

The Answering Service

FROM AMERICA'S PROMISE

Answers to questions from Radio and Tape Listeners

No. 19 - May, 1983

Question No. 1:

We have heard of some men who claim they can "anoint" Christians with oil, lay hands on them, pray for them, and then that person will be spared troubles, ill health or even death! Is this scriptural?

Answer:

Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary says of anointing: "The use of oil in consecrations, was of high antiquity. Kings, prophets and priests were set apart or consecrated to the offices by the use of oil. Hence the peculiar application of the term 'anointed' to Jesus Christ."

The act of "anointing with oil" is mentioned in both the Old Testament and in the New. To make an in-depth study, one should use a Strong's or Young's Concordance, look up all the passages and read them himself (there are over 150 with anoint, anointed, anointedst and anointing.) We will consider some of them and make some general statements to arrive at a Scriptural answer.

The first Bible record of oil being poured on something, is in **Gen. 28:18**, where Jacob poured it on the rock (pillar) and called it "Bethel" (the house of God). In **Gen. 31:13**, God said, "thou anointedst the pillar," so Jacob's act could be the first "anointing with oil." He did it again in **Gen., 35:14**.

The first direct instructions from God to "anoint" persons with oil are in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. This was with a special, "holy anointing oil," and its recipe is given in **Exodus 30:22-25**. **Verse 26-31** gives its use, to anoint Aaron, the High Priest, his sons, the tabernacle and the holy things in the tabernacle. No provision is made in this passage or any other passage in the Books of the Law for its use on any other persons. In fact, the next verse here says, "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured..." and in **verse 33**, it says: "whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger (marginal rendering — 'upon whosoever is not a priest,' obviously meaning whosoever is not an high priest, for the passage is only about high priests), shall even be cut off from his people."

This would mean the death penalty for anointing anyone other than a high priest with this oil. **Verse 37 and 38** further warns of the death penalty even for anyone who would attempt to make the oil for himself. **Amos 6:6** condemns those who "anoint themselves with the chief ointment."

Some of the other chapters about anointing the High Priest are **Ex. 25, 28, 29, 30** (as above), **39 and 40**. Also **Lev. 7, 8,10,16,21 and Numb. 4 and 18**.

The Hebrew word in all the above is "mashach," "mishchah" or similar.

Israel's kings were also "anointed with oil," although it is not positive that this

was the same oil. Read specifically **Judges 9; 1 Sam. 9, 15, 16; 1 Kings 1, and 19.** There are several references in Psalms, in each case it refers to David as king or to Jesus as the coming King. In **Isa. 45:1**, King Cyrus of Persia is called God's "anointed." There is no reference to the use of oil, however, Cyrus was a King and was used of God for a certain work in relation to Israel's restoration to Jerusalem.

The word anointed is used a number of times in the Old Scriptures, where it could refer to persons other than Kings or High Priests. However, in all those passages it is a different Hebrew word and means a different kind of "anointing," either as "chosen," "anointed with the oil of gladness" or given material blessings.

Wherever the "anointing" with "oil" is commanded in the Old Scriptures to be done by men as an act of consecration, it comes from the Hebrew words "mashach" or "mishchah," and it is reserved for the Kings and the High Priest. There is no command to "anoint" with oil any other priests. To interpolate this to the New Testament would seem to reserve such an "anointing" to Jesus, who is both King and High Priest. Many of the passages in the Old Scripture that refer to God's "anointed," obviously-refer to the coming Messiah. You should read these O. T. passages, yourself.

In the New Testament, the words anoint, anointed, and anointing are used only 20 times in 14 different passages. We will consider a few and then summarize.

Mark 6:13, "and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." Also **James 5:14-15**, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with

oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed any sins, they shall be forgiven him." Many interpret this to mean that some sort of oil should be put on ill people who are to be prayed for. However, the kind of oil is not specified in either passage and of all the passages on healings in the N. T., these are the only ones mentioning oil. Of course, we know no physical oil can have any real efficacy for either forgiveness of sins or for miraculous healings, because both are by the power of God, not by any physical substance.

In any case, those passages have to do with past illnesses or sins. They do not suggest anointing with oil to set aside for some future use or protection.

One other mention of healing in the KJV uses the term anointed. In **John 9** Jesus mixed clay with spittle and "anointed" the eyes of the blind man with the clay (**vs 6 and 11**). However, here "anointed" is from an entirely different Greek word, "epichrio" and should have been translated "smeared over." This can't be used for anointing with oil either.

In **Mark 14:3**, a woman came with "an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard (margin: pure nard) very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on His (Jesus') head." In **verse 8**, Jesus said of this act, "She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying." **John 12:3-8** seems to be the same story, except the woman is named here as Mary, the sister of Martha.

The reference to burying would make this fit **Lev. 2, Lev. 7** and other passages in the Law, where sin offerings were anointed with oil. Jesus was our sin offering anointed with oil before being sacrificed.

Jesus refers to His anointing to preach in **Luke 4:18** where He says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor...etc." He is quoting **Isa. 61:1-2**. His anointing to preach was by the Holy Spirit, whereas his anointing as a sacrifice was with oil. He died as Israel's anointed High Priest (**Heb. 7:26-28**).

In **Acts 4:27**, the Disciples pray to God, referring to Jesus as, "Thy holy child Jesus, whom thou has anointed..." In **Acts 10:38**, we read HOW Jesus was anointed by God, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power..." This fits **Luke 4** and **Isa. 61** that Jesus' "anointing" was by the Spirit of God.

To the individual believers, Paul writes in **2 Cor. 1:21**, that the one who "hath anointed us, is God." No mention of oil as any part of the believer's anointing. The word anointing is in **1 John 2:27** twice. It refers to believers, but is from the Greek word "chrisma," and means "learning of knowledge." Read from **vs 20**, where the word "unction" is used, is also from "chrisma," through **vs 27**. You will see it does not involve oil, but means understanding that God has given you so you will not be deceived by "them that seduce you" (**vs 26**).

The last passage in the N.T. is **Rev. 3:18**, "...anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." This is an idiom meaning, clear up your eyes to see the truth. Oil is not mentioned.

SUMMARY: The anointing with oil, as a means of setting a person aside for future service or for special protection, was reserved for High Priests and Kings under the Law, with the death penalty for all who performed this "anointing" upon any other person. It is true we are made

"unto our God kings and priests" (**Rev. 5:10**), but we were made that by Jesus Christ and no act of anointing with oil for special blessings is called for in the Holy Word. In addition, although we are priests, only the High Priest was anointed. That is now Jesus.

Although it can be argued that ill persons may be anointed with oil, preceding prayer for healing, there is no passage in the O.T. or the N.T. that would give authority to any person to claim he can put oil on a believer and accomplish anything; beyond what has already been provided for by the Lord Jesus Christ. Actually, any person who claims he can anoint you and bring a benefit to you, which will not be granted to persons he has not "anointed," is making of himself a "Christ," a "saviour." He is fulfilling **Matt. 24:24** where Jesus said, "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

Such an "anointing" claim is totally unscriptural, and, actually, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. The whole power of the Roman Church is based on that same theory, that Roman Priests can loose and bind according to their own authority and by their own rituals.

Christians are seldom deceived by men who come to them in a spirit of arrogance. Those are usually-rejected. When Christians are badly fooled, it is almost always by men or women who seem to be extremely humble, meek, godly, concerned only with your welfare, and claim to have a special or supernatural contact with God. They may claim that God "speaks to me," that "God gives me visions," or "God led me to tell you this..." Their message is from their mind, not from God!

Be especially careful if he claims his "vision," or his "act," or his "message" will somehow "save" you from something you would otherwise fear. If you accept it, he has become a mediator or a special "saviour" between you and God. That is what an act of a "special anointing" does. As Paul wrote in **2 Cor. 11:3**, "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty (false humbleness coupled with an unscriptural message), so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

In relation to anointing, reread that death penalty in **Exodus 30** for any who would consecrate with oil, anyone but the High Priest.
