composed of five ingredients. The twelve essential oils can be combined together as chemists and expert herbalists and perfumers find it suitable.

The oil is not only for healing the physical wounds, but even more so for restoring the health and joy of the soul – an oil of gladness indeed.

Oil Principle # 13

In any case, the oil of gladness is significant in the context of Psalm 23, because it shows us the backdrop of valley of death and the presence of enemies. The implication is sometimes the troubles of life, including the persecution of people who don't accept our faith, give us sorrow and pain – physical and psychological. However, because we are God's sheep, the Lord

is good, wise, and able to turn our “mourning into dancing” (Psa. 30:11).

You prepare a banquet for me while my enemies watch. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. Certainly, goodness and mercy will stay close to me all the days of my life, and I will remain in the LORD's house for days without end. (Psalm 23:5-6)

CHAPTER

5



CONSECRATION

Only an unconditional and unrestricted acceptance of the reproach of conscience with a corresponding willingness to do what is revealed can show how perfect is our consecration, how truly we hate sin how sincerely we desire to do God's will.

— Watchman Nee

POWER TRUTH

You shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head and anoint him.

Exodus 29:7 NRSV

CONSECRATION

So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate them, and sanctify them that they may minister to me as priests. (Exodus 28:41)

Consecration in the Scriptures is a beautiful word that is usually used by God whenever and wherever He calls His people to follow Him. In the Old Testament, the word signifies devotion, faithful fulfillment of duty, and focus. Consecration is the desire of God's heart for His people. To literally depict both the sweetness and solemnity of swearing one's commitment to God, the anointing of oil is the ceremonial portrayal of such holy devotion.

In Israel, the theology of consecration originated from the rules of holy anointing in the book of Exodus. The oil that was used in the ceremony is described in Exodus 30:22-33. It is called the holy oil. By ingredients, the holy oil is composed of five essential oils: myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and olive oil. This oil is highly exclusive for the purpose of consecration only. Serious divine penalty will occur when Israelites attempt to imitate the composition of this holy oil. Thus, the oil itself was consecrated by a sheer divine declaration.

By ingredients, the holy oil is composed of five essential oils: myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and olive oil. This oil is highly exclusive for the purpose of consecration only.

Oil Principle # 14

The holy oil was first used when the tabernacle was finished. In Exodus chapter 40, Moses anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it. Then afterwards, he also used it to consecrate Aaron and his sons for the priestly ministry. The consecration basically symbolized God's intimacy and ownership. In the case of the tabernacle, its consecration will serve as God's sacred place where the Israelites can literally behold divine glory. As a matter of fact, after its establishment and consecration, the

glorious theophany of Yahweh through a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night was “in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys” (Ex. 40:38).

After the time of Exodus, the oil of consecration was also used on kings whom God had chosen to lead His nation (Judg. 9:15). The first man who had been anointed for royal leadership was Saul. The purpose of his royal consecration was for the protection of Israel from his enemies (1 Samuel 9:16). It was the prophet Samuel who anointed him as king of Israel (1 Samuel 10). Usually, after the anointing of consecration, the Spirit of the Lord will empower the anointed to begin an act of valor for the protection and prosperity of God’s people. This was what happened to Saul when he received divine anointing. However, the strength of royal consecration depends on the king’s faithfulness to God’s word (1 Samuel 10:25). Disobedience removes the anointing of the king to successfully lead God’s people. Hence, part of the major emphasis of the book of Samuel is to present a kind of king that is after God’s own heart. King David exemplified that kind of king. He was not perfect, but his heart was faithful for the cause of God.

Disobedience removes the anointing of the king to successfully lead God’s people. Hence, part of the major emphasis of the book of Samuel is to present a kind of king that is after God’s own heart.

Oil Principle # 15

After the Davidic reign, King Solomon used the anointing of consecration for the dedication of the great temple that he established (1 Kings 8). Somehow, he tried to pattern the temple from the divine design of the tabernacle. But in his mind, aside

from a special place dedicated for the presence of Yahweh, Solomon wanted the temple to become a mighty testimony for the covenant-relationship that Israel has with God. During his prayer of dedication, he warned the people to learn from the painful mistakes of the past. He invoked their hearts to steadfast devotion to Yahweh no matter what.

In the New Testament, the use of holy oil was somewhat outdated. Perhaps, it was only practice in the temple or during priestly ordination. Probably, the history of Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, together with Roman occupation dramatically changed Israel's temple worship. Since the royal position and the former majesty of the temple were gone, the kind of consecration that the nation enjoyed during its golden age was no longer observed. Thus, when the New Testament used the terms consecration and holy anointing, the essential meaning was not referring to priestly offices and royal powers.

The meaning shifted to Messianic hope and spiritual blessings. For example, in Luke 4:18, when Jesus was speaking in the synagogue at Nazareth, he said that God's Spirit was upon him. The Holy Spirit anointed him to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted and to proclaim liberty. Although there's an eschatological meaning in his preaching that pertains to political and universal reign, the primary goal of his Gospel ministry was soul-salvation. This was the first goal of the Messiah, even the consecration of his life – to save His people from their sins, not from their political enemies (Acts 4:27; 10:38).

Certainly, this anointing or consecration looks back and relates to the imagery of Old Testament descriptions. However, in essence, the anointing of New Testament consecration is spiritual on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection.

Oil Principle # 16

On the basis of Christ's redemption, the believer is called "anointed" and "consecrated" because of God's justifying grace (2 Cor. 1:21; Heb. 10:20) and of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Certainly, this anointing or consecration looks back and relates to the imagery of Old Testament descriptions. However, in essence, the anointing of New Testament consecration is spiritual on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection.

CHAPTER

6



SANCTIFICATION

Faith acts upon Christ for justification, as he is a Jesus, or by receiving him as a Jesus; faith acts upon Christ for sanctification, as he is a Lord, or by receiving him as Lord.

— Ralph Erskine

POWER TRUTH

And cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, choice flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, slaves—and human lives.

Revelation 18:13 NRSV

SANCTIFICATION

So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate them, and sanctify them that they may minister to me as priests. (Exodus 28:41)

In the Bible, consecration and sanctification are two sides of the same coin. They are interlinked and in harmonious fusion. But still, they have distinction or emphasis unique to each other. In our study of oil with regards to consecration, we have observed that the unique emphasis of consecration is positional or official service to God. We have seen it in the consecration of the tabernacle, of the Levite priests, of kings, of the temple, in the person of Jesus, the Messiah, and in the believer's positional relationship with Him. In sanctification, its unique emphasis has to do more with the experiential side – that is, living out of the position or the consecration that has been received. Understanding this distinction will help to appreciate the uses of oil pertaining to the act of sanctification.

Before we take a brief survey of the ceremonial use of oil in sanctification, it is important to say at the outset that there is no verbatim or explicit citation that clearly shows us that sanctification necessarily requires anointing of oil. Nonetheless, it is an informed conjecture to say that considering the historical and ceremonial custom of the Israelites, it is highly likely that the use of oil is implied whenever sanctification is called. From the previous chapters, we have sufficiently presented that oil is a fundamental symbol of holiness (Ex. 30:25). Having said that, let's consider some special occasions in the Bible that solemnly observed sanctification.

In sanctification, its unique emphasis has to do more with the experiential side – that is, living out of the position or the consecration that has been received. Understanding this distinction will help to appreciate the uses of oil pertaining to the act of sanctification.

In Exodus 28:31-41, God meticulously laid out to Moses the priestly garments that Aaron and his sons should wear in their holy work in the tabernacle. Every part of the garments has its own weight of spiritual meaning. At the ceremony of consecration, Moses should anoint Aaron and his sons to initiate them in their sanctifying work. Thus, whenever and wherever Aaron and his sons do their priestly duties, they are supposed to wear the garments. The principle of this custom is actually the same today. Whenever and wherever professional people like doctors, lawyers, teachers, policemen, bank or office employees, and company workers go to their work or fulfill their duty, they are also wearing the symbol of their profession. It gives them in the sight of the people a sense of authority and trustworthiness, believing that they are experts and legally authorized in what they do. It is their vocation. Perhaps, the only difference that we have today is that when these professionals took their pledge of service, they didn't undergo a ceremony of anointing.

Thus, in the case of Aaron and his sons, the priestly garments that God Himself gave to them entitled them to do their holy work. Of course, there's no single implication that the garments possessed magical or supernatural powers. But the spiritual significance that God declared about the garments gave them the authority on behalf of the people to mediate between God and man. We need to understand that during the time of Moses, the Levites were blessed by God to receive this spiritual portion. Among the twelve tribes of Israel, only the tribe of Levi had been given the right and privilege of holy priesthood. Only the Levites can receive the anointing of holy oil. Although, the Israelites, in general, should live holy lives because their God is holy, the office and the oil of holiness were given to the Levites only. As a matter of fact, the popular New Testament phrase, "Be holy, for God is holy" was Levitical in its primary address (Lev. 21:8).

The ceremony of anointing or sanctification had been observed when the leaders of Israel faced an important decision, when they attempted to launch an impossible mission and managed to handle religious matters.

Oil Principle # 18

As time went by in the life story of Israel as a nation, the ceremony of sanctification somewhat changed from its exclusive priestly application. The ceremony of anointing or sanctification had been observed when the leaders of Israel faced an important decision, when they attempted to launch an impossible mission and managed to handle religious matters. Some of the historical instances that we can adduce from the Old Testament to prove this point are from the following. For instance, in Joshua 7:10-26, when the Israelites suffered a bitter defeat by the hands of the small city called Ai, Joshua called the people to sanctify themselves (7:13). The command implies a ceremonial practice, and thus the anointing of oil is likely observed as a symbol of sanctification. During this national ceremony, sin in their midst was divinely exposed and punished. Consequently, it gave them victory on their next siege on Ai.

The command implies a ceremonial practice, and thus the anointing of oil is likely observed as a symbol of sanctification. During this national ceremony, sin in their midst was divinely exposed and punished.

Oil Principle # 19

Another example is in 1 Samuel 16:1-13, which tells us the story of David's anointing. This story happened during the time when Saul turned away from the Lord. Instead of obeying the word of God, the taste of absolute political power corrupted them.

Lastly, we can also look at 1 Chronicles 15. In this chapter, David encouraged the priests to once again sanctify themselves before the Lord. He commanded them to get the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Obed-Edom and to bring it to its proper place inside the brand new tabernacle that David built in Jerusalem. According to Mosaic law, no one had the right to carry the Ark but the priests alone. Thus, when the ceremony of sanctification was done, the priest took the Ark and brought it to Jerusalem, while being accompanied along the way by the people with sounds of joy and dance of praise.

CHAPTER

7



INVIGORATION

Certainly, true worship invigorates, but to plan invigoration is not necessarily to order worship.

— J. I. Packer

POWER TRUTH

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

Acts 10:38 NRSV

INVIGORATION

He shall take from it his handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil, and all the frankincense which is on the grain offering, and shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma, as a memorial to the LORD. (Leviticus 6:15)

As a common home remedy for sickness and as a primary source of light in the ancient world, oil has become an emblem of vigor, stamina, and positive outlook.

Also, due to its ever aromatic, medicinal, and therapeutic benefits, it becomes an in-demand source of invigoration today in the market. By properties, all essential oils mentioned in the Bible have their own unique invigorating benefits. But the most common biblical essential oil sold today in the market is frankincense, although myrrh and cypress are also on top of the list. Interestingly, two of these oils were gifts to the child Jesus in Bethlehem. Perhaps, the marketization of Christmas made these essential oils popular. It would be an interesting study to delve into each invigorating benefit, but we will only focus our attention on frankincense.

As prayer invigorates the soul by sending down the peaceful atmosphere of the presence of God, frankincense as God's natural gift helps to soothe the weary body and anxious mind (Phil. 4:6-9).

Oil Principle # 20

Frankincense is known today in the market for its therapeutic effect that “balances the emotion, focuses the energy, and improves concentration.”³¹ Perhaps, this might be the reason why among the essential oils in the Scripture, frankincense became the symbol of prayer. As prayer invigorates the soul by sending down the peaceful atmosphere of the presence of God, frankincense as God's natural gift helps to soothe the weary body and anxious mind (Phil. 4:6-9).

Now, frankincense comes from the “resin of the *Boswellia* tree which is commonly found in Somalia.”³² Unlike the solid and healthy features of cedar and cypress trees, *Boswellia* is a small tree that seems dry and malnourished. However, despite its unattractive looks, it has a high tolerance to grow in poor

environmental conditions in the wilderness. Thus, the picture of vigor despite discomfort and difficulty is exemplified by this tree.

The essential oil that is “extracted from the gum resin of its trunks and limbs”³³ is highly sought today by herbalists and therapists. The oil fragrance is “woody with fruity, pepper, and spicy tones.”³⁴

In the ancient world, frankincense was commonly used in religious ceremonies. For them, it is an oil of spirituality and royalty. They used it to anoint kings and priest. Perhaps, this was the reason why the Magi brought frankincense as part of their gift to the child Jesus. They acknowledged the child as the Messianic King of Israel. Indeed, it was a wise gift, because “frankincense oil is not only antimicrobial but also an immune-stimulant.”³⁵ It can help to protect the child Jesus from bacteria and will increase the strength of his immune system. In other religions, frankincense was also used to “enhance meditation and elevate spiritual consciousness.”³⁶ They also believed that frankincense can assist the dead in the after-life transition and for this reason is “used for embalming.”³⁷

**They used it to anoint kings and priest.
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Oil Principle # 21

Today, research tells us that frankincense has the capacity to reprogram cellular memory, which promotes permanent healing. It helps cellular regeneration and therefore has a high possibility to heal “cancer, herpes, brain damage, massive head injuries”³⁸ and “stimulates the body’s production of white corpuscles”³⁹

which is responsible for strong the immune system. Aside from this, it is also an oil of beauty, because it can reduce “discoloration from stretch marks and scars.”⁴⁰ By combining three drops of oil with lotion, it helps to “smooth the appearance and gives a healthy-looking skin.” Those who have difficulty with sleep can expect frankincense oil to bring them into dreamland. Inhaling frankincense oil “uplifts the mood and brings the feeling of peace and relaxation.”⁴¹ This oil is also valuable to those who have respiratory infections.

Moreover, modern studies show that frankincense can also be used for depression, allergies, headaches, bronchitis, tonsillitis, typhoid, warts, and as an expectorant.

In the Old Testament, frankincense was used as part of the ceremonial offerings (Lev. 2; Num. 5; 1 Chr. 9; Neh. 13). In Exodus 30, it was part of the ingredients of the holy perfumes in the tabernacle. In Isaiah 60:6 and Jeremiah 6:20, it was one of the potential commodities with high commercial value. But in all of these, the spiritual significance of frankincense is noteworthy because it symbolizes or describes the prayers of the saints (Psalm 141:2). It is inspired by the daily priestly offerings in the tabernacle where Aaron was tasked to burn sweet incense on the altar “every morning” (Ex. 30:7).

Although that duty was given to Aaron, it was a daily demonstration to the Israelites that God loves regular communion with His people. In fact, there was a kind of incense in the tabernacle that served as “perpetual incense before the Lord” (Ex. 30:8). Perhaps, this is the Old Testament analogy that Paul had in mind when he said, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Of course, literally speaking, this is impossible to do 24 hours a day. However, when you get the tabernacle background on the altar of incense, you will understand that the expression only means daily or regular discipline.

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Oil Principle # 22

Therefore, as the frankincense gives a feeling of relaxation, prayer to God gives us a sense of peace. It guards us from the spiritual deteriorating effect of worry and fear. When we pray to God, His presence gives us peace of heart and mind (Phil. 4:7). It soothes and strengthens the immune system of our souls to face the challenges of life.

CHAPTER

8



DELIVERANCE

The work of healing is not my work, but by faith healing is done. The work of deliverance, great and mighty deliverance, is not by work but is my faith in Him. It is not the works of righteousness which I have done, but according to His grace. I am a product of His grace.

— T. B. Joshua

POWER TRUTH

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

John 12:3 NRSV

DELIVERANCE

"Your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions. All your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes, and cassia." (Psalm 45:7-8).

The concept of deliverance in the biblical language takes a variety of forms. Sometimes it is used synonymously with salvation, provision, and protection. The phrase in the Lord's Prayer "deliver us from evil" is a good example. In general, the concept doesn't necessarily mean spiritual, but can point to physical healing, material blessings, political victory, and economic prosperity. Thus, when finding word pictures to describe the holistic blessings of Yahweh, the Israelites and even the prophets of the Lord used oil as a symbol of deliverance. The term "oil of gladness" is perhaps the Jewish nomenclature to describe such idea. From the previous chapters, we have mentioned that the composition of the oil of gladness is comprised with myrrh, cinnamon, cassia, calamus, and olive oil. We have already explained from the previous chapters the uses and symbols of the four essential oils except calamus. If the view that the ingredients of the oil of gladness bear a significant meaning, it is a good perspective to study the concept of deliverance in connection with each essential oil.

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Oil Principle # 23

In this study, we will only give attention to the beneficial character of calamus as part of the ingredients in the oil of deliverance. Calamus oil comes from a "fragrant plant."⁴² The root of this plant is similar to ginger used as a spice. The oil is extracted "through steam distillation."⁴³ Since ancient civilizations, "it has been used as an herbal remedy for numerous complaints."⁴⁴ We can find its long-time healing benefits from the ancient

records of Egypt and the Indians. One of its interesting effects is its capability to comfort the “human psyche”⁴⁵ and to cure hallucinations. Today, herbalists and therapists use and promote calamus oil for its abiding benefits as an antioxidant, wound healer, nervous system stimulant, antimicrobial, as an insecticide, for rheumatism, as an antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, for blood circulation, anti-epileptic, as a tranquilizer and a sedative.⁴⁶ With such wonderful benefits, it is not surprising that the Israelites included it in their so-called oil of gladness, which is also a symbol of deliverance.

In the Bible, the major concept of deliverance in relation to anointing oil is found in two Messianic passages, Isaiah 61 and Psalm 45. Both were quoted and explained by New Testament writers to prove the validity of Jesus of Nazareth as the promised King of Israel. Isaiah 61 was the passage that Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth. In this passage, the prophet Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah will deliver his people from broken heartedness and captivity. As an “anointed” by Yahweh, the Messiah is empowered by the Holy Spirit to “preach the good tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, and to proclaim liberty to the captives” (Isa. 61:1). If you will observe carefully, this mission is closely connected to Messiah’s anointing, while the anointing is closely linked to Spirit’s indwelling. This is the personality and dignity of the coming deliverer of Israel – Spirit anointed.

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On the first coming of the Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the deliverance was spiritual. Thus, the description in Isaiah 61:1 should be interpreted from the evangelical perspective, not eschatological or Second Coming scenario. Jesus himself knew that his anointing has a two-fold mission of deliverance. That's why when he read and explained this passage before the Jews, he only focused on verse 1 and not on the second statement of verse 2, which has to do with judgment (Lk. 4:20). However, in the last day, at the time of Second Coming, the second part of the mission would be fulfilled. He will come not as a sacrifice, but as a righteous Judge. He will deliver his people from sin, evil, and wicked men. Sin will be obliterated in the universe, Satan and his minions will be cast into the Lake of Fire, and wicked men ever since the world began will pay for their sins in Hell. Only the anointed One can do this. That's why in Psalm 45, David was overwhelmed by the righteous beauty of the Messiah as the sovereign executive of justice (Psalm 45:2). David's heart overflowed in theological insights when he saw the sword of the Messiah, the "Mighty One" ready to execute justice on earth (Psalm 45:3). David said,

"You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions. All your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes, and cassia." (Psalm 45:7-8).

**In that New World, the anointed
Messiah will reign glorious and be
worshipped by his people with joy.**

In other words, the anointing of the King will fill the earth with freshness of righteousness, peace, and joy. Indeed, this is the absolute deliverance that the universe awaits. This is the kind of deliverance that will end wickedness once and for all. In that New World, the anointed Messiah will reign glorious and be worshipped by his people with joy.

CHAPTER

9



WARFARE

Every source of blessing is a point of attack.

— David McGee

POWER TRUTH

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the
captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,

Luke 4:18 NRSV

WARFARE

And Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” (Joshua 3:5)

War demands psychological composure and emotional stability. Fear and doubt shouldn't be entertained even for a second. If you want to

defeat your enemy, you need to win yourself first. This is the prerequisite of battle.

If you want to defeat your enemy, you need to win yourself first. This is the prerequisite of battle.

Oil Principle # 26

The concept and stories of war are not foreign in the Scriptures, particularly in the life of Israel as a chosen nation. Ever since their exodus from Egypt, hostile nations did not leave them alone. Somehow, their enemies had always found a way to hinder and sidetrack them from their holy journey to the Promised Land. In fact, even their possession of the Land of Promise had a great challenge behind it. If they want to dwell in it, they must fight against the wicked citizens of the land (Joshua 1:1-9).

The promise and presence of Yahweh assured them victory. However, this assurance did not make them irresponsible to use military techniques to help them in the actual battle. God is never against common sense. He sanctifies it when it is used for His glory. Part of the practical means that helped Israel in battle was the use of oil for therapeutic purposes. Indeed, God's presence was their source of psychological composure and emotional stability. But essential oils, as God's natural gift, helped them to calm their bodies as well.

Indeed, God's presence was their source of psychological composure and emotional stability. But essential oils, as God's natural gift, helped them to calm their bodies as well.

Oil Principle # 27

Almost all of the twelve essential oils mentioned in the Bible have a calming benefit suited for battle preparation. Studies tell us that calamus has “relaxing effects to the muscles.”⁴⁷ Cedar is noted for its “calming effects.”⁴⁸ Cypress “promotes feelings of security and grounding.”⁴⁹ Galbanum is used “for pain relief and promote emotional balance.”⁵⁰ Frankincense “enhances meditation and elevates spiritual consciousness”⁵¹ which could have been suited for the Israelites while fighting their battle under the promise of Yahweh. Hyssop “focuses the mind in meditation.”⁵² Onycha gives comfort. The Rose of Sharon “calms the nerves”⁵³ and Spikenard “elevates the mood.”⁵⁴

We don’t know the specific essential oil that the Israelites used in battle. Perhaps, mentioning was not necessary because essential oils in general have this therapeutic benefit. Even the Romans knew the benefits of oils when it comes to warfare. It has been said that before venturing out into battle, every Roman soldier had an essential oil in their pocket, particularly the chamomile oil, “to give them the courage and mental clarity they needed in the battlefield.”⁵⁵ They also used lavender oil “to dress war wounds.”⁵⁶ They used it to treat “upset stomachs, kidney disorders, jaundice, dropsy, and treating insect bites.”⁵⁷ Also, during World War II, a French medical doctor, Jean Valnet maximized the use of “essential oil to treat soldiers and wrote a major book on that topic in 1964 called Aromatherapy.”⁵⁸ Essential oils became “a general antimicrobial agent and insect repellent and was part of the first aid kits carried by the Australian soldiers.”⁵⁹

Also, the use of oil as a symbol of divine blessing and deliverance was a reminder to them that they were cleansed from the curse of hidden sin. God will now bless them with victory and bring down their enemy at their feet.

Oil Principle # 28

In the Bible, we can cite a scenario where the Israelites could have used oil in battle. In Joshua chapter 7, the story tells us that Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, had tasted their first defeat in battle because of hidden sin. This sin was unknown to Joshua, which unfortunately cost him 36 skilled warriors struck down by the men of Ai (Joshua 7:5). In this misfortune, he cried and asked the Lord to give him the reason for their defeat (Joshua 7:7-9). God then told him that someone in the camp committed a sin by disobeying divine prohibitions about the untouchable things in their spoils at Jericho (Joshua 7:10-12). By process of careful investigation, Achan and his family were discovered as the perpetrators of the sin and thus received the death penalty for it (Joshua 7:13-26).

After this, the people were once again sanctified to do battle (Joshua 7:13). Just like in Joshua 3:15, the sanctification likely involved ceremonial preparations. In chapter 6, we deduced that the ceremony of sanctification could involve anointing of oil. But in the case of Joshua chapters 7 and 8, the ceremony of sanctification points not only to spiritual cleansing but to psychological preparation as well. Perhaps, those who got wounded and fled from Ai were still recuperating from their wounds. Thus, tending their wounds with healing oils was vital. Also, the use of oil as a symbol of divine blessing and deliverance was a reminder to them that they were cleansed from the curse of hidden sin. God will now bless them with victory and bring down their enemy at their feet.

CHAPTER

10



ORDINATION

*Ordinary men are given the authority of the priesthood.
Worthiness and willingness – not experience, expertise, or
education – are the qualifications for priesthood ordination.*

– David A. Bednar

POWER TRUTH

your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and
aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces stringed
instruments make you glad;

Psalms 45:8 NRSV

ORDINATION

And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and
consecrate them, that they may minister to
me as priests. (Exodus 30:30)

Ordination is a religious ritual of setting apart a person,
a place, or objects for sacred position, use, and purpose.
In this sense, ordination is also consecration. The
ritual is done through the anointing of oil as a symbol of divine

recognition and blessings. All biblical scenarios of ordination look back to this ritual for their origin and significance. There are at least three kinds of ordination that the Bible shows us.

The ritual is done through the anointing of oil as a symbol of divine recognition and blessings

Oil Principle # 29

The first kind of ordination is inanimate ordination. The story of Jacob's ladder in Gen. 28:10-22 suggests that the practice of anointing already existed before the Mosaic Law. When Jacob fled from the fury of his brother Esau, his mother told him to go to his uncle who lived in Haran. But while on his way, he came to a certain place and stayed there all night. In his sleep, God showed him in a dream the promise of provision and protection in keeping with the covenant that He made with Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 28:10-15). When Jacob woke up, he was afraid because of his encounter with divine holiness. He said, "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Immediately after this realization, he made a pillar of stone in that place. He anointed the altar with oil and consecrated that place, giving it a name, Bethel (Gen. 28:18-19). Thus, in this sense, ordination or consecration can be also done to objects. Another example is found in Lev. 8:11, where the altar was sprinkled seven times with anointing oil. In this case, the anointing symbolized not only consecration but perfection. Also, along with the altar, "all the utensils, and the laver and its base" inside the tabernacle were anointed (Lev. 8:12). All these objects were ordained for one purpose, to signify spiritual truths in their religious use.

**All these objects were ordained for one purpose,
to signify spiritual truths in their religious use.**

Oil Principle # 30

Secondly, there is also what is called spatial ordination or consecration of places. This kind of ordination was more elaborated in the dedication of the tabernacle. In Exodus 30:23-38, the tabernacle itself—outside and inside—was anointed with holy oil. In chapters 1 and 6, we noted that the sweet fragrance of the holy oil literally filled the tabernacle with irresistible aroma. The fragrance of the tabernacle was a psychological testimony that in God's presence there is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11). Also, it must be noted that compared to the dedication of the temple, it was only in the tabernacle that the Israelites witnessed a spectacular manifestation of the Shekinah glory (Ex. 4:38 cf. 1 Kgs. 6-7). Perhaps, it was because the temple was humanly designed, unlike the tabernacle whose master architect was Yahweh himself. By human comparison, the temple was solidly glorious and huge. Yet most of the materials in the tabernacle were wood and curtains. However, the major difference between the two was the anointing. In Solomon's dedication of the temple, we don't have an explicit record about holy anointing. Maybe, the cedarwood served as its alternative. Even so, it was not a fair switch for the holy anointing oil of the tabernacle.

**Jesus is the ordained One whom God the
Father anointed with love and glory to become
the ultimate Prophet, Priest, and King.**

Oil Principle # 31

Thirdly, the Bible shows us about official ordination. In the Old Testament, it refers to a person or people chosen and called by God either for religious order or royal position. Since ancient Israel was originally theocratic in its government, the priests and kings had to undergo the ceremony of anointing as a symbol of divine calling. With regards to the kind of oil used in the ceremony, it seems that only the priests received the holy anointing oil. The oil used for anointing kings was probably common oil like olive oil. In the case of Saul and David, it was the prophet Samuel who anointed them to kingship. Obviously, the priestly and royal offices were God-given positions that should represent and execute the will of Yahweh. Their ordination was not for themselves but for the cause of God to His nation.

In the New Testament, the title of Jesus as the Christ was literally a term of anointing and ordination. Jesus is the Ordained One whom God the Father anointed with love and glory to become the ultimate Prophet, Priest, and King. Regarding Christians, their ordination to Gospel ministry is anointed by the Holy Spirit who indwells them (1 Jn. 2:20). Thus, in the general and spiritual sense, all Christians are ordained servants of Christ to propagate the message of the Gospel to the world.

In pastoral ordination, oil was no longer used, because the church as a community under the Holy Spirit served as a witness to the person's calling and consecration before the presence of God.

Oil Principle # 32

Interestingly, there is no explicit occurrence of ceremonial anointing in the New Testament when ordaining pastors in the local church. The laying of hands is mentioned (1 Tim. 4:14),

but the anointing of oil is not stated. Probably, the presence of the Holy Spirit fulfilled the Old Testament symbolism of anointing. Thus, in pastoral ordination, oil was no longer used, because the church as a community under the Holy Spirit served as a witness to the person's calling and consecration before the presence of God.

CHAPTER

11



HOSPITALITY

Peace is an awareness of reserves from beyond ourselves, so that our power is not so much in us as through us. Peace is the gift, not of volitional struggle, but of spiritual hospitality.

— Harry Emerson Fosdick

POWER TRUTH

you love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;

Psalm 45:7 NRSV

HOSPITALITY

There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spends it up. (Proverbs 21:20).

The Bible shows us that in Jewish etiquette of hospitality, oil signifies a symbol of generosity and openness. It is based on the two greatest commandments: loving God

and loving your neighbor as yourself, even if that neighbor is a stranger. As a people saved by Yahweh from Egyptian slavery, Israel must reflect or share the kindness of God to the poor and the oppressed. As they experienced the unfailing provision and protection of God in their wilderness journey, they are to show care to people who humbly and peaceably come under their protection and provision.

Like in other cultures, food plays a major role for refreshment and blessing. By serving food to a guest, the host of the house shows his honor and privilege to share his blessings. However, when we try to interpret and imagine biblical hospitality according to common settings that we have today, we may fail to appreciate its real picture of openness and generosity. Today, due to rampant and nonstop news of wickedness almost everywhere, everyone is suspicious and wary to open his house to strangers. “Don’t talk to strangers” is the common rule of safety today. Of course, in times like this, who would not be more careful and cynical? Thus, our hospitality is usually limited to the people we know and like.

The Bible shows us that in Jewish etiquette of hospitality, oil signifies a symbol of generosity and openness. It is based on the two greatest commandments: Loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself, even if that neighbor is a stranger.

Oil Principle # 33

But in biblical times, the highest expression of hospitality was for strangers. For example, in Genesis chapter 18, Abraham opened his house to three strangers who he saw walking in the heat of the day. The three men did not ask to come into

his house, yet Abraham ran to meet them and bowed himself on the ground while asking them to come inside his tent and dine with him (Gen. 18:2-5). Such hospitality since the time of Abraham was motivated by divine providence. In biblical times, the ancients believed that strangers were God-sent. In fact, the story of Abraham became a basis for early Christians to believe that angels sometimes take the form of strangers to visit God's people (Heb. 13:2). In other words, from a biblical perspective, hospitality to strangers was giving hospitality to God.

Again, going back to the major role of food in hospitality, the ancients took this as highly important. Since food gives refreshment, strength, and health, the serving of it is indeed a clear and tangible form of care. In the case of Abraham, in Genesis 18, if you observe his excitement and attitude in verses 4-8, you will see that ever since then, food served with gladness never ceases to establish friendship and blessing. Of course, like in any other food preparation, oil serves a major role. In biblical times, olive oil “replaced butter to a large extent in the diet of the people of the Mediterranean countries.”⁶⁰

That's how important oil is in food preparation, that the ancients considered it as a treasure and a symbol of prudence (Prov. 21:20).

Oil Principle # 34

At that time, food was usually fried. Oil was “added to stews and poured over boiled vegetables, such as beans, peas and lentils, and over salads, sour milk, cheese and other foods as a dressing.”⁶¹ It was also used in “preparation of cakes (Num. 11:8; 1 Kings 17:12-16) and with honey (Ezra 16:13), flour (Lev. 2:1, 4), and wine (Rev. 6:6).”⁶² When it comes to bread, “a cake is prepared from ordinary bread dough which is smeared with oil and sprinkled with herbs before baking (Lev. 2:4).”

This was actually the first food that Abraham offered to the strangers, perhaps as appetizers (Gen. 18:6). At times of fasting, “early Christians only used vegetable oils, usually olive oil, for cooking.”⁶³ That’s how important oil is in food preparation, that the ancients considered it as a treasure and a symbol of prudence (Prov. 21:20).

It is also interesting to note that within the Oriental community context, when a person somehow receives a favor from God, he will invite his neighbors to come and dine with him. When the food is ready to serve, the host of the house will call out his neighbors three times from a high spot where many can hear him. From there, he will gladly shout an invitation to partake of a meal with him. That’s why when the patriarch Job said, “Have I eaten my morsel myself alone and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof?” What he was saying was: He did not hoard his blessings for himself (Job 31:17).

We are like hungry beggars on the streets and dying travelers in the desert, but with God’s gracious shout of invitation He takes us into His tent.

Oil Principle # 35

Moreover, aside from food serving, a notable biblical custom of Jewish hospitality was the anointing of the head with oil. In this anointing, olive oil was usually used, although the use of other essential oils was possible. In Luke chapter 7, for example, when Simon, the Pharisee, questioned Jesus for not rebuking the sinful woman who washed his feet with her hair and kisses, Jesus tenderly rebuked him for his lack of hospitality (Lk. 7:40-47). Jesus said to Simon, “You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment” (Lk. 7:46). Thus,

anointing the head with oil was a tender and pure expression of humility, grace, and care. Indeed, Simon, the Pharisee, invited Jesus to dine inside his house. But his heart was not fully committed to Jesus. Simon's invitation was just out of curiosity, not of devotion.

Finally, the greatest pattern of hospitality is God himself. Despite our sinful condition before Him, He is gracious to show us His openness and care. We are like hungry beggars on the streets and dying travelers in the desert, but with God's gracious shout of invitation, He takes us into His tent. And as His sheep, He anoints our head with oil (Ps. 23:5).

C H A P T E R

12



BREAKING AND RESTORATION OF BONDS

When God forgives, He at once restores.

– Theodore Epp

POWER TRUTH

The turn came for each girl to go in to King Ahasuerus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their cosmetic treatment, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and cosmetics for women.

Esther 2:12 NRSV

BREAKING AND RESTORATION OF BONDS

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me...” (Luke 4:18)

The use and significance of oil with regards to the subjects of “breaking bonds” and “restoration of bonds” can be only deduced from its theological significance in the history

of Israel as a nation. As the essential oils have the therapeutic properties to heal wounds and give comfort to the heart, likewise, the covenant-keeping God has the redemptive grace to restore His wayward people through His own anointed oil.

As the essential oils have the therapeutic properties to heal wounds and give comfort to the heart, likewise, the covenant-keeping God has the redemptive grace to restore His wayward people through His own anointed oil.

Oil Principle # 36

In the previous chapters, the divine symbolism of oil has already been presented with its historical uses and theological significance. As a divine symbol of Yahweh's calling, favor, presence, provision and protection, one cannot but see it as a covenant emblem of Yahweh. It is indeed a divine bond of relationship to His anointed. Through the anointing, the people see the divine hand of approval and authority. God, ever since He created Man, has always been establishing relationship or covenant with people. In the biblical history of Israel, prophets, priests, and kings were God's agents of building and strengthening the covenant. They were called and anointed in order to protect and preserve the bond of Yahweh to His people.

Through the anointing, the people see the divine hand of approval and authority. God, ever since He created Man, has always been establishing relationship or covenant with people.

Oil Principle # 37

When Israel was enslaved in Egypt, God consecrated a man like Moses to send the message of deliverance to His suffering people. When they were in the wilderness, God majestically showed the glory of His presence through the pillars of cloud and fire over the tabernacle. He also separated a faithful tribe for Himself whom He could anoint to the priesthood ministry. Then when Israel started to prosper and propagate in the Land of Promise and began to ask for a king, God granted them their request. In due time, He gave them David, the man after God's own heart who had rule over them according to His desire.

Hence, the offices of the prophet, priest, and king were all anointed for a special duty of guarding and nurturing the covenant bond of Yahweh to His people. Those who fulfilled their sacred duty had ushered the nation not only to its golden age of prosperity, but into a true devotion to God. However, as the Scripture plainly shows, not all the anointed officials executed their duties with high regard for the covenant of God. Most of them were swallowed up by absolute power. As a consequence, they had ushered the nation into its moral and spiritual demise.

It was for this reason that the Old Testament prophets untiringly preached the message of God's judgment. The judgment was not primarily to terrify them, but to prick and convict their unfaithful heart to repent. Unfortunately, the roots of sin had already went through down to their life system.⁶⁴ Consequently, God finally severed His bond with Israel and brought them at the feet of their enemies.⁶⁵

Israel as a people may have failed to keep the bond. But God in His grace and power has never broken His bond.

Nonetheless, despite Israel's sin and fall, God has promised to keep His blessings to His nation, which He established with the Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel as a people may have failed to keep the bond. But God in His grace and power has never broken His bond. For instance, when Israel was in times of great spiritual crisis when every one of them just did whatever was good in their sight, God raised up a faithful prophet who mightily brought them back to their spiritual senses. God answered the prayer of a pious barren woman of whom Samuel, the great prophet, was born. Likewise, in the fullness of times, when Israel was under the political reign of Rome and when their religion was under the manipulation of false teachers, God sent forth His Son – the Anointed One (Gal. 4:4).

As the Ultimate Anointed One, Jesus Christ will once and for all restore the covenant bond of Israel with Yahweh. He is the only One who can do this, for he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In front of his countrymen, the Anointed One said to his people, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor..." (Lk. 4:18). Indeed, as the Anointed One, Jesus knew that his redemptive sacrifice will restore the broken bond and by his Spirit will seal it for eternity. When the day of God's supreme restoration comes, the prophetic prayer of Hannah – the mother of the prophet Samuel – will come to pass.

The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed." (1 Samuel 2:10)

CHAPTER

13



ADORNMENT

There's more to clothing than just adornment. It does more than merely change how the world perceives us. It changes how we perceive ourselves.

— Jacqueline Carey

POWER TRUTH

Then you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture, so that it shall become holy.

Exodus 40:9 NRSV

ADORNMENT

And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the beautiful young virgins to the harem in Susa the capital...Let their cosmetics be given them. (Esther 2:3)

Beauty is never separated from the nature of divine blessings. God's favor of health and wealth inevitably produce beauty. Thus, it is wrong to think that God only blesses with spiritual, but stingy to bless with physical and material. On the contrary, the Scripture over and over again emphasizes that God's blessing is holistic. He takes care the whole man, not parts of him (1 Th. 5:20). When God's glory is adored, man is adorned. Perhaps, this is the symbolism that we can see from the cosmetic use of oil. In the ancient world, countries like Egypt and Greece had unlocked the marvelous work of art through the use of oil. At that time, they were considered as masters of cosmetology. Surrounding countries like Israel learned from their beautification. No wonder, when it comes to Scripture, the cosmetic power of oil oftentimes portrays a backdrop for a historical landmark in Israel.

When God's glory is adored, man is adorned.

Oil Principle # 39

Now, the Bible does not give us a somewhat laboratorial formulation of oil for cosmetic purpose. However, it shows us the impact of its cosmetic properties in the shaping of the nation. For example, in Exodus 25, the historical establishment of the tabernacle as a physical emblem or manifestation of God's presence was literally emitting a fragrant aroma. It was the most fragrant place among the Israelites during their wilderness journey. As the God of beauty and grace, Yahweh purposely intended that the architectural design of the Tabernacle must emit sweet aroma. He wanted His people to know that in His presence there is fullness of joy.

In Deuteronomy 28:40, God specifically noted that disobedience to His command will greatly affect the beauty of Israel as a nation. Of course, God was not primarily talking

about cosmetics here but moral beauty. Nonetheless, it was part of the blessings that will be affected if His people will turn against Him. It's interesting to read here that God will curse the olive trees as their source of anointing and adornment.

In Ruth chapter 3, when Israel was in her dark period without a king or godly leader to lead the nation, God was preparing a humble and gentle woman to produce a godly king. Ruth was such a woman. She had already experienced the pain of losing someone she loves. She became a poor widow left with her mother-in-law – Naomi. Yet, despite her misfortune, she pledged to follow Naomi wherever she goes and to serve her God. Then at the right moment of time, Ruth didn't know that God will use her gentleness and beauty to win the heart of a rich ruler in Bethlehem – Boaz. When Naomi learned that Boaz had fallen in love with Ruth at first sight, she seized the opportunity to bless her with a kinsman redeemer of good dignity and financial capability. Naomi then encouraged Ruth to once again adorn herself with lovely clothes and fragrant oil and meet with Boaz (Ruth 3:3). Of course, as the story went on, we are told that Boaz and Ruth married and their love was blessed with a son whom they named Obed. "He was the father of Jesse, the father of David" who soon became the good and great king of Israel (Ruth 4:17).

The book of Esther also testifies of the providence of God in using adornment to protect the nation of Israel.

Oil Principle # 40

The book of Esther also testifies of the providence of God in using adornment to protect the nation of Israel. By reading the story, it would not be an exaggeration to say that God used beauty and cosmetics to preserve the Jews. Esther was literally

a beauty queen with a beautiful bodily figure and lovely face (Esther 2:7). Through her tactful attitude and creative use of cosmetics, she was able – by the help of God – to save the Jews from genocide (Est. 3).

Most of all, the greatest adornment of all is the adornment of the Messiah. It is poetically described in Song of Solomon 1:2, 3:6, and 4:6. In these passages, the King Messiah will come as a lovely husband to his bride – Israel. Psalm 45:6-8 also testifies of this fact. In the spirit of prophecy, David said,

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of
uprightness; you have loved righteousness
and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your
God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness
beyond your companions; your robes are all
fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

**As long as beautification exalts His
glory, God's people should not hesitate
to use it with grace and decency.**

Oil Principle # 41

Of course, from a theological perspective, perhaps the description here should not be taken strictly as literal. It is possible that the fragrance of myrrh, aloes, and cassia here is just a symbolism for the spiritual beauty and glory that the presence of the Messiah will bring.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, compare with the tabernacle, it is highly likely that the presence of the Messiah will literally emit various aroma.⁶⁷ In any case, with all these scriptural examples, it is biblical to conclude that the God of essential oils never hates the cosmetic world. As long as beautification exalts His glory, God's people should not hesitate to use it with grace and decency.

C H A P T E R

14



BLESSINGS, PROTECTION, AND COVERING

A blessing of a circle of light drawn around a person to protect, heal and strengthen.

— John O'Donohue

POWER TRUTH

So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.

Genesis 28:18 NRSV

BLESSINGS, PROTECTION, AND COVERING

The priest will put the rest of the oil in his hand on the head of the one to be cleansed. So he will make peace with the LORD for that person in the LORD's presence. (Leviticus 14:18).

BLESSINGS

In Israel's history, the greatest landmark of divine supernatural provision was during their wilderness journey. In Deuteronomy chapter 32, Moses was old enough to lead Israel to the land of milk and honey. As a farewell message to the people, he solemnly and eloquently admonished them to remain faithful to Yahweh in whatever situation. He reminded the people of God's historical and supernatural care through the years of their journey in the wilderness despite their murmurings and arrogance. Moses assured the people that if they will only give their devotion to Yahweh, He is powerful enough to make them "ride on the heights of the earth and feed them with the produce of the fields, and to give them honey from rocks and olive oil from solid rock" (Deut. 32:13). In other words, God can make a way if there seems to be no way. God can make the oil of gladness to flow over them even in the midst of a difficult situation as long as they remain faithful to Him.

God can make the oil of gladness to flow over them even in the midst of a difficult situation as long as they remain faithful to Him.

Oil Principle # 42

Like the blessings promised to the tribe of Asher, Israel as a nation will "wash their feet in olive oil" if they will obey the commandments of Yahweh in all situations (Deut. 33:24). Job also used this symbolism when he said that his "steps were bathed in buttermilk and the rock poured streams of olive oil on me" (Job 29:6). Thus, based on this portrayal, the abundance of oil as a symbol of blessings does not only mean divine favor, it also means obedience. The human side of the blessing must

not be set aside. The blessings are received because of obedience; that's the biblical picture of oil as a symbol of blessings.

PROTECTION

When it comes to portraying the symbol or metaphor of divine protection, nothing can surpass the beautiful picture of the good shepherd. Psalm 23 can be regarded as an immortal and eternal song for God. Perhaps, even in heaven, God's people will still sing this psalm with gratefulness and awe. Imagine the confidence of the psalmist here for God's protection. David says in verse 5 that Yahweh is preparing a banquet for him while his enemies watch. At the same time, Yahweh is also anointing his head with oil in front of them and making the cup of provision to overflow.

One of the basic requirements for victorious warfare is the sufficiency of provision. The soldiers should not lack in their food and drinks. As long as the army has the food resource secured and maintained, they will never lose the vitality and strength in battle. It also boosts their morale, knowing that their General takes care of them. That's why in the ancient art of war it was always a good strategy to find a way to cut the source of provision of your enemy. The moment they get the source of provision, it won't be necessary to attack the enemy head on. They can choose to wait until their enemies surrender due to starvation. This was exactly one of the situations that David had in mind when he said that God anoints his head with oil. God was assuring David that because of His omnipotence and omnipresence, he didn't need to worry about his enemies. God will protect him. They can only watch him from a distance, but they cannot come to hurt him. They also cannot starve David or destroy the source of his provision, because God as his faithful and good Shepherd never leaves him alone. God was his provision.

COVERING

In the Old Testament, the ceremony of animal sacrifices for the remission of sins actually meant covering. In the New Testament, the word “propitiation” as one of the blessings of the Cross is connected to this picture. But pertaining to the typology and spiritual significance of animal sacrifices, it must be put in mind that they prophetically pointed to the Cross of Jesus. It is for this reason in the Gospels Jesus is told to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. However, going back to the ceremonial regulations in the book of Leviticus, it is once again interesting to note that oil had played a redemptive significance.

In Old Testament understanding, to have peace with God was to be covered from His wrath.

Oil Principle # 43

In Leviticus 14:10-18, it is said that along with the animal to be sacrificed, the priest must also take some olive oil. He will use that olive oil for some religious gestures after the sacrifice. In v. 18, it is said that the priest will put the oil in his hand “on the head of the one to be cleansed.” By doing this symbolic gesture, it is said that the man who offered the animal sacrifice will receive peace with God. In Old Testament understanding, to have peace with God was to be covered from His wrath. In other words, the justice of God that He was supposed to bring upon the sinner was brought on to the innocent lamb that became the substitute. The anointing oil secured or sealed this ritual and thus by this gesture authorized in front of Yahweh the spiritual covering given to the sinner.⁶⁸

CHAPTER

15



BURIAL MARKER

It is not length of life, but depth of life.

— Emerson Ralph Waldo

POWER TRUTH

As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him.

1 John 2:27 NRSV

BURIAL MARKER

They buried him in the tomb that he had prepared for himself in the City of David. They laid him on a bed full of spices and blended perfumes. And they burned a bonfire in his honor. (2 Chronicles 16:14).

The belief that life on earth is not the final stage of existence has made the believers of the afterlife to view death as a door to a new and glorious existence. Such belief created a hope that although the present life is characterized with pain and loss, the divine reality beyond this life will comfort those who passed on to glory. Thus, as an expression of this belief, people honor their dead with a proper burial. The ceremony is usually observed through symbolic gestures and with emblematic objects that bear spiritual significance.

In the ancient world and even in biblical times, the use of oil was both part of the embalming process and spiritual symbolism. Many ancient cultures in the East believed that the ritual of anointing had “the power to protect the dead from evil as they passed into the afterlife.”⁶⁹ For instance, the Egyptians believed that the use of oil in the embalming process was “instrumental in changing the form from human to divine, specifically in the case of royalty.”⁷⁰ They never took this for granted; the oil was essential for the deification or spiritual metamorphosis of the dead. This belief was also the reason why cremation was mostly abhorred in the ancient religion. Such kind of treatment to the body of the dead was not only considered as horrifyingly insulting, but also tormenting. Since, the body was expected to transform in the unknown future glory, burning it might affect the transformation.

The ceremony is usually observed through symbolic gestures and with emblematic objects that bear spiritual significance.

Oil Principle # 44

In the Bible, the belief in the resurrection of the dead has created a custom of honorable proper burial. In fact, in Psalm 79:2-3, part of the abominable things that an Israelite earnestly

prayed to God would not happen to him was to be deprived of a proper burial. Although embalming is not explicitly prescribed in the Bible, Genesis chapter 50 gives us a record that both Jacob and Joseph were embalmed. Perhaps, in the case of Joseph, it was an honor likely performed due to his status as Pharaoh's second in command. We don't know if the Israelites had their own burial ceremony or if they just adapted the procedures of Egyptian embalming. Truly, it is not the purpose of the Bible to give us details about the burial and embalming process. However, common sense and Jewish religious culture tell us that a high regard for the afterlife has imported honorable rituals for the body of the dead.

There are at least three biblical references that implicitly show that the Jews since the Old Testament period had their own unique way of performing the burial ceremony –with the use of oil. In 2 Chronicles 16:14, it was recorded that an aromatic ritual for burial was already practiced. According to the text, different kinds of essential oils and perfumes were used. Some of these were burned to emit a fragrant and soothing aroma suited to comfort the hearts of the bereaved.

These oils and perfumes were not only for the mere observance of proper burial, they were also expressions of their love and care for their dead Lord.

Oil Principle # 45

In Luke 23:56-24:1, the text tells us that when the followers of Jesus laid down his body inside the grave, the women put different kinds of perfumes and ointments inside the linen cloth wrapped on the body of Jesus. These oils and perfumes were not only for the mere observance of proper burial, they were

also expressions of their love and care for their dead Lord. But perhaps the most dramatic and even cinematic gesture of honor and care was when Mary washed the feet of Jesus with expensive oils. The story is told in John 12:3-7.

Many preachers usually go to this story because it contains rich lessons about devotion, commitment, and love. In verse 3, it is believed that in today's currency, the cost of the oil that Mary used to anoint the feet of Jesus was worth up to \$25,000.⁷¹ The story does not tell us where or how she got that kind of ointment. But if Judas was not exaggerating in his comment in verse 5, the cost of the ointment during that time was equal to a workman's whole year salary. Judas was right then when he said that the ointment, if sold, can be used on various philanthropic works for the poor. However, out of her deep honor and love for Jesus, Mary willingly and lavishly offered it to the Lord. According to Jesus, such an act of deep honor and care would be honored as well as a burial marker for his coming redemptive death.

CHAPTER

16



SYMBOL OF WORSHIP

I need to worship because without it I lose a sense of wonder and gratitude and plod through life with blinders on.

— John Ortberg

POWER TRUTH

But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge.

1 John 2:20 NRSV

SYMBOL OF WORSHIP

Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, for a burnt offering, and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today the LORD will appear to you. (Leviticus 9:3-4)

Today, worship is typically defined and described as an act of singing or uttering praise and thanks to God. It is ceremonially viewed as part of the church's program where songs and music are offered to God. A well-known worship

leader defines worship as an atmosphere of praise that welcomes God's presence. These are good descriptions, in fact they are biblical. Psalm 22:3 says that God is "enthroned in the praises" of His people. "It is a good thing to sing praises" to the Lord (Psalm 92:1). Nonetheless, these descriptions are not the definition of worship. They are not pointing to the essence of worshipping God. Thus, the important question is: What is worship?

The Scripture actually does not give us a clear-cut definition of worship in a creedal fashion. However, by general observation of its description, it can be stated that worship simply means, giving what is due to God. But then, admittedly, this definition cannot specifically show the essence of worship, because God in His essence is far beyond human descriptions. For this reason, for a human to express the worth of God in a succinct but profound terminology and description, he uses symbolism or metaphors to compare God or to show his homage to God. It is not within the scope of this study to present all the symbolisms or anthropomorphic language for God written in the Bible. But pertaining to the symbolism of oil related to worship, there are two fundamental backgrounds to consider.

Since worship simply means, giving what is due to God, the human symbolism usually goes into two directions of descriptions. First is to describe in word-pictures his desire and act of giving, and secondly, to describe in word-pictures the majesty of God's worth.

Oil Principle # 46

First of all, it must be noted that worship is not limited to songs of praise and music. They are parts or ingredients of worship but not the core of worship. Since worship simply

means giving what is due to God, the human symbolism usually goes into two directions of descriptions. First is to describe in word-pictures his desire and act of giving, and secondly, to describe in word-pictures the majesty of God's worth.

In the book of Exodus, it has already been highlighted in the previous study that the tabernacle was a beautiful emblem of God's presence.⁷² Essential oils had been used to sanctify and aromatize its furniture so that the people will realize that in the presence of Yahweh, joy, peace, and beauty are found (Psa. 16:11). In fact, the very act of sanctifying the tabernacle through the fragrance of the holy anointing oil was already an act of worship (Exodus 25:6; 27:20; 29:2, 7, 21). God is holy, (this is perhaps the core-characteristic of His nature), thereby, part of giving what is worthy to Him is to sanctify Him. But we don't sanctify Him in the sense that He sanctifies us. Our sanctification of Him is an acknowledgement that He is indeed the Holy One. So, when the Israelites anointed the tabernacle as the place of God's presence, it was not merely for cleansing it, but to set it apart as a special place for God. Thus, with this description, the oil symbolizes consecration. God must be worshipped in the beauty of His holiness.

Thus, with this description, the oil symbolizes consecration. God must be worshipped in the beauty of His holiness.

Oil Principle # 47

The second fundamental description is the redemptive background of worship. This is logically based on God's holiness. Since God is holy, His worshippers must come to Him not only sincerely, but holy. However, the human problem is that he cannot do this on his own. The sin in his heart hinders him from coming to God according to divine terms. To solve this

human problem, God, out of the graciousness of His heart, provided a way for Man to come to Him. Indeed, during the time of Moses, God stepped among His people through the tabernacle. He declared the majesty of His holiness before them. But since He knew that man could not just come to Him as he is, He established the system of animal sacrifices to serve as a spiritual covering.

The principle is that sinful man cannot just approach God without suffering the consequence of His punishment. The wages of sin is death. Therefore, without cleansing, without atonement man cannot approach God. Thus, by going through the ceremony of the animal sacrifices, man can express his humility and repentance before the Lord. In this ritual, man is acknowledging the substitutionary sacrifice that an innocent animal will do for him. Man in this ritual understands that the animal will die for him. And then when the ritual of sacrifice is done, the priest will anoint his head as a symbol of atonement done for him (Lev. 14:10-18). This is the symbolism of animal sacrifices in the Mosaic ceremonial system. Man's worship must be based on God's holiness and mercy. And with this description, the use of oil served as a symbol of atonement⁷³ to make man's worship of God possible.

CHAPTER

17



OIL OF GLADNESS

A kind heart is a fountain of gladness, making everything in its vicinity freshen into smiles.

— Washington Irving

POWER TRUTH

Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds.

John 19:39 NRSV

OIL OF GLADNESS

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me...to grant to those who mourn in Zion--- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning. (Isaiah 61:1-3)

St. Paul admonished the believers in Philippi to “rejoice in the Lord always,” he also gave them the foundation of Christian happiness (Phil. 4:4). Unlike the happiness

in the world, Christian joy does not depend on feelings and happenings. Christians are happy not because God gives them financial stability and social influence, but because they know Jesus. Of course, this idea of Christian happiness is interpreted by the world as a sheer excuse of human weakness and religious delusion. In the world of sense experience, happiness is defined by control and power. Those who are in control have the money and the sociopolitical power to command people according to their desires. Thus, if you have the power, you have the ability to change your circumstances or your world. This is their happiness.

In a sense, there's a grain of truth in that perspective. In fact, the symbolism of the "oil of gladness" testifies to that kind of perspective. How? Of course, it is not through the worldly lens by which it is viewed, but through the biblical lens.

Christians are happy because no matter what their circumstances are, their Lord is always sovereignly in control.

Oil Principle # 48

There are three biblical passages that define the meaning of the oil of gladness in relation to the concept of control and power.⁷⁴ But before digging into those passages, it must be observed that when Paul said to the Christians in Philippi to rejoice in the Lord always, the immediate context tells that the source of joy comes from the presence and power of the Lord above and beyond human condition and situation (Phil. 4:4-5). Christians are happy because no matter what their circumstances are, their Lord is always sovereignly in control.

The oil of gladness is first mentioned in Psalm 45:7. It was David who invented the term under the prophetic inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Generally, in David's own words, the definition of the oil of gladness is messianic. Specifically, it points to

the character of the Messiah and what He can do. In verse 2, David described the character of the Messiah as “fairer than the children of men.”

Theologically, it means that the Messiah is not an ordinary person; He is a divine being, not an angel but the second Person of the Trinity – the Son of God. David also said that grace is flowing through the Messiah’s lips, which can refer to the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Biblically considered, this gospel has two characteristics: One is for salvation and the second is for judgment. In other words, those who received the Gospel will receive the grace of the Messiah. But those who reject it will receive His justice. It is surprising to see that in this Psalm David focused the emphasis of the oil of gladness on the Messiah’s justice (Psalm 45:3-7). In other words, true joy will only come on earth when the presence of wickedness is totally eradicated. This is exactly the Christian perspective of joy.

And indeed, in that day, their King Messiah will “give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning” (Isa. 61:3). Thus, in this sense, the oil of gladness refers to Israel’s future glory.

Oil Principle # 49

The Christian believes that there will come a time that his sorrow, pain, and persecution on behalf of his Lord will end. He lives in the light of this future hope. He believes that someday the meek will inherit the earth. Wicked people and the presence of sin will no longer exist when the fragrant presence of the King Messiah will finally erase them on the face of the earth. This is why in Isaiah 61:3, the prophet said that time will come that the ugliness of Israel will be cleansed and healed.

God will supernaturally restore her glory and beauty as a chosen nation. But like other prophecies, Isaiah emphasized that the restoration of Israel will be a Messianic work. The glorious presence of the Messiah at His second coming will make them repent and bow in contrition. And indeed, in that day, their King Messiah will “give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning” (Isa. 61:3). Thus, in this sense, the oil of gladness refers to Israel’s future glory.

In the New Testament, the oil of gladness mentioned in Psalm 45 was quoted by the writer of the book of Hebrews to refer to the validity of the Christian Faith.⁷⁵ Generally, the author of Hebrews wanted to assure the persecuted Christians of the early Church that their belief in Jesus of Nazareth was founded on solid ground. In his scholarly and eloquent arguments, the author of Hebrews proved from Mosaic grounds that prophecies concerning the Messiah had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, Christians should not waver in their faith because they are standing on solid biblical ground. Hence, in this sense, the oil of gladness from a Christian perspective refers to the validity of his faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christians are happy because they have the truth that gives liberty. (Jn. 8:32; 14:6).

CHAPTER

18



THE UNITY OF BELIEVERS

Unity to be real must stand the severest strain without breaking.

— Mahatma Gandhi

POWER TRUTH

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Luke 10:34 NRSV

THE UNITY OF BELIEVERS

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment...” (Psalm 133:1)

There is strength in unity. History and experience testify that honorable feats are accomplished through unity. This is the power that must govern politics; the capstone that builds orderly and peaceable society; the bond that strengthens the family; and the spirit that moves the Church.

There is strength in unity. History and experience testify that honorable feats are accomplished through unity.

Oil Principle # 50

In the Bible, it is once again interesting that oil is used as a symbol of unity. Perhaps, its flexible and adaptive characteristics as an essential commodity made it appropriate for this symbolism. Today, people may not appreciate the diverse uses and benefits of oil because they don't see it commonly used in many things. But in the ancient world, it performed a jack-of-all-trades kind of work. It was used for various purposes like food, medicine, perfume, therapy, illuminant, skin care, and so on.⁷⁶ Thus, with its flexible benefits, the ancients considered oil as a suitable symbol of diversity in unity.

It was composed of four essential oils at the time of Moses that were considered the “finest spices.” They are myrrh, cinnamon, cane, and cassia.

Oil Principle # 51

There's only one passage in the Bible that shows oil as a symbol of unity. It is found in Psalm 133. In this passage, the psalmist poetically stated,

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments..."
(Psalm 133:1-2)

As you can see, the unity of the believers is compared to the “precious ointment” poured upon the head of Aaron. Surely, with this Mosaic picture, we can conclude that the precious ointment mentioned here refers to the holy anointing oil. This oil was exclusively used for the consecration of the tabernacle and of the priesthood. No one in Israel, even Moses, had the right and privilege to be anointed with this oil. It was a holy oil by which the ingredients were prescribed by God Himself.

It was composed of four essential oils at the time of Moses that were considered the “finest spices.” They are myrrh, cinnamon, cane, and cassia. All have the same aromatic characteristics that induce mental and spiritual focus. Hence, the holy oil was irresistibly fragrant. This is the oil that is referred to in Psalm 133 as a symbol of unity. This is also the reason why in verse 1, the psalmist described unity as “good” and “pleasant” because he is going to compare it to the holy anointing of the Tabernacle. Of course, like the wide range benefits of oils, when believers “dwell together in unity” they are also like oil that produce a lot of benefits to their community, their government, their family, and in the church. Like the benefits of essential oil as food, therapy, illuminant, and medicine, believers will also do the same benefit in the moral and spiritual aspects of their society if they dwell together in unity. In other words, when unity happens in the church, the word of God as food for the soul is widely broadcasted.

Healing of mind, emotion, and relationships are also given to the community. Believers are able to fulfill their duty as lights of the world and they are empowered to share Jesus as the redeemer of the soul. But aside from this, the context of Psalm 133 tells us that the profound symbolism of the holy oil for the unity of the believers has to do with consecration and messianic hope (Psalm 133:2-3). These are actually the fundamental ingredients of the believers’ unity.

In other words, when unity happens in the church, the word of God as food for the soul is widely broadcasted. Healing of mind, emotion, and relationships are also given to the community.

Oil Principle # 52

Just as the holy oil was composed of four essential oils that God Himself prescribed, in the same way, the believers' unity will only happen when these two essential spiritual ingredients are applied. With regards to consecration, just like Aaron, when believers start to dedicate their lives to God and shun selfish ambition, loving people will become the natural outflow. In Galatians 5:14-21, Paul said that self-centeredness hinders and destroys Christian unity.

Secondly, it is also important that the believer focus on the eternal kingdom of the Messiah. The psalmist described it as "the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psa. 133:3). In other words, if the believer's motivation in life is not earthly possessions and position but the blessings of Mount Zion, he will not become self-centered.⁷⁷ And since the nature of greatness in the Kingdom of God is service, His relationship with co-believers will be for their benefit and encouragement. You see, just think about this: If someone feels that he is loved and appreciated, that person will not try to hurt the one who loves him. Why? Loving your neighbor is the satisfaction of our social nature (Eph. 4:2-3).

CHAPTER

19



ANOINTING KINGS

*Kings in this should imitate God, their
mercy should be above their works.*

— William Penn

POWER TRUTH

You shall sow, but not reap;
you shall tread olives, but not anoint
yourselves with oil;
you shall tread grapes, but not drink wine.
Micah 6:15 NRSV

ANOINTING KINGS

I found my servant David. I anointed him with
my holy oil. (Psalm 89:20)

Under the theocratic government of Israel in the Old Testament, God was their King. From the time of Moses until the Judges, the laws and policies of their nation came directly from divine orders through the mediation of prophets and priests. However, in the time of Samuel, they

started to murmur against the Lord and asked for a human king. By doing so, they declared their rejection to God.⁷⁸ Yet, Yahweh patiently listened to the rebellious request of His people. He granted their request for a king.

He granted their request for a king.

Oil Principle # 53

In 1 Samuel chapter 8, the Lord listed before them the rights of a king who will rule over them. Considering the weakness of the human nature, God assured Israel that their request would backfire against them. Yet they did not listen to Yahweh's warning but insisted to push their want. The man from the tribe of Benjamin was their first king. It was Saul.⁷⁹ At first, Saul was fulfilling his kingly duties well. But when political power started to consume him, he took things into his own hands. King Saul's selfishness brought calamity upon the people. The Lord also rejected him and promised that the next king will be after God's own heart.

Now, to be "after God's own heart" was the very symbolism of the royal anointing. The priestly anointing signifies commitment to the spiritual things of God. On the other hand, the kingly anointing signifies godly leadership in the sociopolitical aspects of the nation. Both offices go hand-in-hand. They were both needed for the national stability of Israel as Yahweh's people.

The royal power is not for his to enjoy in self-pleasure, but a privilege to lead the people of God back to their covenant-relationship with Yahweh.

Oil Principle # 54

In 1 Samuel 10:1, when Samuel anointed Saul to the royal office, he also told him that the leadership he received was for the benefit of the people. It was not for self-pleasure. That's why during the ceremony of anointing, it was necessary for the Spirit of God to empower the chosen king so that he can fulfill the task expected of him. More importantly, the divine power of the king depended on his faithfulness to Yahweh's words (1 Samuel 1:25). Disobedience driven by selfishness removes the anointing of the king. Hence, the anointing should always remind the king that he is just a vice-regent of God. The royal power is not for his to enjoy in self-pleasure, but a privilege to lead the people of God back to their covenant-relationship with Yahweh.

In 1 Samuel 16:1 and 13, when Israel was under attack by the Philistines, God told Samuel that he had already chosen the next king who will replace Saul. The next king was the young man David. It's interesting to note that unlike Saul whom Samuel personally admired for his kingly stature, David was God's own choice. Even Samuel didn't expect that the next king whom he would anoint was a youth. In fact, when Samuel was in the presence of the sons of Jesse, somehow the manly build and air of authority that he sensed from Eliab made him conclude that he was God's anointed.⁸⁰ But God had to remind Samuel that it is not the basis of royal anointing. God said that it is natural for humans to look on the outward, but God sees the heart.

The next king was the young man David. It's interesting to note that unlike Saul whom Samuel personally admired for his kingly stature, David was God's own choice.

In 1 Kings 1:39, Solomon was anointed by the prophet, Nathan, together with the priest, Zadok, to become the successor of King David. The scenario behind Solomon's anointing is significant in understanding the nature of royal anointing. In the story, before the ceremony of Solomon's anointing, one of David's sons by the name of Adonijah, had taken in his hands the decision to be his father's successor. King David himself didn't know this because he was very old. Yet Adonijah was able to convince some of David's faithful men to support him in his desire. As a result, they enthroned him as their king. However, since Adonijah's self-serving assumption of the royal office was not honored by God, his anointing was not accepted or valid. Although he had the right as one of the sons of David to inherit the throne, by virtue of his father's covenant with God he was not qualified. The divine choice was in favor of Solomon, the son of Bathsheba.⁸¹

Thus, the royal anointing that the kings of Israel received in the Old Testament was not mere ceremony. It was a divine testimony for His choice.

Oil Principle # 56

Thus, the royal anointing that the kings of Israel received in the Old Testament was not mere ceremony. It was a divine testimony for His choice. Of course, when Israel, after the reign of David and Solomon, had been plagued with moral and political corruptions, the royal anointing had also been taken for granted. It became a sheer ceremony. But in God's sight, it was a sign of His approval, because in the final analysis, a "king belongs to the Holy One of Israel" (Psalm 89:18).

CHAPTER

20



FOR FASTING

A fast is not a hunger strike. Fasting submits to God's commands. A hunger strike makes God submit to our demands.

— Ed Cole

POWER TRUTH

to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.
Isaiah 61:3 NRSV

FOR FASTING

When you fast, wash your face and comb your hair. Then your fasting won't be obvious. Instead, it will be obvious to your Father who is with you in private. Your Father sees what you do in private. He will reward you. (Matthew 6:17-18)

It must be said at the outset that the Scriptures do not tell us anything about the use of oil with regards to fasting. In fact, the explicit symbolism of oil as an emblem of divine blessing and joy does not make it fit with fasting. Fasting is an expression of sorrow, contrition, and suffering. Even God made it clear when He encouraged Israel to approach Him with integrity through “fasting, crying, and mourning” (Joe. 2:12). Thus, the use and symbolism of oil with regards to this practice is impossible to infer from the Scriptures.

However, with regards to Christian attitude when it comes to fasting, it seems that Jesus encouraged the use of oil to show humility before God. For example, in his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said in Matthew 6:17-18 that fasting should not showcase spirituality. When a believer fasts before God, he should not imitate the hypocrites who love to publicize their so-called spirituality. Rather, when they fast, they need to wash their face and comb their hair. This is so that people will not know what they are doing in front of God. Jesus wanted His followers to live with integrity and not in hypocrisy.

Fasting is an expression of sorrow, contrition, and suffering.

Oil Principle # 57

Now, when Jesus said that a believer should wash his face and comb his hair during fasting, it is probable that the use of oil was implied. We know that the use of oil as a cosmetic was already known since Old Testament times (Ex. 25:6; Est. 2:12). Even in Psalm 23, the anointing of oil on the head can imply beauty in the sight of God. In this sense then, the use of oil for fasting was a personal expression of integrity before God. But then today, health experts tell us that oil can be used as an alternative sustenance or support during fasting. Of course,

outside religious purposes, fasting can be done also as a means to burn fat. The kind of oil that is used today in fasting is extracted “from coconut oil or palm oil.”⁸² Chemists named this kind of oil as MCT or “medium chain triglycerides.”⁸³ According to experts, this kind of oil “is colorless, odorless, and stays liquid at room temperature”⁸⁴ which makes it perfect to add to food and coffee. This oil gives extra energy and boosts the brain during fasting. Thus, the person in fasting will not so much crave for food when he has this oil. For those who want to lose weight, the good news is that, this oil “absorbed more quickly than other fats and easily converted into energy.”⁸⁵ It is no wonder why this product is in-demand in the market today. Those who want to avoid much struggle during their diet found this oil very helpful and effective.

Moreover, compared to the essential oils in the Bible, coconut oil and palm oil are also rich in many health benefits. Unlike other fatty acids, coconut and palm oils are said to be “antibacterial and antiviral.”⁸⁶ They help the immune system. They help “to lose unwanted fats.”⁸⁷ More interestingly, they “can suppress hunger”⁸⁸ and can “provide quick, clean energy, especially brain energy.”⁸⁹

Even in Psalm 23, the anointing of oil on the head can imply beauty in the sight of God. In this sense then, the use of oil for fasting was a personal expression of integrity before God.

Oil Principle # 58

With these benefits, it is possible that when Jesus told his followers to use oil in their fasting, perhaps, during that day, people had already discovered the benefits of oil to suppress hunger. Of course, the great saints in the Bible had a kind of fasting where

by supernatural help they did not need the assistance of some kind of food supplement. But for ordinary people who observe fasting for the simple purpose of giving more time to listen to God, there must be some kind of sustenance that should help them in the process. Thus, when it is said that the prophetess, Anna, “never left the temple courtyard but worshipped day and night by fasting and praying,” the description here should not be taken strictly literal (Lk. 2:36-37). In order to maintain the clarity of her mind and maintain physical energy, Anna possibly had a supplement to assist her in fasting. Of course, this does not mean that she was always taking that supplement, as if she was eating chunks of it during breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If that’s the case, she was not fasting but feasting. The point is, the early Church must have some kind of food supplement to help them in the process of fasting. In this case, the use of essential oil is likely implied. Then it is not to symbolize the spirit of their fasting, but to help them to fulfill it effectively, particularly those who have health problems.

C H A P T E R

21



PREPARATION AND COMMERCE

*Commerce with all nations, alliance
with none, should be our motto.*

– Thomas Jefferson

POWER TRUTH

He cuts down cedars or chooses a holm tree
or an oak and lets it grow strong among the
trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the
rain nourishes it.

Isaiah 44:14 NRSV

PREPARATION AND COMMERCE

So Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and
cypress wood he wanted. Solomon gave
Hiram 120,000 bushels of wheat and 120,000
gallons of pure olive oil. Solomon paid Hiram
this much every year. (1 Ki. 5:10-11).

PRODUCTION AND PREPARATION

The terrain and climate of Palestine proves a suitable environment for growing vines and tree crops, like figs and olives. In the Bible, these two were not only symbolic for Israel as a nation, but they are major source for the production of their finest oil and wine. Since the invention of the Gezer Calendar of the 10th century BC, the agriculturalists in Israel had already traditionalized the harvesting of olives as “one of their major agricultural activities”⁹⁰ and specialty. Since then, the finest oils were “produced from olives freshly harvested.”⁹¹ The process of producing the oil involves three steps. They are, “(1) crushing the olives; (2) pressing the crushed olives (mash); and separating the oil from other liquid (water lees).”⁹²

In doing this process, archeological evidence shows us that the use of “mechanical means”⁹³ was likely involved both in the first and second steps of production, although in Malachi 6:15, the first step could be done manually by treading on the olives under foot. But just in case manpower is lacking, crushing the olives can be done also by using “mortar and pestle or by stone rollers in rock basins.”⁹⁴ It must be noted that historically, “the introduction of a more sophisticated rotary device is tentatively dated to 750-500 BC.”⁹⁵ Thus, during the time of Jesus, it is possible that a more developed and efficient mechanism had already been invented.

The terrain and climate of Palestine proves a suitable environment for growing vines and tree crops like figs and olives. In the Bible, these two were not only symbolic for Israel as a nation, but they are a major source for the production of their finest oil and wine.

In the process of extraction, the Israelites discovered that the finest oil was actually produced when they didn't add "any additional pressure to the crushed olive mash."⁹⁶

When the lever press was invented, the extraction of the finest oil became efficient and increased the amount of oil extracted from the mash. Then in the last process, they will add water to the mashed and boiled olives, so that they can easily skim the oil that floats on top of the water. Interestingly, in this process, the Israelites used the "overflow method" by which they allow gravity to "carry the oil from one vessel to another via overflow or underflow conduits."⁹⁷

Yet aside from this, the fine quality of oil produced not only depends on its process of production. Four factors are also carefully considered. First, the quality of the olive tree is evaluated. Second, the ripeness of its olive fruit is examined. Third, the "treatment of the olives between picking and processing"⁹⁸ is monitored. And fourth, the extraction process must be efficient. During the later times of the kings in Israel, there was already an improved and efficient technological process by which the harvesting and extraction were done (1 Sa. 8:12; 1 Chron. 27:28).

Commerce

Without a doubt, essential oils were an "indispensable commodity in the ancient Near East."⁹⁹ As a large part of Israel's economy and possessing the symbol of divine blessing, olive oil has been used for food, cosmetics, medicines, and religious rites. In Deuteronomy 11:14, the Israelites had been taught that the abundance of oil was a sign of divine favor. In fact, even the description of the Promised Land was connected to an olive tree to show that it was a land blessed by God (Deut. 8:8). With this perspective, the Israelites were honored to share the sign of divine blessings to other nations. Interestingly, when olive oil is properly made and stored, it will remain sweet for years. Hence, it's a good form of merchandise to trade with foreign countries.

Interestingly, when olive oil is properly made and stored, it will remain sweet for years.

Oil Principle # 60

But its value is even more evident in the Scriptures when the olive oil was “sometimes used as a mode of payment (1 Kings 5:11; Eze. 27:17; Hos. 12:1).”¹⁰⁰ Like precious metals and animals, oil became an established medium of exchange. During the reign of King Solomon, he used oil “as part of the payment he gave to Hiram for the expenses used in the construction of the great and beautiful temple (1 Ki. 5:11). Also in Ezekiel 27:17, Israel and Judah included olive oil as part of the finest goods that they traded with Syria. But the trade was done not only to achieve economic prosperity but to ensure political partnership in times of difficulty. In Hosea 12:1, in order for Israel to win the favor and military support of Egypt against Assyria, they sent a favorable supply of oil to them as a gift. And during the time of Jesus, payment through olive oil was still practice (Lk. 16:6). And when the Apostle John tried to picture to his readers the merchandise of rich people on earth in the last days, he used oil as one of the goods that proves their influence and wealth (Rev. 18:13).

CHAPTER

22



PRECIOUS COMMODITIES

*The exchangeable value of all commodities, rises
as the difficulties of their production increase.*

— David Ricardo

POWER TRUTH

I will put in the wilderness the cedar,
the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive;
I will set in the desert the cypress,
the plane and the pine together,
Isaiah 41:19 NRSV

PRECIOUS COMMODITIES

The LORD answered and said to his people,
“Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and
oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more
make you a reproach among the nations.
(Joel 2:19)

Our study of oil in the Bible has taken us into its many benefits. As far as Jewish custom is concerned, the preciousness of oil revolves around religious and

economic aspects. It can be used as food, as a cosmetic, medicine, illuminant, a commodity of exchange, and for religious rites. Indeed, for a Jew, the oil is a symbol and manifestation of divine blessings.

First of all, in the history of Israel, the remarkable event that made oil so precious was when God used it to represent His holiness. Ever since the formation of Israel as a nation, God has always used oil to represent significant and prophetic roles. In the establishment of the tabernacle, God manifestly used oil as a marker of holiness, even the fragrance of His presence. He also instructed Moses to make a special kind of oil that will be used exclusively for spiritual purposes.¹⁰¹

All essential oils have their own unique health benefits.

Oil Principle # 61

Second to its great spiritual significance, oil became a special commodity because it contains many healing benefits. All essential oils have their own unique health benefits. We have already tackled some of these benefits from the previous chapters. The aloe oil, for example, that is mentioned in Num. 24:6, is good for skincare and supports the female reproductive system. The Cedar oil in Lev. 14:4 was used for cleansing lepers. In Song of Solomon 1:17, the cypress oil serves as antibacterial. Then in Exodus 30:34, the frankincense oil can boost the immune system. When it comes to healing benefits, the hyssop oil mentioned in Psalm 51:7 was one of the common herbal medicines in the ancient time that relieves respiratory congestion, and cleanses skin bruises, frostbite, and wounds.

Thirdly, in the psychological aspect, the fragrance of oil can also bring invigoration and encouragement. In the Bible, the frankincense is at the top of the list when it comes to

psychological conditioning. In fact, its psychological effects made it become a symbol of prayer.¹⁰² The aroma of frankincense relaxes the weary mind and gives the person a spiritual sense of divine presence. That's why in Leviticus chapter 6, during the ceremony of animal sacrifices, frankincense was always used to create an aromatic smoke that signals solemnity before the presence of Yahweh.

Fourthly, in the world of cosmetics, the ancient world had already maximized the beautifying properties of oil. In our previous study, we discovered in the book of Esther that God used oil to save His people from a genocide attempt. We have also learned that God is never against beauty, as long as it exalts His glory. The godly women of the Bible certainly used essential oils as their perfumes. Since God Himself made a perfume exclusive for His tabernacle and priesthood, it is not prohibited in His sight that women enhance their appearance through the art of cosmetics. Thus, as a cosmetic, oil serves as a precious commodity that can be traded with other countries.

It was God who made oil to represent remarkable meaning and reality in their culture. Hence, as a God-given emblem, it's a privilege for Israel to share it with other nations.

Oil Principle # 62

Finally, in the New Testament, in the case of Jesus' ministry, oils were used to mark his death and burial.¹⁰³ In fact, in the case of Mary, who washed Jesus' feet, a very expensive ointment was used to honor his presence and to mark the coming redemptive death.¹⁰⁴ Then at his burial, different kinds of fragrant oils were placed inside the linen cloth that wrapped his body. It was a

precious expression of honor and care for the beloved Master who loved his disciples at the cost of his own life.¹⁰⁵

These are just some of the precious benefits that the Bible and Jewish custom tell us about the importance of oil. However, we must take note that the significant uses and symbolism of oil in the culture of Israel was not the product of their thinking. It was God who made oil to represent remarkable meaning and reality in their culture. Hence, as a God-given emblem, it's a privilege for Israel to share it with other nations. So that by doing so, they can also testify the promises of their God to those who will come to acknowledge Him as Creator and Redeemer.

CHAPTER

23



CEREMONIAL OFFERINGS

After giving something to God, you are no longer accountable for it. Your blessing is based on your giving, not on what others do with the gift.

— Ed Cole

POWER TRUTH

Precious treasure remains in the house of the wise,
but the fool devours it.

Proverbs 21:20 NRSV

CEREMONIAL OFFERINGS

When anyone brings a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. He shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it and bring it to Aaron's sons the priests. (Leviticus 2:1-2)

In the Bible, the use of oil in the ceremonial offerings is given in detail in the book of Leviticus. Like any other religious rite in Israel, the use of oil in ceremonial offering carries with it a spiritual symbolism.

In Leviticus chapter 2, regarding the Grain Offering, the Lord instructed the Israelites to use flour in this offering. On the flour they needed to pour olive oil to make it a flavorful offering to God. They needed also to use frankincense as their incense to make it aromatic.¹⁰⁶ As usual, this offering should be given to the priest who will do the ritual for the worshipper. In verse 2, it said that the priest will burn the offering on the altar in order to serve as a reminder to the worshipper. And since frankincense was used as incense, the offering released “a soothing aroma to the Lord.”¹⁰⁷

In the spiritual sense, the grain offering signifies a thanksgiving offering to the Lord as the source of strength in work. Flour comes from wheat and wheat signifies farming as a means of livelihood.¹⁰⁸ Thus, in the grain offering, the worshipper is acknowledging the blessings of Yahweh for his successful harvest. The symbolism of oil on the flour refers to the Spirit of God who gives daily strength for work. But in the redemptive sense, it refers to the anointed Messiah who gives His life for our atonement. This is the symbolism that smells good before God during the offering. On the other hand, on the part of the worshipper, God as the source of his strength must be the reminder that he must think about and keep in heart.

The symbolism of oil on the flour refers to the Spirit of God who gives daily strength for work. But in the redemptive sense, it refers to the anointed Messiah who gives His life for our atonement.

Oil Principle # 63

Moreover, with regards to the priests, it is interesting to note that in Leviticus 6:16 and 21, they are commanded to eat some of the offering inside the holy place. Their partaking

of it signifies that God is pleased with the offering, that He sanctified it, and therefore, worthy and accepted to enter into the holy place.

Aside from the Grain Offering, there's also what is called the Cleansing Offering that was made by a leper who has been cleansed from his disease. According to Leviticus 14:10-18, the leper who has been cleansed must bring (1) two male lambs without blemish, (2) one ewe lamb a year old without blemish, and (3) a grain offering mentioned in Leviticus 2. The offerings that he will do are three kinds: Sin Offering, Burnt Offering, and Grain Offering.¹⁰⁹ But interestingly, in the process of the offering, it is said in verses 15-16 that the priest will pour oil "into the palm of his own left hand and dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand and sprinkle some oil with his finger seven times before the LORD." Then in verses 17-18, some of the oil that remains in the priest hand, he will use it to anoint the worshipper and the sacrifice. Then only after this ritual that the priest will begin the ceremony of atonement through Sin Offering, Burnt Offering, and Grain Offering.¹¹⁰

Interestingly, the oil here could also refer to the work of the Holy Spirit who brings the sinner in front of God through the cleansing sacrifice of Christ.

Oil Principle # 64

In the symbolic sense, what the priest is doing in this ritual is identifying the worshipper with the sacrifice. In theology, what the priest is doing here is called substitutionary atonement. The ritual is actually a typology that points to the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. In the ritual, the oil plays a role of identification. Take note, when the priest sprinkles seven

times before the Lord some of the oil in his left hand with his fingers, what he is doing is consecration. In other words, the redemptive symbolism in this ritual is a perfect redemption before the Lord. This is the only kind of sacrifice that will satisfy Him. And since, prophetically, the offering in the points to Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, the sacrifice of Jesus perfectly pleased the holy demands of God.

Interestingly, the oil here could also refer to the work of the Holy Spirit who brings the sinner in front of God through the cleansing sacrifice of Christ. It must also be noted that sin here is pictured as leprosy – an abominable disease. In other words, just as the leper is healed by the ministry of the priest,¹¹¹ in the same manner, Jesus, the great High Priest, cleansed us from the abomination of our sin in the sight of God. For him to declare the validity of our cleansing before God and people, he gives us the oil of his Spirit to be poured out on our lives, so that by the presence of the Spirit within us, the watching world will truly see that we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus who died for us. This is the symbolism of oil in this offering.

CHAPTER

24



CLEANSING LEPROSY

Like a spring of pure water, God's peace in our hearts brings cleansing and refreshment to our minds and bodies.

— Billy Graham

POWER TRUTH

I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,
aloes, and cinnamon.

Proverbs 7:17 NRSV

CLEANSING LEPROSY

Then, if the case of leprous disease is healed in the leprous person, the priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed two live clean birds and cedarwood and scarlet yarn and hyssop. (Leviticus 14:3-4).

In the Bible, the detailed account that talks about the use of oil for leprosy is recorded in Leviticus 14:1-20. But it is not explicit about the medicinal use of oil for healing. Rather, the emphasis of the passage has to do with ceremonial purification.

Therefore, the use of oil in this situation is to point to religious symbolism, not to show or promote ancient medical practice.

The ceremonies to be observed in the ritual of purification are two parts. The first part has to do with the ritual before the leper is brought into the camp (Lev. 14:2-8). The second part is when the leper is admitted into the camp (Lev. 14:9-20). It must be noted that this ritual is ordered by the Lord Himself (Lev. 14:1).

In the first part of the ceremony (Lev. 14:2-7), a priest who is skilled in the diagnostics of disease is deputed outside the camp in order to examine the leper who claims that he has been healed from leprosy. The passage does not tell us how the leper got healed or what kind of medication he took to get his healing. However, it seems to imply here that since essential oils were common medicine during that time, it's probable that the medical priests used healing oil like hyssop as part of the medication. Whatever the case, it is important to notice here that the ancients had a way to treat leprosy. Then after the priest thoroughly examined that the healing is permanent, he will give a certificate of good health to the patient and will require him to perform a ritual of purification (Lev. 14:3-4). In this ritual, major sources of essential oil like cedarwood and hyssop are required. After this purification, the healed man is readmitted into the Camp.

In this ritual, major sources of essential oil, like cedarwood and hyssop, are required. After this purification, the healed man is readmitted into the Camp.

After fulfilling the first part of purification, the healed man is now ready to perform the second ritual. This ritual is for the purpose of publicly pronouncing him before the people of Israel inside the camp that he has been healed from leprosy. But before the day of the ritual, the man needs to groom and wash himself first (Lev. 14:9). Then on the eighth day, he will bring the required offerings unto the Lord, which consist of three kinds. The man through the assistance of the priest will offer a Sin Offering, Burnt Offering, and Grain Offering. We have already mentioned in the previous chapter the spiritual significance shown in these offerings. However, in close connection with leprosy, we will focus on the three kinds of symbolism that through the use of oil the healed man is identified.

First of all, leprosy in the Old Testament was regarded by the Jews as a symbol of death, uncleanness, and divine curse.¹¹² To be a leper was to be considered dead, cast out, rejected, and smitten by God. It was the most abominable picture that they used to express a curse. Thus, in the process of purification, when the priest uses oil to declare and to identify that the man is already cleansed from leprosy, three significant and dramatic things are indicated.

It is a symbol of completion or perfection. In other words, the physical, social, and spiritual restoration that the healed man received is to be regarded by the people as complete. No one in the camp should treat him the way he was before.

Oil Principle # 66

First, through the Sin Offering, the oil declares and identifies the man as having been restored to life. In the Burnt

Offering, the oil declares and identifies that the man is cleansed from his sins. His personal dignity and social reputation are re-established. In the Grain Offering, the Lord, as the Source of his life and strength, granted his prayer request to live inside the Camp of Israel again. In the socio-religious sense of the ritual, these are the symbolisms that the healed man received in the act of ritual. And just as we observed, the oil serves as a justifier and identifier for the man.

In verse 27, it is very interesting to notice also that the priest will do a gesture of sprinkling the oil in his hand before the Lord seven times. It is a symbol of completion or perfection. In other words, the physical, social, and spiritual restoration that the healed man received is to be regarded by the people as complete. No one in the camp should treat him the way he was before. Rather, as he is now pleasing in the sight of God, the people should also treat him in the same manner. Any form of social discrimination – due to his former disease – is discouraged and prohibited. Instead, God's people should treat him as a living demonstration of divine goodness and mercy.

C H A P T E R

25



PART OF RITUAL CLEANSING AND CEREMONIAL OFFERING

Ceremony and ritual spring from our heart of hearts: those who govern us know it well, for they would sooner deny us bread than dare alter the observance of tradition.

— F. Gonzalez-Crussi

POWER TRUTH

I have found my servant David;
with my holy oil I have anointed him;
Psalm 89:20 NRSV

PART OF RITUAL CLEANSING AND CEREMONIAL OFFERING

The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it a grain offering and its drink offering, as in the morning, for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD. (Exodus 29:41)

In the ritual cleansing of the leper in Leviticus chapter 14, cedar and hyssop mixed in water and blood were used to declare the healing from leprosy. Both were part of the twelve essential oils in the Bible and possessed significant symbolism. The cedar represents stability and endurance, while hyssop represents cleansing. For instance, in Psalm 51:9, when David asked God for forgiveness for the grave sin that he committed, he used the imagery of hyssop as a means of divine cleansing for his terrible sins. David certainly had in mind the ritual cleansing for the leper in Leviticus 14, when he felt within his heart the destructive ugliness of sin. Just like the leper, he wanted God to miraculously cleanse him from the foulness and filthiness of sin that slowly but surely decayed his spiritual life.

Moreover, the ceremonial use of oil in the ritual of cleansing plays a significant role because it denotes social and spiritual blessings in front of the people and God. In the case of the leper in Lev. 14, the use of oil serves as a justifier and identifier of who the healed person is in front of God and the people. Social rejection and spiritual impurities are no longer reckoned to him as a healed person. With regards to the healing of leprosy, the book of Leviticus does not tell us if the healing comes from God or the use of available medicine. But when a leper got his healing and the medical priest recognized its validity, he received a certificate for it and it was required of him to perform ritual of purification. In this ritual, the anointing of oil through the priest recognizes him to enter the Camp and to relate with God and the people (Lev. 14).

In the case of the leper in Lev. 14, the use of oil serves as a justifier and identifier of who the healed person is in front of God and the people. Social rejection and spiritual impurities are no longer reckoned to him as a healed person.

Oil Principle # 67

Regarding the ritual use of oil for the ceremonial offering, three kinds of offerings bear a spiritual symbolism. Generally, there are two kinds of offerings in the Old Testament, namely, the sweet savor and the non-sweet savor. In these offerings, the grain offering of the sweet savor only uses oil. The grain offering is the “most holy part of the food offering presented to the Lord.”¹¹³ Unlike the other offerings that are offered for the purpose of atonement, the purpose of the grain offering is to praise and worship God for His provision and protection. In fact, compared to the strict regulations to be observed in other offerings like the sin and burnt offerings, the grain offering can be done in a personalized way. For this reason, it is also called a free will offering.¹¹⁴

Now, the importance of knowing this fact with regard to the use of oil is that it highlights the symbolic role of oil in the ceremony. The use of oil in the grain offering not only makes it flavorful but also aromatic. Again, compared with non-savor offerings, it is always pictured in the book of Leviticus that God is pleased with the sweet - smelling offering of His people. That’s because in the typological sense of the offering, the oil and the grain represent the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. Thus, in the New Testament sense, the sweet-savor offerings really refer to the heartfelt praise and worship of God’s redeemed people. Of course, it becomes possible to worship and

love God with the heart because the sacrifice of Jesus cleansed the worshipper.

Thus, in the New Testament sense, the sweet-savor offerings really refer to the heartfelt praise and worship of God's redeemed people.

Oil Principle # 68

Besides, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, the believer is motivated to give to God out of gratefulness and love, as well. In fact, even though in the New Testament, believers no longer practice ceremonial offerings, in the spiritual sense, they are fulfilling the typology of the grain offering in their voluntary monetary giving. It has been said that God loves a cheerful giver.¹¹⁵ And indeed, God really loves it; it's like a sweet-smelling aroma before Him, because it is lifted to Him heartily, not out of compulsion.

Now, think about this: During Israel's journey in the wilderness for forty years, surely the supply of grain was not always available. It was limited and occasional based on the location of their camp. Thus, grain offerings surely were costly and precious for them. And yet, they were willing to do it still. Why? Their gratefulness to God couldn't be hindered by a limited supply. When they willingly offered such an offering to God, they were also expressing their dependence on God for the provision.¹¹⁶ That's the kind of worship that God loves. But then we cannot do this on our own. Just as the grain offering becomes a sweet-smelling savor before God because of the presence of oil, in the same way, our offerings to God will only become sweet-smelling when the Holy Spirit is in our hearts. That's the symbolism of oil in the grain offering and its New Testament significance.

C H A P T E R

26



BURIAL PREPARATIONS FOR JESUS

In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.

— Abraham Lincoln

POWER TRUTH

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Psalms 23:5 NRSV

BURIAL PREPARATIONS FOR JESUS

Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (John 12:3)

There are two significant anointings in the life and ministry of Jesus that signaled great redemptive work. They are his anointing for the gospel ministry and his anointing for the sacrificial death. The first anointing was prophetically given by the Spirit in Luke 4:19, while the second one was personally given by Mary in John 12:3-8. Both anointings marked an important messianic mission to fulfill. In this study, we will only focus on the second anointing in its dramatic and foretelling characteristics.

As already mentioned, it was Mary who gave the anointing to Jesus. In the case of Mary, it was not personally intended to be a ceremonial prediction of the coming death of Jesus. In her mind, the anointing was a sheer act of thankfulness for the awesome goodness that they had received from their Lord. The background of the story in John 12 was set at a time when Jesus miraculously resurrected Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11). Lazarus was the brother of Martha and Mary. According to John's report, this family was dear to Jesus (Jn. 11:28-37). In fact, only in John's account that we read that Jesus wept because of the heavy sorrow felt by the sisters of Lazarus when he died of sickness (Jn.11:35). Thus, in John 12 when Mary and Martha were amazingly comforted by the life-giving power of their Lord, they really gave all their best to serve him. In the story, we see Martha busily and gladly doing the food serving while Lazarus was just silently watching in awe the One who resurrected him. And then with regards to Mary, we see her taking "a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus" (Jn. 12:3). That's the setting of the story.

In the case of Mary, it was not personally intended to be a ceremonial prediction of the coming death of Jesus. In her mind, the anointing was a sheer act of thankfulness for the awesome goodness that they had received from their Lord.

Oil Principle # 69

Now, concerning the ointment that Mary used here, some biblical commentators believed that the ointment here “made from pure nard” was actually spikenard oil.¹¹⁷ Since Old Testament times, this oil “was highly prized as a perfume and very precious.”¹¹⁸ As herbal oil it was noted as “anti-inflammatory.”¹¹⁹ Therapeutically, it’s very effective as a “skin tonic, mood enhancer, and helps to reduce anxiety.”¹²⁰ No wonder, Jesus said that the anointing of this oil was suited for His coming death. Perhaps, the relaxing effects of the oil somehow conditioned the Lord to face His forthcoming suffering.

Also, the story tells us that the oil that Mary used was expensive. But the question is, how much was the cost of that oil during that time? If Judas’ calculation in verse 5 is correct, it’s highly likely the cost of that pound of spikenard oil was equivalent to a one-year salary. The basis for this is found in Matthew. 20:2, where one denarius was a fair payment for a day’s work. Therefore, one denarius, if it’s multiplied with Judas’ calculation of 300 denarii, would mean a one-year salary. That was the cost of the perfume. That’s why when Judas Iscariot saw this, he was not able to control himself to give a sad comment. For him, what Mary did was a great waste. Judas even justified his comment by saying that instead of wasting the expensive ointment on the feet of Jesus, why not sell it so that they can use the money to minister to the poor (Jn. 12:6). But of course, according to John, the real intention of Judas was not to minister

to the poor. What he really wanted was to pilfer something from the expensive price of the ointment.

**She used all the oil for the anointing of Jesus;
and with all love and care for her Lord, she
anointed the feet of Jesus using her hair.**

Oil Principle # 70

However, contrasted to Judas' attitude, Mary's gratefulness to her Lord was so deep that she didn't hold back using the expensive oil for Jesus. She used all the oil for the anointing of Jesus; and with all love and care for her Lord, she anointed the feet of Jesus using her hair. It was not only a symbol of deep humility, but it was also an expression of deep love. No words can describe the drama of her gratefulness to Jesus. In fact, the story does not tell us that Mary spoke something while she was doing the anointing. She didn't even reply to Judas' comment. Instead, she was busy, attentively and affectionately focused on her Lord. With that heartfelt show of affection, Jesus honored her devotion by saying that what she did was a perfect preparation for His coming redemptive sacrifice.

CHAPTER

27



FOR PROTECTION

Did you never run for shelter in a storm, and find fruit which you expected not? Did you never go to God for safeguard, driven by outward storms, and there find unexpected fruit?

— John Owen

POWER TRUTH

prepared for Tobiah a large room where they had previously put the grain offering, the frankincense, the vessels, and the tithes of grain, wine, and oil, which were given by commandment to the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, and the contributions for the priests.

Nehemiah 13:5 NRSV

FOR PROTECTION

All your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia; out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made you glad. (Psalm 45:8)

God's protection is expressed in various forms. But in the Old Testament, the typical expression of God's protection was seen in two ways: health and wealth. Perhaps, it was the aloe oil of the Old Testament that gives us a good description of God's protection.

First of all, aloe is a tropical plant¹²¹ that is “native to countries like India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.”¹²² It is popular for its “healing gel.”¹²³ Regarding its benefits, experts tell us that aloe promotes relaxation and healing. In the ancient world, it became common in the religious practice because it conditions the body in meditation.¹²⁴ It was also used as an incense¹²⁵ in prayer.

Now, in the Bible, the use of aloe oil is mentioned a number of times. As a matter of fact, its benefits were already known during the time of Moses.

Oil Principle # 71

Today, because of its powerful healing oil component,¹²⁶ aloe is widely used in many ways. For instance, it is used as a cosmetic oil¹²⁷ good for facial cleansers and skin tone improvement.¹²⁸ This kind of oil “deprograms misinformation and carries oxygen at a cellular level,”¹²⁹ which is very good for skin care. In fact, many women have testified for its beautifying effect because of its capacity to repair damaged skin¹³⁰ and to remove “discoloration and wrinkles.”¹³¹ It also supports female reproductive and endocrine systems and has been applied for urinary tract infections.¹³² It was also proven that it quells the ache of arthritis.¹³³ For children, it's a good home remedy for stomachache. By massaging the stomach, it curbs indigestion, gas, and bloat.¹³⁴ Of course, for working moms and dads, aloe oil

is also a dependable companion. It diffuses stress by dispelling negativity and focuses the mind.¹³⁵ No wonder it is used for meditation and prayer. Its soothing scent imparts calmness.¹³⁶ To those who have a problem with insomnia, inhaling its sweet aroma can stimulate the release of melatonin¹³⁷ which gives deep sleep.

These are just some of the noted relaxing and healing benefits that aloe oil gives. Indeed, it testifies to God's loving protection for our body.

Now, in the Bible, the use of aloe oil is mentioned a number of times. As a matter of fact, its benefits were already known during the time of Moses. Since health is a major blessing, the Israelites saw aloe as a "symbol of divine provision and protection."¹³⁸ For instance, in Numbers 24, when the false prophet Balaam attempted to curse Israel by his concocted prophecy, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly overwhelmed the false prophet that instead of declaring a curse to Israel, he pronounced blessings. Instead of declaring destruction, Balaam declared wonderful descriptions of protection. One of the beautiful pictures of protection that the Spirit used to portray Israel's dwelling was that it will be "like aloes planted by the Lord" (Num. 24:6).

The symbolic language of aloe in this context points to Yahweh's personal care for His people. As the aloe plants assure the health and wealth of Israel, God's personal concern for His people will secure their provision and protection.

Oil Principle # 72

The symbolic language of aloe in this context points to Yahweh's personal care of His people. As the aloe plants assure the health and wealth of Israel, God's personal concern for His

people will secure their provision and protection. Moreover, in the final sense, aloes also refer to the coming blessings of the Messiah for their health and wealth. Israel as a nation will be protected well when “the healing wings” of the Messiah will overshadow them (Mal. 4:2). This is more described in Psa. 45:8. In this text, the aromatic fragrance of aloe was used by the psalmist to describe the protective glory of the Messiah as the victorious King of His people. The atmosphere of sin and the smell of wickedness will be blown away when the “Mighty One” will “ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness” (Psa. 45:3-4). Before the mighty presence of the Messiah, the stench of sin and wickedness emitted by Satan and the human sinful nature will vanish. Only the beautiful and fragrant presence of the Messiah, “whose garments are scented with myrrh, aloes, and cassia,” will permeate the cosmic atmosphere and penetrate the human heart (Psa. 45:8). It will become the most glorious and awesome protection of Israel when their Messiah comes.

Only the beautiful and fragrant presence of the Messiah “whose garments are scented with myrrh, aloes, and cassia” will permeate the cosmic atmosphere and penetrate the human heart (45:8). It will become the most glorious and awesome protection of Israel when their Messiah comes.

Oil Principle # 73

Then, in Song of Solomon 4:14, the romantic lover of the beautiful woman compared the intimacy of their love to the fragrance of “frankincense, myrrh, and aloes.” Primarily, the passage refers to marital relationship, but symbolically,

theologians interpret the spiritual significance of Song of Solomon as Christ's protection and love for his Church. Christians, in and of themselves, are not righteous before God. Sin makes them worthy of judgment. However, because of the sacrificial death of Jesus, his blood completely protects them from the wrath of God. It also cleanses and beautifies them as a lovely and "glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle" before the presence of the Father (Eph. 5:27).

CHAPTER

28



CEREMONIAL PERFUME

Fragrance speaks the loudest on a subliminal level.

— Marian Bendeth

POWER TRUTH

and that they should publish and proclaim in all their towns and in Jerusalem as follows, “Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written.”

Nehemiah 8:15 NRSV

CEREMONIAL PERFUME

Righteous people flourish like palm trees and grow tall like the cedars in Lebanon. (Psalm 92:12)

The cedarwood is “one of the majestic ancient trees that are still round today.”¹³⁹ Most people see it as an embodiment of stability, patience, and fragrance. This tree can thrive at high altitudes in cold climates. It can grow to a height of 100 feet and can reach an age of over 1,000 years.¹⁴⁰ Cedarwood is

usually a native to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco.¹⁴¹ It can be also found in Israel, known as the cedar of Lebanon. The oil is “extracted from the tree’s wood and leaves.”¹⁴²

Since ancient civilizations, cedarwood was used for religious ceremony. But they more saw its high value for its cleansing characteristics. Its fragrance caused people to use it in the religious ceremony. For example, the oil extracted from the cedars was used to embalm the ancient Pharaohs of Egypt.¹⁴³ The ancient doctors also believed that it had a high chance to cleanse lepers. Its oil was used as a disinfectant after the ritual cleansing of the dead.¹⁴⁴ It was used as cleansing power against the spell or influence of evil spirits.¹⁴⁵ It can also be used for various practical and health purposes like cosmetics, skin problems, medicine, and relaxation.

Experts believe that cedarwood could be the first and most ancient of the distilled oils¹⁴⁶ that the Chinese, Sumerian, and Egyptians used for various purposes for more than 5,000 years. In fact, the oil of cedarwood is mentioned on a Babylonian tablet dated back 1,800 B.C.¹⁴⁷ Today modern scientists have demonstrated the antioxidant properties of the cedarwood oil.¹⁴⁸ Cedarwood has an oil property that can deprogram misinformation and bring oxygen to cellular levels.¹⁴⁹ It enhances deep sleep, relieves emotional anxiety, and promotes mental clarity.¹⁵⁰ It is also proven as effective herbal oil for hair loss, tuberculosis, bronchitis, and gonorrhea. If you have asthma, you can inhale the oil from the bottle or rub the oil on your chest and it will ease the breathing difficulty. Interestingly, with its woody, pencil-like aroma¹⁵¹ cedarwood can be used an insect repellent of moths and mosquitoes.¹⁵²

In Psalm 48, it is listed as one of the perfumes that describe the presence of Yahweh and therefore, an expensive perfume to sell in the market.

Oil Principle # 74

In the Bible, cedarwood is an in-demand commodity for religious and economic purposes. In Leviticus 14, cedarwood was part of the divine instructions given to Moses as a ceremonial tool for cleansing leprosy.¹⁵³ In Psalm 48, it is listed as one of the perfumes that describe the presence of Yahweh and therefore, an expensive perfume to sell in the market. In Numbers 24:6 and Psalm 92:12, it is used to describe abundance and provision. While in Song of Solomon 1:17 and 8:9, it was used as a romantic description for security and stability. For industrial purposes, cedarwood is a choice wood for building, trading, and currency during the times of the prophets and kings of Israel.

But perhaps the most significant moment where the cedarwood became an emblem of ceremonial perfume was when the Temple of Solomon was built.

Oil Principle # 75

But perhaps the most significant moment where the cedarwood became an emblem of ceremonial perfume was when the Temple of Solomon was built. 1 Kings 6:9-20 tells us the beautiful architectural design that Solomon made inside the Temple using cedarwood. With careful study, every veteran engineer and architect can imagine the beauty of the ancient Temple described in the passage. For example, in verses

18-20 of this passage, it is said that inside the Temple, Solomon commanded the builders to carve the cedars in the form of gourds and open flowers. "All was cedar; no stone was seen" in the decorations inside (1 Kings 6:18). Then within or in the center of that sophisticated decoration, Solomon placed the Ark of the Covenant he overlaid with pure gold and cedars.

No wonder when the Temple was finished and they began to dedicate it before the Lord, somehow the fragrance of cedarwood had induced the worshippers and the people into dramatic adoration and prayer to Yahweh. It must be noted that the cedarwood of Lebanon was a fragrant tree. That's why the ancients commonly burned the cedarwood for ceremonial purposes,¹⁵⁴ because it emits a fragrant smell.

Moreover, the fragrant cedar was also a symbol of stability and faithfulness. Thus, during the dedication of the Temple, Israel acknowledged that God was the ultimate source of their stability. Indeed, they beautifully and aromatically expressed their re-commitment to Yahweh in the cedar Temple of King Solomon. It was a very fragrant worship soaked in the ceremonial perfume of cedarwood that covered the Temple.

CHAPTER

29



STRENGTH AND SECURITY

*Strength does not come from physical capacity.
It comes from an indomitable will.*

— Mahatma Gandhi

POWER TRUTH

So they gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sidonians and the Tyrians to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the grant that they had from King Cyrus of Persia.

Ezra 3:7 NRSV

STRENGTH AND SECURITY

"I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive. I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together" (Isaiah 41:19)

Among the twelve essential oils in the Bible, cypress oil represents strength and security. The cypress tree is a companion to the cedar tree. In the Mediterranean, it is famous for its evergreen leaves with tiny flowers and small cones. Its scent is piney and spicy.¹⁵⁵ In the past, people used to burn the cypress tree in their festivals for its fragrant release of oil. Like the strong cedar tree, cypress has also a deep and well-developed root system. The essential oil is extracted from its branches¹⁵⁶ and has been century proven for its healing benefits. It is one of the essential oils mentioned in a Babylonian tablet dating 1800 B.C.¹⁵⁷ The ancients used it for arthritis, laryngitis, reducing scar tissue, and cramps.¹⁵⁸

Due to its so-called antispasmodic properties,¹⁵⁹ it is commonly used for massage. Therapists testified about its effectiveness to avert cramping and muscle strain. It quiets restless leg syndrome, supports the cardiovascular system,¹⁶⁰ treats carpal tunnel syndrome of the wrist¹⁶¹ for those who type for long hours in front of their computers. It can subside the bulging of varicose veins,¹⁶² supports the digestive system,¹⁶³ controls hemorrhages and nosebleeds,¹⁶⁴ and it can also use to relieve acute chest discomfort.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, like any other essential oil, cypress oil has the capacity to reprogram cellular memory with correct information, thus promoting permanent healing at a cellular level.¹⁶⁶

Among the twelve essential oils in the Bible, cypress oil represents strength and security. The cypress tree is a companion to the cedar tree.

Oil Principle # 76

As an antibacterial healing oil,¹⁶⁷ women find it supportive during menstruation and menopause. In fact, it was used for

centuries to alleviate occasional discomfort associated with the woman's menstrual cycle.¹⁶⁸

Emotionally, cypress oil is also used by therapists to help their clients feel relaxed. Somehow, its scent gives the person the feeling of security¹⁶⁹ and eases them of the pain of losing something dear to them.

In the Bible, the cypress tree is celebrated as a symbol of strength and security.¹⁷⁰ Old Testament saints used cypress to describe strength, prosperity, and beauty (Isa. 60:13; Hos. 14:8; Zech. 11:2). It was a common commodity for building, trading, and currency. It was also part of the essential provisions needed in times of war (Nah. 2:3).

However, regarding its spiritual significance, there is a particular passage in Isaiah that talks about the symbolism of the cypress tree. In Isaiah 41:19, the Lord assured Israel that He could plant and nourish a cypress tree even in the desert. According to the context of this passage, Israel was experiencing a political turmoil (Isaiah 41:11-12). Surrounding enemy countries conspired to plot Israel's demise. Israel was at the end of her rope. She was only waiting for their move (Isaiah 41:12). However, in the midst of her desperation, God sent a message of assurance through His prophet Isaiah.

God emphatically declared to Israel, "I am your God."

Oil Principle # 77

The message reminded Israel that her stability is not in her economic prosperity, military power, and international alliances. Her strength as a nation comes from her covenant-keeping God (Isaiah 41:1-13). God emphatically declared to Israel, "I am your God." Israel should not be dismayed or fear the evil plots of her enemies. God's presence will protect and

preserve her from generation to generation (Isaiah 41:10). He can turn her desert situation into a forest filled with cedars, cypress, and other trees from which healing oils are derived (Isaiah 41:18-19). In other words, God can make a way when there seems to be no way. That's the strength and stability of the saints. There are times in the life of the believer that because of our natural affection to do selfish and worldly things, God's desired blessings for us are hindered. But then thank God, because by heartfelt repentance (Isaiah 41:17), He is faithful and just to bring us into the light of enjoying fellowship with Him (1 Jn. 1:9).

It is implied in the Isaiah 41 message that Israel, because of her continuous rebellion against the Lord, will go through the pain and shame of Babylonian captivity (Isaiah 41:8). In that captivity, she will experience all the horrible attacks to her dignity as a chosen nation. She will question all the messianic promises that she believes due to the desperate and humiliating situation that she will be in. However, God will not forget her. He will rescue her and bring her to repentance. God will punish her persecutors and then will build her dignity from the scratch of her desperation.

God will punish her persecutors and then will build her dignity from the scratch of her desperation.

Oil Principle # 78

History tells us that this is so. God punished the Babylonians and the Assyrians for their cruelty to Israel. Their national identities no longer exist today. But then God's stabilizing work is not yet finished. The messianic undertone of the passage is not yet realized and materialized. Presently, Israel as a nation is still spiritually lost. However, when the promised millennial reign

has come, Israel as stated in this prophecy will become a nation of great strength and stability. She will become an overflowing blessing to the nations of the earth. That's all because of God's faithful covenant with her.

C H A P T E R

30



HOLY CEREMONIAL PERFUME

*A prayer couched in the words of the soul,
is far more powerful than any ritual.*

— Paulo Coelho

POWER TRUTH

Others of them were appointed over the furniture, and over all the holy utensils, also over the choice flour, the wine, the oil, the incense, and the spices.

1 Chronicles 9:29 NRSV

HOLY CEREMONIAL PERFUME

“You shall make of these a holy anointing oil, a perfume mixture, the work of a perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony...” (Exodus 30:25-26)

There was a time in the history of the Christian Church that the concept of asceticism and mysticism went extreme when they viewed spirituality and holiness on the basis of neglecting the body. Their dualistic view of the world that separates matter and spirit caused them to shun physical desires even if it is for bodily good. For them, matter is the source of evil. Only in the spirit realm can man find meaning and rest for his soul.

However, when thoughtful Christian thinkers examined this view in light of God's character in the Bible, they found it totally unbiblical. The God who created all things is shown in the Bible as the God of beauty. His beauty is not only seen in the spiritual world that He created, but also in the physical world. In fact, God's holiness is seen in the material world that He made. In the Old Testament, one of the interesting materializations of His holiness was in the creation of the Tabernacle.¹⁷¹ It was God Himself who designed the blueprint of the Tabernacle. All parts of it point to His holy character. And when it was established, the Lord somehow baptized it using the aroma of the finest essential oils available during that time.¹⁷² Thus, in Israel, their holy ceremonial perfume was born when the Tabernacle was built.¹⁷³ Contrary to the view of asceticism and mysticism of the medieval period, the God of the Old Testament loves to manifest the beauty of His holiness through physical and material beauty. In Israel's history, the fragrance of His holiness was sensed and enjoyed when the aroma of the finest essential oils in the land permeates His holy place – the Tabernacle.

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Furthermore, the holy ceremonial perfume in Exodus 30:25 was a divine marker of His presence. By ingredients it was composed of pure myrrh, cinnamon, aromatic cane, and cassia. It was one of the unique religious treasures of Israel in Old Testament times. It was exclusively used for the Tabernacle and the priesthood. Yet, four things are marked through this perfume.

First, it marks the nearness of Yahweh to His people. Through the sweet aroma of the Tabernacle, God's holiness was somehow materialized. It served as an effective reminder to the Israelites that their God is a joyful God. God is not a killjoy, rather in God's presence there is joy forever more.

Secondly, the holy ceremonial perfume also marks the separation of God's people from the sinful world. Although in the official sense, the tribe of Levi or the sons of Aaron were the ones who were appointed to the priesthood, in the covenant-sense, Israel as a nation will function as a priesthood in front of pagan nations.¹⁷⁴ In other words, the holy ceremonial perfume was a symbol of their calling as a holy people of Yahweh. "Be holy as I am holy" says Yahweh.¹⁷⁵ As a holy nation, they were called to testify to the holiness of God to other nations. Like the holy perfume in the Tabernacle, through faithfulness and obedience to the Lord, they will become an irresistible aroma that cleanses the pollution of the ungodly world.

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Thirdly, in the case of Aaron and his sons, the holy ceremonial perfume signifies holy office. In Exodus 28:41, Yahweh, through the use of the holy oil, consecrated them as mediators between God and Man. As God's representatives, they were called to testify to the holiness of Yahweh through the careful observance of the ceremonial laws. Through these laws, they will teach the people that their relationship to God is on the basis of atoning sacrifice. God's holiness must be satisfied. As representatives of Man, they were called to represent the sinfulness of the people through animal sacrifices that symbolized substitutionary atonement. In other words, God's presence was enjoyed on the basis of the atonement.

Finally, it must be noted that the holy ceremonial perfume in the Tabernacle was a very dangerous perfume. That is to say, since it was exclusive for the Tabernacle and the priests, no one has the right to touch and use it like a common perfume.¹⁷⁶ In fact, anything and anyone that this perfume anoints becomes holy. This is the reason why pertaining to the Ark of the Covenant, no one has the right to touch it, even if the intention is good. The Ark of the Covenant inside the Tabernacle was the most holy furniture sprinkled by the fragrance of the holy anointing oil. That's why in 2 Samuel 6:1-8, when someone tried to catch the Ark from falling, the man who touched it instantly died. Why? Simply because the Ark of the Covenant and the holy anointing oil were powerful symbols of the separation of God and Man because of sin.

C H A P T E R

31



THE ANOINTING OF CHRIST

*It is the anointing of God that will make
the difference in your life.*

– Lawrence Tetteh

POWER TRUTH

Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his vestments and on his sons and his sons' vestments with him; then he and his vestments shall be holy, as well as his sons and his sons' vestments.

Exodus 29:21 NRSV

THE ANOINTING OF CHRIST

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed..."
(Luke 4:18)

The spotlight of this biblical storyline focuses on the promised Anointed One. Since Man's fall in Genesis 3, God has given a promise that one day, in the fullness of time, the Anointed One will come to bring redemption and beauty to humanity and glory to God. The word "Christ" is a very important word in the New Testament. It was also a very important claim in the early Church. It was an essential doctrinal position with regards to their view of Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁷⁷ The word simply means "anointed."¹⁷⁸ In Old Testament prophetic usage, it refers to the King Messiah of Israel – the One who is destined to rule Israel for all eternity.

Thus, the life story of Jesus of Nazareth revolves around the testimony that validates his claim as the Anointed One. This was the doctrinal highlight of the New Testament writers when they wrote their books and epistles. In the case of the Gospels, the authors intentionally emphasized the personal claim of Jesus as the fulfiller of the prophecy. For instance, in Luke 4:18, when Jesus started to launch his gospel ministry, he told the Jews who were listening to him in the synagogue that the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the coming Anointed One has been fulfilled.¹⁷⁹ In that scenario, Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1-2. His reading of this passage was so important to him at that time because after his forty days and nights of supernatural fasting in the wilderness, the Spirit of God has now called him to start gospel ministry. Thus, from the historical perspective, the first anointing that Jesus received was by the Spirit.

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In the prophetic sense, the anointing of Jesus mentioned in Luke 4:18 refers to the first mission of his coming. It was redemptive. This is the reason why in Luke 4:20, he didn't read Isa. 61:3-4, because the statement mentioned in these verses are still in the future – that is, at his second coming. Thus, when he read Isaiah 61:1-2, he was fulfilling and indirectly declaring that he was the promised Anointed One whom Israel waited for for so long. He was the promised Prophet, Priest, and King who would rule Israel forever and ever. That's the anointing of Jesus in Luke 4:18.

Now, concerning the kind of oil used in the anointing of the Messiah, it is without a doubt that it refers to the holy oil exclusive for the Mosaic priesthood and the royal oil used for the anointing of kings. We have already commented enough about the details of these oils in the previous chapters. But the point that must be noted here is that the anointing oil of Isaiah 61:1 that Jesus read in Luke 4:18 refers to the priestly and royal anointing. It's also very interesting to note that in relation to healing benefits of Old Testament essential oils, the gospel ministry of Jesus will be characterized as a healing ministry to the poor, to the broken-hearted, to the captive, and to the blind (Lk. 4:18).

Finally, the anointing of Jesus mentioned by him in Luke 4:18 refers eschatologically to future divine judgment. Christ himself will execute this judgment in fulfillment to David's prophecy in Psalm 45:7. According to David, the oil of gladness that God the Father has anointed on the head of His Son will bring justice, peace, order, and joy to the world. In the psalm, David poetically and prophetically described the anointing of the Messiah as filled with the fragrance of myrrh, aloe, and cassia that came from the expensive perfumes in the royal palace.¹⁸⁰ Thus, because of the aromatic presence of the King, everyone who sees and smells him rejoices.¹⁸¹ Indeed, the Messiah is the fairest of them all.

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Oil Principle # 82

The oil of gladness then in the context of Psalm 45 basically refers to divine deliverance from evil. In our previous studies, we have mentioned that the oil of gladness was basically composed of cinnamon, cassia, calamus, and olive oil. Three of these are aromatic, while the olive oil was nationally significant to Israel as God's covenant people. These aromatic oils point to the beauty of righteousness that the Anointed One will bring upon the earth. By the sweet holy aroma of the Messiah's presence, the presence of sin, of Satan, of evil spirits, and of wicked men will be thrown away into the place of Judgment. Indeed, at the second coming of the Messiah, the prayer "thy Kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" will be fulfilled. That's the meaning of Christ's anointing.

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