

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OIL IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

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Psalm 27:5 And "Thou Anointest My Head With Oil", Misguided Interpretation, Confirm All Doctrines With The Scriptures, Oil And Being Anointed With Oil Symbolizes Presence Of God's Spirit, Menorah Continually Burned In The Tabernacle And The Temple, Israelite Kings Anointed With Oil As A Sign Of God's Presence With Them, The Danger Of Losing The Anointing Due To Sin, Promise Of The Holy Spirit For All Flesh, Parable Of The Ten Virgins, We Are Vessels For God's Holy Spirit, Without God's Anointing We Are Nothing, Two Olive Trees In Zechariah And Revelation, Verify All Doctrine With The Holy Scriptures, Children Of Light, Closing Remarks, Suggested Reading List

Today while scrolling through my Facebook news feed, I came upon a post where one of my dear friends was pondering the significance of the following verse of Scripture which is found in the well-known Psalm 23:

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

Psalm 23:5, KJV

In particular, my dear friend was wondering about the phrase "thou anointest my head with oil". Apparently, she had found an online explanation regarding the phrase from some unknown author. However, when I read it, my jaw dropped, because the explanation offered not only did not provide any supporting Scriptures -- a red flag in itself -- but it then went on to mention not the anointing of actual people as is very clearly indicated in the Psalm, but rather the practice of pouring oil over sheep's heads. It then went on to discuss mental stress in our lives and how to overcome it.

Now, on the surface, what I read seemed like a rather logical explanation which many Christians might possibly be inclined

to accept. However, sadly, it is most definitely not what the Scriptures teach us whatsoever concerning this phrase "thou anointest my head with oil".

To be honest, I was quite bothered by this explanation, which in my mind is just a man-made doctrine. As I have shared many times before with my friends, we cannot just make up things in our heads. We need to go directly to the Scriptures, and allow them to interpret themselves as much as possible. This is the best way to guard ourselves against false doctrines. In fact, as I have mentioned before, this is precisely what the wise people of Berea did when the Apostle Paul and Silas came preaching the Gospel to them, as we can determine by the following group of verses:

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."

Acts 17:10-12, KJV

Please notice that the previous verses state "Therefore many of them believed". Exactly why did they believe? Because they had confirmed what Paul and Silas had told them by way of the Scriptures. They did NOT just believe because Paul and Silas said so. They took the time to carefully verify their words.

Not to dwell on this particular issue too much, but this is a big problem with so many Christians today, whether online or offline. Rather than delve into the Scriptures themselves in order to ascertain the truth of a matter, they simply -- and naively -- believe whatever some church preacher or popular televangelist tells them, because they possess a long list of impressive theology degrees. Is it any wonder then that there is so much deception and false doctrines in the Christian world today?

At any rate, after reading the aforementioned explanation my friend had offered, I then proceeded to share with her my own thoughts regarding the phrase in Psalm 23:5. That is to say, "thou anointest my head with oil". So what about you my friend? Have you ever wondered about the significance of the

phrase? If so, then I invite you to continue reading this article in order to discover the truth.

As it turns out, throughout the Holy Scriptures, it becomes rather evident that oil, and being anointed with oil, is symbolic of the presence of the Lord's Spirit. For example, the Book of Exodus informs us that when the Lord gave the Israelites instructions to build the tabernacle, they were commanded to fill the lamp with olive oil, and to keep it burning always. As I just said, this was symbolic of the Lord's presence being with them. In other words, as long as the Israelites knew that the menorah was burning in the outer portion of the Tabernacle -- and later in the Temple -- they were comforted and realized that God's Spirit was with them. Consider the following set of verses as proof of this fact:

"And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always."

Exodus 27:20, KJV

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually.

Without the vail of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually."

Leviticus 24:1-4, KJV

"And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two

branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount."

Exodus 25:31-40, KJV

Furthermore, this is also why Israelite kings such as Saul and David were likewise anointed with oil. It was a physical representation of being anointed with God's Spirit in order to perform the task which God had given them to do. That is to say, to rule over Israel. Again, consider the following group of verses:

"And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God . . . Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his [Saul's] head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"

1 Samuel 9:27-10:1, KJV

"And he sent, and brought him [David] in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him [David] in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah."

1 Samuel 16:12-13, KJV

Tragically, when stubborn King Saul disobeyed the Lord by refusing to utterly destroy their enemies, the Amalekites, as the Prophet Samuel had instructed him to do, we are told that God rejected Saul, His Spirit departed from Saul, and an evil spirit then plagued Saul from that time forward, as we can determine by the following group of Bible verses:

"And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and

utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king . . . And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou."

1 Samuel 15:18-23, 26-28, KJV

"But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee."

1 Samuel 16:14-15, KJV

"And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul."

1 Samuel 18:12, KJV

In contrast to the previous tragic story, consider what the Lord said through the Prophet Isaiah in the following verse of Scripture:

"As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

Isaiah 59:21, KJV

So as you can see, just as God can easily anoint a person with His Spirit, He can likewise choose to withdraw it when that individual becomes disobedient and fails to perform His Will. In fact, even king David became very concerned about the same thing possibly occurring in his own life. As we are informed in Psalm 51, after David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and even plotted to have her husband -- Uriah the Hittite -- murdered, David was worried that God's Spirit might depart from him as well, as we see by the following verse:

"Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me."

Psalm 51:11, KJV

Moving up to the prophetic Book of Joel, we discover that the Lord promised to eventually pour out His divine Spirit upon all flesh, as we can easily determine by the following group of verses:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."

Joel 2:28-32, KJV

As I also explain in articles such as "A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: God's Promise of the Spirit" and "Are You Saved and Sealed and Healed and Filled?", this very same promise of the Spirit is amply discussed in the New Testament as well, as becomes evident by the following sample verses:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the

Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

John 14:16-17, KJV

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:"

John 15:26, KJV

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment . . . Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

John 16:7-8, 13, KJV

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Acts 1:4-8, KJV

In the New Testament, in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, we can thus understand that the five wise virgins having their lamps filled with oil represented the same thing. That is to

say, having God's Spirit in their lives, so that they were spiritually awake and eagerly watching for the wonderful return of the Lord. Consider the following group of verses:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Matthew 25:1-13, KJV

In other words, in both a symbolic and literal sense, their bodies were the very temples, lamps and earthen vessels within which dwelt God's Holy Spirit. Here again are some Bible verses which confirm this point:

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

2 Corinthians 4:7, KJV

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

1 Corinthians 3:16-17, KJV

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV



"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

2 Corinthians 6:16-18, KJV

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Romans 8:9-11, KJV

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

1 John 4:13, KJV

So what about you, my friend? Is your life well lubricated with the oil of anointing of God's Holy Spirit? Please also remember that without His divine anointing, we are nothing, and we can do nothing, as we can see by the following two verses:

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

John 15:4, KJV

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

Zechariah 4:6, KJV

If we dig deeper into this chapter in the Book of Zechariah, we discover that it is describing two anointed witnesses who continually stand before the Lord. These two witnesses are described as two olive branches or trees which feed oil into

the seven lamps of the menorah. They are likewise mentioned in the Book of Revelation, as we see by the following verses:

"And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof . . . Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

Zechariah 4:1-3, 11-14, KJV

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw

them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them."

Revelation 11:3-12, KJV

So as you can see, once again, being anointed with God's Spirit, or filled with God's Spirit, is symbolized by olive oil, lamps, olive trees and the menorah. This is very easy to understand if we simply take time to diligently study the Holy Scriptures. It has nothing to do with dealing with any kind of mental stress, or pouring oil over sheep's heads in order to relieve their suffering from parasites. I hope this point has been made clear to you by now.

Before concluding this article, there is one more important point we need to cover. While I have now explained to you exactly what the oil symbolizes -- that is, the presence and anointing of God's Spirit -- we have not directly addressed the PURPOSE of the oil. If you have been closely reading all of the verses I have been sharing with you, then the answer should already be apparent to you. The oil, of course, serves as fuel for the lamps -- or menorahs -- which stood in both the tabernacle, as well as later in the temple itself. Thus we see that the oil is the fuel which provided light in both of these structures.

In similar fashion, as I point out in articles such as "This Little Light, Glory of the Lord and Our Bright Future" and "The Children of Light: Are You One of Us?", the reason why God provides us with and anoints us with the oil of the Holy Spirit, is so that we can likewise shine brightly and serve as bold witnesses of our faith in the world. This Biblical truth is revealed in such Bible verses as the following:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16, KJV

"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the

body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."

Luke 11:33-36, KJV

"And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Luke 16:8, KJV

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them."

John 12:36, KJV

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children . . . For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Ephesians 5:1, 8, 11 KJV

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

Philippians 2:15, KJV

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

1 Thessalonians 5:4-5, KJV

So just as the two witnesses -- a.k.a. the olive branches -- stand before the Throne of God, and just as we are told that He makes His ministers flames, so too, we must shine brightly before this lost, sick and dying world. Do you? I certainly hope so. Consider this final verse of Scripture:

"And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."

Hebrews 1:7, KJV

In conclusion, as you can clearly see, throughout this article, I have pointed you directly and continuously to the Scriptures in order to explain to you what the phrase "thou anointest my head with oil" actually means. I have not tried to invent something which sounds nice or logical. So rather than embrace the false doctrines of misguided men which are so prevalent today, please always remember that we need to strive to let the Scriptures interpret themselves as much as possible. In this way, we will be less prone to doctrinal error.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: God's Promise of the Spirit  
Are the Gifts of the Spirit for Today?  
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Was Jesus Filled With the Holy Spirit from Birth?

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