

# BAPTICOSTAL

One Man's Journey to Inherit the Kingdom of Heaven

Shawn Hunting

**KW**  
Kingdom Winds  
Publishing

The events and people described in this book are real. The names have been changed to protect the innocent and by association the guilty. The geography (names of towns and regions) are correct. However, most institutions such as schools and churches have had their names changed, so their identity will remain concealed.

© 2018 Copyright by Shawn Hunting

*Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are taken from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*

*Scripture quotations marked (NKJV) are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*

*Scripture quotations marked (KJV) are taken from The Authorized (King James) Version. Rights in the Authorized Version in the United Kingdom are vested in the Crown. Reproduced by permission of the Crown's patentee, Cambridge University Press*

*Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*

First edition, 2018

ISBN 10: 0998010510

ISBN 13: 9780998010519

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of the author.

Cover design by Gloria Biggers.

Edited by Becca James.

Book design by Dawn King.

Published by Kingdom Winds Publishing.

[www.kingdomwinds.com](http://www.kingdomwinds.com)

[publishing@kingdomwinds.com](mailto:publishing@kingdomwinds.com)

The views expressed in this book are not necessarily those of the publisher.

*For my Lord Jesus in order  
to share  
the revelation He has given unto me*

## PROLOGUE

In name of Jesus the book you hold in your hand (or possibly downloaded to your favorite device) has the potential to change your life. So many people in our present time are educated very well in biblical studies, religious history, and even in comparative theologies, but few people know the God that they know a lot about. The sole purpose of this book is to point you to that deep, abiding relationship with the Most High.

*Bapticostal* is first my personal journey from a traditional, religious background to a deeper walk with the Lord (which leads me to the baptism of the Holy Spirit). Along the way, I have biographical chapters and teaching chapters interspersed with each other. Because I want the book to make sense, I will add a ‘big idea’ statement to the beginning of some chapters in italics. This is to help you understand the flow of the book. Some of the topics may be familiar to you, and they were to me as well when I was a Baptist. However, the truth is often so much deeper than I was taught, so I want you to understand the ‘why’ of a topic in each chapter.

## THE PURPOSE OF BAPTICOSTAL

A year or so ago, after I sat around with some friends, reminiscing about my life and the goodness of the Lord, they started to encourage me to write *Bapticostal*. The last few years have been interesting (a mild understatement), and most of the notable events were either a prelude to or the result of my receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This book is part memoir, part theological treatise, and all autobiographical. Bapticostal’s purpose is singular: introduce the reader to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (often referred to as the ‘anointing’—I will use both terms). Most books don’t state their purpose so plainly, but the teaching is sorely needed in the church of Jesus Christ today.

This book is written primarily for people in traditional, mainstream, or fundamental churches that want that deeper walk with God but are unsure how to go about it. To move from the religious life to a true walk with God is as simple as receiving the anointing of the Holy Spirit, but most people (maybe you are included) have no idea what those words mean. They, like the disciples of John when asked about receiving the Holy Spirit, state “We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2 ESV). Most church people have at least heard of the Holy Spirit, but their knowledge ends at knowing about His existence or remembering His mention in some distant sermon or catechism. However, whether you are religious or unchurched, you are invited and welcomed to continue reading. Really, anyone who wants to know more about the Lord can read and glean good things from this book.

Whenever something is written to the Church as a whole, the problem is people come from diverse backgrounds of the denominational systems. Those individual groups have varied levels of stress on the importance of discipleship, teaching, and even the common language of the faith. Some denominations do a great job with evangelism, convincing someone of his or her need for Jesus and encouraging him or her to come to faith in the Lord. Metaphorically, they take the person from his or her fallen, sinful nature to the cross for forgiveness and then the empty tomb for hope in a future resurrection, but they leave him or her beside the stone that was rolled away to wait for heaven—just waiting for years that turn into decades. Jesus did not remain standing around the empty tomb, lingering and loitering without purpose. In fact, He gave several specific commands and statements to His followers about where the believer should go next, and that place is Pentecost for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

You, the reader, may ask what qualifies me to speak to your denomination on this topic. I spent the first 33 years of my life in the Independent and Southern Baptist churches. One set of grandparents was Methodist, and my other grandmother attended the Church of Christ.

All of my formative years and formal theological training came in either fundamentalist or mainstream denominations. So I think I am uniquely qualified (anointed—sorry I could not resist! Again, I will explain later) to speak to traditional denominations. This book is not an attempt to say, ‘Pentecostals are right, and everyone else is wrong, so join us!’ I really only embraced the term Pentecostal because that is what others have described me as since I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Disunity and division among Christians is the opposite of what I seek. This book’s goal is to lead you into a deeper walk with the Lord through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which will help to bring about the unity Jesus prayed for near the end of His ministry (John 17:20-23). So throughout this book, I will generically use the term ‘Baptists,’ but I am referring to anyone who resides in a denominational church without either an understanding of the Kingdom of God or belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I could just as easily say ‘Methodists,’ ‘Catholics,’ ‘Community church members,’ etc. Also, I will write directly to you, the reader. Normally, I correspond in 1st or 3rd person, but this book is a conversation from me to you.

## BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

Answer the following questions honestly if you are not sure if this book is for you. Are you sitting in church week after week, singing the same song set over and again by rote—a call to worship, a hymn, and an offertory—without feeling as though your mind wanders? Do you watch as the offering plate passes and listen to the same handful of people sing specials right before the preacher or priest or teaching elder gets up to give one of his sermons with three points that alliterate? You could probably save him some time, right? And even if you haven’t heard it, the sermon will fall in one of the categories: ‘Be Good,’ ‘Read Your Bible and Pray,’ ‘Tithe,’ ‘Serve,’ or any variation on those. You know

your attitude should be different—you might secretly harbor hope for a meaningful relationship with the Lord—but you feel nothing.

Perhaps you even give handsomely when the plate passes or sing in the choir? Maybe you are sitting there after teaching Sunday School to your favorite age group? Maybe you are an usher or Deacon or Elder or some combination of all of the above? Maybe you are the pastor? But deep down you know something is missing. You believe in Jesus as God's Son, your savior who died and rose from the dead. You prayed the prayer of faith, got water baptized, read your Bible, prayed, and did all the stuff other religious people told you, but something is still missing. The great stories of faith in the Bible now leave you cold because you hope that you would stand up to persecution as the apostles did or pray with the fervor and faith of the great saints. But in the corners of your mind, you know something was different for them. You know that you sing with no zest, pray without the slightest indication that it changes anything, and most of all, wonder if this is all there is to the Christian life.

If this sounds familiar, I was where you are. I was a very religious man, more so than most. The problem is that religion is an adherence to an outward set of standards, not a relationship with God. It is at best extreme, self-imposed behavior modification. The Holy Spirit drew me to believe in Jesus, and the Lord's gift of faith allowed me to believe on Him for salvation. Then, for some reason, I, like many of you reading this, did not continue in faith or the pursuit of God but started trying to act like I saw other "good" Christians act. The problem was they knew how to look like they had it together without having traveled one inch farther down the road of faith than I had. The Lord graciously allowed me the cognitive dissonance and trials to break me out of the religious rut and join an abiding relationship in Him.

The following book is my journey from "a form of Godliness but denying its power" (2 Tim. 3:5 NIV) to a Holy Spirit baptized believer. If these words or phrases are unfamiliar to you, don't worry; I will explain

concepts as they are introduced. I have woven my personal narrative of the last six years with teaching to preach to you the ‘Gospel of the Kingdom.’

This book will be a challenge for you if you reside in a traditional, religious church, so it is important to pray for God to open your understanding to His wisdom. Before we go any further, I would like you to pray a passage from the Scriptures for your own understanding. The Scriptures are God’s words to us, and I will explain in depth why praying them can be powerful in a believer’s life, but basically God has said His Word will not return void in Isaiah 55:11. Simply put: God’s Word is effective.

Ephesians 1:17-21 states:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come (ESV).

Changing a passage into a prayer is as simple as making it personal and believing what you speak. Pray the following to the Lord: “Dear Lord, I pray to You to give me the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of You, to enlighten the eyes of my heart, that I may know the hope to which You have called me, the riches of Your glorious



inheritance in the saints, the immeasurable greatness of Your power toward us who believe, according to the working of Your great might that You worked in Christ when You raised Him from the dead and seated Him at Your right hand in heavenly places far above all rule, authority, power, dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.”

One word of caution: I wrote this book based on the teachings from the Bible, and every reference is to the Scriptures, not any man-made theological system. In other words, people you care about and respect may disagree with this book because it offends their traditions. You will not be able to unlearn what you read. God will hold you accountable for how you react to this information (not my personal story but the knowledge of the Kingdom of God). Jesus said in Luke 9:62 “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God” (ESV). If you want a deeper relationship with the Lord, then I can show you the way. However, if you are looking to be more religious or have an “experience” you can turn on and off, then this is not the book for you. You have been warned.

A note on terms and language: During the course of this book, I will use “religious” words and phrases such as ‘salvation,’ ‘the anointing,’ ‘the Kingdom of Heaven,’ etc. When I do, I will attempt to immediately define the words using Scripture. The readers of this book will be from different denominational traditions or completely unchurched folks, and I want the Gospel of the Kingdom (see I just used one! You will definitely know the implication of that phrase by the end of this book) to have meaning. Some of the concepts are loaded with specific significance for certain denominational groups, while they are used differently with others. If I do not define terms then, even though my meaning may be exact, my communication could be sloppy. The teaching and ideas contained here are too important to be locked into the paradigm of one denominational tradition or someone's vague notion of nuance.

## TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

Some of you may be curious how I cite Bible verses in this book, and I want to make sure you understand what I am doing. I don't want a stylistic writing method to derail your reading. Obviously, when I give the verse's reference and use quotation marks, then it is an exact rendering. I will use the King James Version, New King James Version, New International Version, and English Standard Version. I would use the original text, but since none of us speak, read, or write ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, or Koine Greek, we need to pick a translation in our language. English is complex, so I try to find the version with the most accurate rendering of the original to our modern understanding. In translations from one language to another, a word to word transcription might not capture the meaning that was intended. For instance, if I say "he is a dog" in English, I have one of two possible meanings: the male animal to which I refer is a canine or the person I am referencing is of low moral character. However, if we transcribe the sentence exactly into Koine Greek, then you still come out with two possible meanings: the male animal referred to is a canine or the male referred to is a homosexual. Not quite the same, is it? Suddenly a verse in Revelation came into focus for all of those reading only the King James Version of the Bible. That is why I switch between translations to find the best possible rendering in English.

Sometimes I will simply list a verse in parenthesis with no quotation marks. This is because I am taking an idea directly from the verse without quoting. I encourage you to look the verses up if you have questions about the concepts. Read this book as a study guide, cross-referencing with the Scriptures. I am not offended; the Apostle Paul commended the Berean believers for checking his words against the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11) and called them 'fair-minded.' I use this convention because of the deft discussions coming later; if I quote every verse, then the book will be the size of a systematic theology text.

However, I do include them, so you can use this as a quick reference as you study these truths on your own.

I want to handle the Scriptures with respect and read them with fidelity to their original meanings. Many people proof-text or come to a belief, then try to find a Scripture or set of verses to agree with them. Apart from being intellectually dishonest, the person who proof-texts is not trying to learn from God by reading the Bible. The person who proof-texts by using verses out of context is simply trying to convince others that God said something in agreement with them—a dangerous proposition. We should all approach the Word with humility, willing to be taught—not with a desire to prove ourselves right.

# 2

## WHEN GOD SPEAKS

The weekend of Mother's Day 2010 forever changed my life, and I don't mean that in a cliché kind of way. Sometimes people use the phrase for the first day of a new job or even when switching brands of soda. In terms of opportunity cost, they are right; they have chosen x, so y is no longer an option for at least the moment. What they really mean in a very Frostian 'Road Not Taken' kind of way is every decision affects the next and accumulates consequences. That is true but not what I mean. What I am saying is when God spoke unexpectedly, my entire world and way of looking at life transformed. It had to. My perception altered. Everything I thought I knew and was so sure about—theology, God, the natural world, and the spiritual realm—lay in shambles at my feet with one simple phrase on one of the most beautiful Sunday mornings to ever dawn.

Sometimes I ramble and wax poetic. I am a philosopher at heart, but most people glean meaning from stories or parables. Let me assure the

reader that what follows is fantastic in nature, and you may not want to believe it. Some readers, like me, are from traditional denominational backgrounds and have been taught that what I am about to write is not possible. Most churches teach encounters of the supernatural kind and God speaking ended with the death of the apostles and completion of the Bible. Well-meaning learned men and women put boundaries on what God is capable of doing, so people believe in a supernatural being but not supernatural experiences. Know this: God cannot be bound by you or by the most religious and wise person you know.

Every word that follows is true.

On Saturday, May 8, 2010, I know exactly where I was and what I was doing. Scarlet and I were shopping for our mothers. We went to our local mall to get Scarlet's mother a gift card to a clothing store and then across the parking lot to get mine a gift certificate to the movies. Neither one of us is a really good gift-buyer. Gifts are just not our thing; hence the reason we are doing this the day before Mother's Day.

During the walk into the mall, Scarlet was complaining of soreness in her lower abdomen. Honestly, I didn't think much of it because she was nine months pregnant with our fourth child. After that many pregnancies, we learned as a couple that walking around is important to prepare for the birth (and may even speed it along). I have no personal experience carrying a child, but I am sure you ladies can confirm that everything hurts or is sore at that point. I thought it was 'normal' pregnancy pain from the discomfort of carrying something around in front of you the size of a watermelon. The rest of the day and evening passed quite uneventfully, and we went to bed.

On Sunday mornings, I have a long-standing tradition of cooking breakfast for the family. Really, this is the only meal of the week I am responsible for, as I am married to an awesome woman. I always say that Scarlet does 99% of the household responsibilities, but I am far prouder of my 1%. Anyway, I had gotten quite good at preparing grits by experimenting with different combinations of herbs and spices, but if I ever print a cookbook, it will only be one recipe long: 'The Greatest Grits Ever.' By the way, if the reader does not know what a 'grit' is, then chances are you are not from the South.

I would get up early to study my Sunday School lesson in the quiet before the kids were awake. I taught the Adult Men's class for anyone who was at retirement age (most of these men were in their seventies and some over eighty). I loved teaching the older gentlemen who accepted me readily as their teacher even though I was just 33 years old at the time. My morning routine was to put a pot of grits on, read through my lesson one final time, and go through my prayer list. It was all very simple and peaceful at that time of the morning.

On a typical Sunday, the routine included getting Sally (6 years), Keith (4 years), and Jack (almost 2 years) up to eat, so their mother could sleep in a little before church. However, on this day, it was about seven, and I was sitting on the couch as everyone slept, looking out at the beautiful morning through the bay windows in our living room. I was reading through the Scriptures for the lesson and had bowed my head to pray when a voice said, "Get her to the hospital." It is hard to describe what this was like, but it was as if the message came through on all my frequencies simultaneously. Simple noise or certain voices you can ignore, but the voice cut through my hearing and attention on the Scriptures yet felt authoritative and loving all at once.

The statement was a simple command. I was startled and looked around the room, questioning my own sanity, but there was no doubt about what had happened. Back then, supernatural experiences were not the norm for me (other than seeing an angel on the Mountain a few years before), but I was not about to argue with a Heavenly voice.

I ran to the bedroom and woke Scarlet up and asked her if she had heard the voice. I should have known the answer was 'no' since she had been sleeping. Supernatural experiences were not normal for her either, and I could see the question oscillating behind her eyes between 'Is he serious?' and 'Has my husband had a psychotic break?' She must have had the confidence that I was still functioning because Scarlet revealed her pain and soreness was abnormal compared to the first three children. In fact, now, she had a look of pain on her face as she tried to stand.

After rushing around waking children up and sending them with grandparents, brothers, and sisters as quickly as we could, Scarlet and I made our trek to the hospital. Scarlet's ob-gyn was the doctor on call and

had delivered Sally and Jack. She listened patiently to my story of hearing a voice warning me to bring my wife to the hospital; I imagine doctors are like teachers in that they have heard it all. Even as I was telling it, I felt a little self-conscious, and I will give the doctor this: she was extremely diplomatic. To this day, I have no idea if she believed me. She looked at Scarlet and said, "What do you think?"

Scarlet told her about the pain, so the doctor decided we were going to do a Caesarean. Evelyn was due in about a week, so the surgery wasn't too early. About forty-five minutes later, Scarlet, her mother Betsy, and I were in the operating room as the doctor started to cut. Evelyn was our fourth C-section. I guess a person never gets used to being cut in half, but as surgeries go, Scarlet went through it like a champ. They put a sheet across Scarlet's upper chest to keep her from seeing what they were doing, but Betsy and I could see over it. I am not a fan of surgery TV, so I definitely would not be in an operating room unless it involved somebody I love. However, I was watching this procedure with great interest.

About ten minutes into the surgery, the doctor and the nursing staff around that end of the table stopped and looked at each other, first in concern and then relief. I don't know if they had bets placed on the story I had told, but it was clear something wasn't normal. Betsy was frantically asking what was wrong. The doctor said two things to the nurses and us: "It looks like the baby is wrapped in cellophane" and a few seconds later, she continued, "If this baby were holding a newspaper, I would be able to read it."

After completing the Caesarean and delivering our second daughter, Evelyn, a beautiful, spunky red-head who looks like her mother and sister, the doctor met me back in recovery. Scarlet was groggy from the spinal block and surgery as the doctor went through her vitals and gave the nurse instructions. She then explained to us medically what had happened.

Ladies, please forgive me for the description that follows. During the course of pregnancy, a woman's uterus is supposed to stretch evenly as the baby grows, like a water balloon filling up. Ideally, the thickness of the organ will remain uniform around the baby. Scarlet's uterus had stretched on only one end, leaving the uterus thick on one side of Evelyn and thin on the other. The pain on Saturday was the uterus unable to stretch on the

one side anymore; by Sunday morning, Scarlet's uterus was beginning to lose fluid from small tears, increasing her pain. The doctor told us that by the evening, Scarlet would have suffered a full uterine rupture. At that point, she would have lived for maybe five minutes. Evelyn would have survived for an additional five minutes. We live twenty-five minutes from the hospital. Without the Lord's intervention, my wife and daughter would have been dead before the sun came up again. The pain is excruciating, but sometimes women don't realize it is not normal discomfort associated with pregnancy.

Later that night, after everyone left the hospital, Scarlet was asleep. I held this mostly-bald (except for some red fuzz like a tennis ball) little girl in my hands. Evelyn wasn't about to sleep because she had been active at night for the whole pregnancy. I was happy to stay up with her after the events of the day. On that night, my daughter saw me weep and thank the Lord for her life and that of my wife.

## MANNER OF SPEAKING

The aspect of the story that seems to bother people the most (or at least draw the most comments from naysayers) is the way in which the Lord spoke using a Southern phrasing or dialect. They seem to be unable to view God saying 'Get' at the beginning of the sentence, as that is not proper elocution. However, remember that God was speaking to a Southerner, not somebody in the English Court. The sentence 'Take your wife to the hospital' is grammatically correct and a command, but 'Get her to the hospital' is an urgent imperative to me, the recipient of the message. Remember in the Gospel of John, chapter 1, the name of Jesus is 'Word' with the implication that God is a communicator.

I think people get derailed on minor issues like this because they cannot divorce what they think or have been taught by others about God from the reality of how He reveals Himself. So they look for any excuse not to believe, even if it means reducing God, who performed miracle upon miracle throughout the Scriptures, to an idea of someone who does not affect their lives today. Jesus stated only one thing was more powerful



than Scripture (and by implication His personal revelation): the traditions of men (Mark 7:13). Instead of saying ‘praise the Lord’ for the miracle of Scarlet and Evelyn’s lives, they want to have a discussion of God’s perfection versus English grammar.

They argue something like—and I have heard many versions—*‘If God is perfect and cannot do wrong, then He cannot speak incorrectly, so, therefore, your entire experience that morning was a lie or a lucky guess! But don’t make too much of it, and by the way, you are a blasphemer who needs to repent of what you say about God!’* I have trouble not rolling my eyes at their logical fallacies, and I don’t want to have an intellectual argument with them as that is a trap of the enemy to get believers to argue about who has the biggest brain (soul), when God is Spirit and His messages are spiritual (John 4:24). Having a cerebral disagreement about the things of God is like two men, deaf from birth, arguing over how Beethoven’s fifth moves them. Conceptually, they can understand what music is and read what others say about the piece, but without the ability to hear music, it is not in their experience.

You will find I have little patience for the ‘traditions of men’ because of their disastrous consequences for the believer. I do try to have a heart for these people, as they are wearing heavy bindings put on them by others and really believe they are helping lead people to the Lord as they wrap the bindings tighter on themselves and those around them. They put heavy yokes across their own necks that they cannot hope to lift in an effort to be just a little better, a little more religious. They are one of the core focus groups of the book, and I pray for their release from the prison of their own making.

# 3

## AT THAT POINT, I WAS A LITTLE CONFUSED

In the three days we spent in the hospital after Evelyn's birth, I had some time to think and pray. The message was not like the earlier warning, but I could sense the Lord wanted me to proclaim what had happened publicly. We had already told the doctor and our family on that day, so the story would have gotten out. But really, God saved my wife and daughter, so the *least* I could do was get over any perceived embarrassment or ridicule and praise Him publicly. My private theology did not allow for such miraculous intervention to happen in my life, but it had happened.

Dr. Ben was our pastor at this time and had been for twenty years. The man known lovingly by his congregation as 'Preacher Ben' will figure greatly into this story at several points. Preacher Ben was a gifted orator, but he excelled at the pastoral gifts involved with being the shepherd of the flock the Lord had given him. Naturally, he visited Scarlet in the hospital, and, as was his tradition, brought a picture Bible for the new baby.

Preacher Ben is not like any other Baptist minister I have ever met, and I do not cast aspersions on the group as a whole. One thing I hope you take away from this book is that I see the bondage of the denominational systems and wish nothing but freedom in the Holy Spirit and unity in our Lord Jesus Christ for all believers. I do not fault men for lack of light or for using the light they have. I want this book to point them to the sellers of the oil for their lamps to fully illuminate their way (more on what a seller of the oil is later).

Preacher Ben had a streak different than most Baptist ministers though. My father called him a ‘renegade Baptist’ in a loving way, but he led with a more open heart to the Lord working in diverse ways than most of his brethren. He believed me without question and instantly said I needed to testify in church on Sunday. ‘Testify’ in the Baptist tradition simply means to tell the congregation what the Lord has done for you. I agreed, but I had about a thousand questions I wanted to ask him, which would have just been arguments against my own experience. He left, and I was alone with my thoughts again.

Baptists usually know their Bibles well. We start with Bible drills when we are very young to learn to look up passages with speed. When I was growing up, Sunday School, Training Union, Mission Friends, and Royal Ambassadors were all systematic and thorough classes for learning the basics of the Bible. We also learned Baptist Theology quite methodically with the Bible. I don’t want to sound like I am accusing anyone of doing anything untoward because basic biblical knowledge is important for a Christian, but the Baptist theology was so ingrained I had trouble seeing past it when thinking about God speaking in my living room. By virtue of the fact that Baptists teach very little about the third person of the Trinity, I had missed the importance of the Holy Spirit’s ministry.

## DENOMINATIONAL BELIEFS

Theology is just a person or group’s beliefs about God. If you are unchurched or new to church, you may wonder why they do not all come to the same conclusion with the same Bible. Crazy, right, how everyone can still argue

over a book in completed print for 1,900 years? Really, unless you are talking about a cult, most denominations agree on major points of belief about Jesus Christ. The place where they differ tends to be in certain practices, church history arguments, and the meaning of specific verses. Specific verses are where they build their beliefs about God, how they should live in this life, and what comes next. Jesus said in John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (ESV). If everyone is praying for Holy Spirit guidance, then we should all come to the same conclusions about Scripture. That is where the problem comes in: not everyone is praying for guidance. Learned men in seminaries have read and taught what other learned men have said, intellectual arrogance has slipped into churches among laymen and leaders, and a host of books with a clever turn of the phrase lead people from God’s words to man’s wit. The Holy Spirit, our heavenly teacher, is not even sought or asked anymore in many cases. Denominations print books and pamphlets outlining their beliefs, but I wonder how many of those committees got on their faces before the Lord and asked for guidance from the Holy Spirit before they printed a book purporting to point to the Lord? Winning the arguments against other denominations have become more important to some than fulfilling the Bible’s multiple commands to be unified (Eph. 4:3, 13 and 1 Pet. 3:8). I am not casting stones at the reader because I loved to argue and ‘be right.’ The Holy Spirit’s conviction simply showed me how divisive and ugly my actions were.

We are going to have an in-depth theological aside on authority and soul ties later in this book, but suffice it to say I held the candle of Baptist revelation so close to my eyes that I had blinded myself to other light. If you are in a denominational setting, then you may find my words offensive and be unable to comprehend the teachings. Sometimes what you hear is based on how you hear. There are some Bible verses in chapter four that I am going to have you pray to reveal God’s truth to you. I encourage you to continue to pray the verses throughout this book because the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth to you. If you are skeptical, all you are doing is praying verses. If your denominational beliefs are correct, the Holy Spirit will show you and you have lost nothing other than some time reading this book. But

if you are blinded by man's teaching, wouldn't you like to know what God has to say through the Holy Spirit? Sometimes I pray for God to show me things as He knows them to be, not as I want them to be or think they are. Those are powerful prayers because they ask God to transform thinking and biases, wiping away what man has added and getting to the core of truth. God loves you enough to change your mind and heart.

As I was saying before I started my important bird-walking expedition above, Baptists typically know their Bibles well, including the beliefs and interpretations Baptist theologians have assigned to certain Scriptures. The two verses that seemed to stick out to me as a person who had just heard the Lord speak and saw the resulting miracle were Hebrews 1:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. Hebrews states, "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (ESV). 1 Corinthians states, "Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away" (ESV).

I do not want to oversimplify or misrepresent anyone's beliefs, but these two verses could have numerous pages dedicated to them (and they do in other works). Simply put, Hebrews implies God used to speak in different ways to people but is now revealed by Jesus exclusively. Baptists will tell you that means the Jesus revealed in Scripture, so God doesn't really talk to us directly anymore. 1 Corinthians states the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will cease when the perfect comes. Again, Baptists interpret 'the perfect' as the finishing of the New Testament, so the gifts have ceased by their calculations. My cognitive dissonance came from the fact that God had spoken with a direct word of special knowledge, but all the most religious people I know said these two things are not possible and stand against Scripture. I will revisit these verses again as they are key to many people's and denominations' rejection of spiritual gifts for today.

## TESTIFYING

On Sunday, May 16, 2010, I stood before the morning service congregation

at Traditional Baptist Church in Startex, South Carolina and related the tale from the week before. Most of the church already knew it since I had not shown up to teach my Sunday School class and people had contacted my family to find out why. To this day, I do not know what the group as a whole thought about my story, but there was not a pew that did not have someone in tears.

Preacher Ben got up after I finished and said, “God is merciful. Today we celebrate a birth, but it could have been two funerals, instead.” Truly God is merciful. Today, I have my wife, my daughter, and since then, our fifth child Andy. None of them would be here without God’s direct intervention on that Sunday.

That was probably the most pressing question in my mind as the service ended. Believers die every day and suffer tragedies without a report of hearing from the Lord. In fact, an oft-repeated phrase in the Baptist Church is that, other than Jesus, the only consistent theme in every book of the New Testament is suffering. Baptists face their lives with a hope for peace and prosperity but a viewpoint that Job (An Old Testament figure who suffered a set of devastating tragedies) was God’s faithful as well. I was thankful but unsure why He chose to be merciful to me? It seemed so many other people were worthier of the Lord’s intervention than I.

# 7

## IN CHRIST

*Big Idea: The baptism of the Holy Spirit is God's will for every believer's life.*

In chapter 6, I developed the idea of believing in Jesus as a separate event from the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To recap, believing on Jesus saves a person from his or sins and from an eternity in Hell. They become Christians in the sense that they are followers of and believers in Jesus. To be complete in Christ, on the other hand, a person must follow Jesus's command to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit often referred to as 'the anointing,' the fire baptism, or being 'in Christ.' I showed you, using the books of Luke and Acts, that becoming a believer and receiving the anointing were certainly separate events by the clear teachings of Scripture.

Many people will be offended by what is written in this chapter, and in terms of the theology of the Gospel of the Kingdom, if someone is granted

revelation to understand this doctrine, then the rest of what I write will be self-evident. Once God gives you this revelation, you will not be able to believe that you could not ‘see’ it before. The Apostle Paul states plainly, “The mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:26-27 ESV). The anointing of the Holy Spirit was a mystery hidden even from the Jewish nation, the people God chose for the revelation of His Word, law, prophets, and the incarnation of Jesus. But in all of that revelation, they did not understand the ‘mystery.’ The anointing is referred to as ‘the hope of glory.’ Don’t miss this truth.

God does not waste words in the Bible, but because we sometimes fail to understand how teachings are immediately applicable to our lives, we tend to overlook or ignore them. The genealogical lists of the Gospels or the Levitical sacrificial law are examples of where people begin to skip or read through as their mind wanders. In the Gospel of John, the last living apostle records some statements and sermons not included in the first three Gospels. Most experts believe John was no older than twenty when Jesus was resurrected and ascended. At ninety years old when he wrote the Gospel of John, he had experienced a lifetime of reflection over the words and actions of Jesus plus the knowledge acquired in founding the Church. John, by the Holy Spirit’s leading, recorded some of the greatest teachings of Jesus in these relatively long discourses. Regrettably, many people miss the nuggets of truth because our society has become a bottom-line or main idea only type of culture with messages, pictures, and ideas flying between phones and across the internet at the speed of light. We tend to forget the context of who they were speaking to and how they were speaking in the ancient world. Remember the introduction to this book? God takes pleasure in revealing messages to seekers—it is a Kingdom principle from the idea of the treasure hidden in the field (Matt. 13:44) that God hides truths for those who are searching for Him. Those willing to be still, quiet, and slow down to meditate on the messages of the Lord will find great treasures in His word.

John, chapter 14 is one of those passages where Jesus is speaking about going away to His disciples, and most of them are upset by His words. In



verse 16, He tells them of the “Comforter” God the Father is going to send to them, the Holy Spirit. who Jesus said would abide with them “forever.” Then here is a nugget that most people miss because they do not read carefully. In verse 17, Jesus tells the disciples in present tense that the Holy Spirit already dwells “with” them and, future tense, would be “in” them. How was the Holy Spirit already dwelling with them if He had not come to them yet? The answer is simple. The Holy Spirit dwelled “with” them because Jesus was physically present with them and had been baptized in the Holy Spirit when the Spirit descended on Him “like a dove” (Matt. 3:16) at the beginning of His ministry. Then Jesus goes on to say, “On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you” (John 14:20 NIV). On what day? The day the Comforter (The Holy Spirit) comes, Jesus is telling them the relationship will change to Christ or the anointing dwelling in them just like the anointing dwells in Him, Jesus. All these ‘withs’ and ‘ins’ are not just fancy turns of the phrase but are meaningful, applicable points for the Christian walk in which Jesus is teaching about the anointed life.

Quite possibly one of the more obvious passages explaining the difference in belief and the anointing is Jesus’s conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. Firstly, in response to a statement by Nicodemus, “Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again’” (John 3:3 NIV). ‘Born again’ is a synonym for belief in Jesus in the context. Nicodemus is confused by the phrase ‘born again,’ so he asks another question. The important point is that belief allows the convert to even ‘see’ the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven. In other words, a lost person (unbeliever) cannot understand or comprehend the anointing. Then, “Jesus answered, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit’” (John 3:5 NIV). Jesus is stating belief (being born again) is not enough to enter. Water is a reference to water baptism, a public sign or ceremony of a person’s belief in Jesus. To enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus is stating the person must be both a believer and baptized in the Spirit, or verse five has no meaning. The reference to birth by water and Spirit are not flowery language but clear references to separate events in the Christian life.

Jesus goes on to say, “Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me” (John 15:4 NIV). Where do we see fruit mentioned in the Bible? I found sixty references to fruit in the New Testament, many of them in the Gospels. Our society does not speak in overtly agrarian terms as Jesus did, but we do talk about ‘cause and effect’ and ‘actions and consequences.’ Remember Jesus’s sermons were to a mixture of highly educated upper class and illiterate masses, so He used object lessons from agriculture they both could understand. In the terms of ‘seed and harvest’ or ‘seed and fruit,’ the fruit is the consequence of planting the seed, and Jesus’s audience would have understood these terms. The Bible tells us, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23 ESV). The statement simply means if we plant the seed of remaining in Christ, the consequences will be these actions and character traits. Remaining in the vine (Jesus) helps us produce the fruit of the Spirit. Are you beginning to see that the phrase ‘in Christ’ has deep meaning?

The first question for the doctrine is: Is it possible to be a believer and disobey the command to receive the anointing? In the book of Hebrews, the author is describing eternity. The writer states:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Able (Heb. 12:22-24 NKJV).

These verses list what and who will be on Mount Zion (the surrounding terrain of the city leading to the walls) and in the heavenly Jerusalem. These verses are not application, high-interest, or standard Bible study material. God the Father, Jesus, and angels are beings from the list, and Jesus’s blood

is also specifically mentioned. Two groups of people are in the list: members of the church and spirits of just men made perfect.

What is the difference between the two groups of people and why are they both listed? I don't want this to be overly complex with reasoning that cannot be followed. In Acts, chapter 2, we have the famous story of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost with the description of the baptism of the Holy Spirit for the disciples, Peter's famous sermon, and the evangelism of the crowd. The chapter ends with verse 47, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (NKJV). Remember the chart from chapter 6; after the apostle's baptism in the Holy Spirit, they made a habit of laying on of hands and praying for all believers to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost. The 'church' in the Bible is a reference to believers who have experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly, the passage calls the church those "who are registered in heaven" (Heb. 12:23 NKJV). This reference to an archive must be to "the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27). Not to be confused with the book of life mentioned in Revelation 20:15. They are clearly not the same book, or they would have the same name and function. The book of life lists those not to be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15). The Lamb's Book of Life lists who is able to enter the city of Heaven (Rev. 21:27). God did not make a typo; He mentioned both books in back-to-back chapters of the same writing, along with their specific function.

The books are referenced by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:3 and by the Apostle John in Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 20:12, and 21:27. David mentions a 'book of the living' in Psalm 69:28, and Moses introduces the Lord's statement about blotting people's names out of His own book in Exodus 32:32-33. But notice the members of the church are in the specific book The Lamb's Book of Life but not the spirits of the just men. So what could this book signify? In the ancient world, cities kept detailed listings of citizens as a type of index or directory of who had the right to walk through the gates, gain the protection of the walls, own property, participate in civic life, and have the benefit of the privileges of protection by the ruler. The registration and book record who has the right to participate as a citizen of the Heavenly City.

Then who are the ‘just men made perfect?’ ‘Justification’ is a biblical idea of being declared in right standing with God, so a ‘just man’ is a person who is declared to no longer be in debt to or guilty before God. As covered earlier, Jesus’s sacrificial death on the cross was the atonement or justifying act for anyone who believes on His name. These men have believed on Jesus as their Lord and have been justified. They are ‘just men.’ Considering the Bible states, “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10 KJV) and describes human righteousness as “filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6 KJV), the reference cannot be to some kind of man-achieved perfection. The perfection comes from the sacrifice of Jesus.

Simply put, the ‘just men made perfect’ can come to Mount Zion (the area around the city) but are not citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem because they are not listed in the Lamb’s Book of Life. The church of the firstborn (those registered) have a place in new Jerusalem. It is a hard truth but truth none the less.

Did you notice who was not listed? The passage does not overtly mention the Holy Spirit as being inside the city. But this is one of those nuggets for the seeker. In John 14:16-17, Jesus said, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth” (ESV). The Holy Spirit is there because the church is, and He never leaves those who are in Christ.

## PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

The truth about the two groups of Christians may be best explained by one of Jesus’s parables that is quite horrifying. Although the parable of the wise and foolish virgins is often misused in Baptist churches as the context for Heaven versus Hell sermons or for evangelistic purposes of the saved versus sinners, the meaning is so much deeper. I have even heard it used to justify ‘being prepared,’ like digging a bunker and storing water. I do agree the passage is on preparation but not the physical kind; it is spiritual. Matthew, chapters 24 and 25 are all about the End Times and the return of Jesus to the earth. Chapter 25 of Matthew contains three consecutive parables Jesus spoke about the judgements coming at the end of time: the

Parable of the Ten Virgins (the judgment of Christians, also called the commendation or Bema judgment seat of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:10); the Parable of the Talents (judgement of the Jews, also known as the Council judgment of Matthew 5:22, Romans 2:12, Revelation 4:10 & 20:4); and the sheep and goats (judgment of the Gentiles, also known as The Great White Throne Judgement of Revelation 20:11-15, Romans 2:14-16). The following is the first parable of the three and specifically for Christians:

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming” (Matt. 25:1-13 NKJV).

Oil is a symbol often used for the Holy Spirit throughout the Bible. We will talk about ‘type and shadow’ in chapter 9, but suffice it to say for now that symbolism is important in the Bible, as the images and metaphors are carried across chapters, books, and even testaments.

Whenever Jesus begins with “The Kingdom of Heaven is like,” the reader is about to go into some deep water—gloriously deep, refreshing water. Who wants to just put their toes into the things of God? Jump in over your head

when seeking the Lord! Also, without getting into an English grammar lesson, when someone says ‘like’ or ‘as,’ the statement following is a simile. ‘Simile’ is a fancy word for a type of symbol, so the story is going to show an important aspect of the Kingdom in terms the reader or listener can understand. Chapter 24 of this book will explore the ideas of the Kingdom Similes deeply. This particular parable relates to some important points from the ancient world, using common practices from a wedding as well as the realities of collective village defense and not having electricity flowing from lamps on every street corner.

The ‘bridegroom’ is simply the groom in English or the male in the wedding. In Jewish culture, the betrothal, a small ceremony in itself, happened about a year before the groom went to the bride’s father’s house to take her to the wedding feast. After the betrothal, Jewish men would spend the next year getting their homes ready for their wives and preparing for married life. The last day and night before the feast, the groom gathered all his friends for a party. Part of the festivities were that the bride and her attending bridesmaids, the virgins from the story, would wait up for the groom and his party to enter the wedding feast. The waiting part of the ceremony is where the parable begins as the women of the wedding party are in the house anticipating the groom’s arrival. The groom in the parable is representative of Jesus. Matthew, chapters 24 and 25 is a discourse and several parables about the return of the Lord Jesus. Plus, at the end of the Age, the Apostle John describes the ‘Marriage Supper of the Lamb’ in Revelation, chapter 19, verses 6-10, and the parallels to the parable are stunning.

An important point is that “the kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins.” The rest of the story is important, and the details are significant. But the simile or symbolism is specifically about the ten virgins, not the bride, who is actually never mentioned and only implied as a necessary part of the wedding. Jesus is telling us there are specifically two types of believers, the wise and foolish, and He tells the reader there is one standard for judging between them: the presence of the oil.

The virgins are identified by their actions: taking their lamps out to the bridegroom. In a wedding, the lamps would be both ceremonial and practical. In the ancient world without electricity or modern, flat paths and

roads, traveling at night was treacherous. The virgins provided light for the wedding party. Symbolically, Jesus's salvation is the light in the lamps. In terms of biblical symbolism, light can only come from God. I John 1:5 declares, "This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you, God is Light, in Him there is no darkness at all" (NIV). The Old Testament states the following, "His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power" (Hab. 3:4 ESV). "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'" (Matt. 17:5 NKJV). There are about twenty verses in the Bible that refer expressly or implicitly to God or Jesus as light. Here a little, there a little.

Notice from the parable that all ten of the virgins have the light of the gospel in their lamps—they are believers! This is key to refute those that see the parable as one of saved versus sinners or saved versus those with only the knowledge of God. When a person denies the clear teachings of Scripture, like the separate events of believing on Jesus as Lord and receiving the Holy Spirit, they begin to twist or modify verses to fit their theology instead of using the Bible to inform their beliefs. The virgins are all 'believers' in the account with the light of salvation shining forth in their lives.

The lamps of Jesus's day varied in artistry from plain pottery to highly decorative pieces made into the shape of a face or boat or anything the user could imagine. Their basic shape was that of an elongated teapot. The spout (highest point of the lamp) was where the wick was inserted into the basin. The basin hole was where the oil was put inside and corresponded to the top of the pot. The wick was submerged in the basin of oil, ran the distance of the spout, and ultimately emerged into the open air. So the wick blocked the flame from igniting all of the oil at once but also conducted oil to the flame allowing the fire to burn brightly outside of the spout.

How did their lamps get lit without oil? When a person becomes a believer, they are 'sealed' by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30). All ten virgins had some oil from when they believed; plus, the wick or trim inside the lamp is a symbol of the virgins themselves. In a lamp, the fire consumes the wick in absence of any fuel, but if one end of the wick is in a flammable

substance like oil, then the wick becomes a conduit for the fire to consume the oil. The lamp glows brighter and longer with the oil, and the wick is consumed at a much slower rate. Are you beginning to see?

The foolish virgins, half the group, took no oil in their vessels (other than what was used to wet the wick, the sealing). The wise had extra vessels of oil, more than they needed to keep their lamps going. The group slumbers while waiting for the groom—another sermon for another day! However, none of their lamps go out, even those belonging to whoever falls asleep! As they get up to trim them, the ember of salvation is still burning and smoldering in the foolish virgins' lamps. The lamps without oil cannot cast light into the darkness to light the way for others as the groom has commanded them to do. They may still have light for their lamps, but they have disobeyed their master. The light is no good to others.

In their frantic shame of foolishness, they want the wise virgins to give up their oil. These ten servants are going to meet their Lord, the groom—they had one job—and five of them did nothing to prepare for that task. Without the anointing, people cannot bear the fruit of the spirit or be fully effective with the gifts of the Spirit that God wants to shower into their lives. They cannot even shine light in the darkness. With the oil of the Holy Spirit, the lamp shines brightly, giving light for all to see as it pierces the darkness. Without the oil of the Holy Spirit, the wick burns and smokes frustratingly, giving little light to the person or others.

The discussion between the wise and foolish virgins reveals some immediate truths. The first is that the foolish virgins recognized the fuel needed to light their lamps and get them to glow more brightly, and if you, the reader, have read this far and have no oil for your lamp, you, too, now know how to light your lamp more brightly. I warned you at the beginning you would be responsible for what you read. Just as the foolish virgins recognized the need for oil, those without the anointing recognize their need for it.

Secondly, the foolish virgins had not paid the price for the oil the wise ones had. I don't mean dollars and cents because the Bible is clear that authority and power to lay hands for the anointing of the Holy is not for sale. Peter had to rebuke Simon the Sorcerer for the request in Acts 8:9-25



with the statement, “May your silver perish with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!” (v. 20 ESV). But even though you don’t pay for the baptism with money, there is a cost associated with the anointing.

The foolish virgins had the same amount of time and ability to get the oil for their lamps before the ceremony that the wise virgins had. Finally, the wise tell them to go the sellers of the oil. There are those that specifically have a gift to pray, lay on hands, etc. to bring about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Referencing Acts, chapter 8 from above, both Phillip and Simon do not have the gift of laying on hands for the anointing, but Peter and John do. We know from Acts, chapter 19 that Paul had the ability to lay hands on people to receive the anointing. Lest the reader think this gift is only for the apostles, I would remind you Ananias, never listed as an apostle in the Scriptures, laid hands on Paul to receive the Holy Spirit in Acts, chapter 22.

There is no doubt in my mind that God will anoint those with the Holy Spirit who ask; Luke 11:13 says God will give you the Holy Spirit for asking, but having someone with the gift of laying hands makes the discipleship smoother and the pitfalls known. Jonathan Edward served as my mentor in this regard and saved me months if not years of maturing the hard way with his occasional sage advice. This is true with anything. Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28 for His followers to disciple others, or what we call ‘mentoring’ in the modern world. Christianity was not meant to spread by mass media or even in formal classrooms (these are not prohibited, but Jesus introduced the superior discipleship system) but by a seasoned veteran and a few newbies living out the walk together until the newbies can disciple on their own. And so on. And so on.

As the parable continues, the foolish virgins leave the party to find oil, and the groom shows up to take the wise virgins to the wedding feast. At this point, I am not going to get into a discussion of eschatology (end-times arguments and timelines). Suffice it to say that whether you are pre-trib, post-trib, a-millennial, or any of the thousands of other theories floating out there, this parable corresponds to and happens during the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in Revelation, chapter 19.

The important aspect of the story is that we find the wise virgins with

the oil behind the walls of a city with their Lord. The foolish virgins without the oil are on the outside, and the Lord says He does not know them. He leaves them outside of the feast and city—outside of Heavenly Jerusalem.

They were in the darkness without oil for their lamps, so the answer was both practical (He couldn't see them) and an illusion to a similar, clear teaching of Jesus. Jesus in Heaven will have perfect knowledge, so the statement of not knowing them is not a confession of imperfection but a simple declaration that they did not have the 'in Christ' relationship of John, chapter 14. In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus states the same words about the *kingdom*,

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness" (ESV).

Jesus specifically mentions not entering the Kingdom of Heaven which is, of course, the anointing or baptism of the Holy Spirit. He tells the people who have worked in His name but did not obey Him to 'depart from me.' You are probably wondering in what way did they not obey? They did not follow the command to be baptized in the Holy Spirit from Matthew 3:11 and Acts 2:38. Do not confuse these verses with the judgment at the end in Revelation 20:11-15 where God sends unbelievers to Hell. When Jesus says, 'depart from me,' the natural question is 'where is He?' According to Revelation, chapter 21 God the Father and Jesus will make the city of New Jerusalem their home, often called the Heavenly City. Those Jesus does not know must depart from the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Adding to this idea further, Jesus said as part of the Great Commission, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16 NIV). Those who believe and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit will be saved. Those who refuse even

to believe will be condemned, another phrase for Hell. But nothing is said of those who believe but don't receive the baptism.

Putting all the verses of this chapter together and synthesizing them (here a little, there a little), we can build a doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who believe on Jesus and receive the anointing are in Christ and are enrolled as citizens of Heaven. Those who refuse to believe on Jesus are condemned to eternity in Hell. In two of the three major passages of this chapter, those believers who refused the anointing, the foolish virgins, end up outside the walls of a city either literally or without citizenship (Matt. 25 and Heb. 12). In the passage from Matthew 7, they are told to depart from the Lord, who will make His eternal home the new Jerusalem.

This chapter has grown long, so I don't want to belabor the point. Along with the specific mention of the Lamb's Book of Life, Revelation, chapter 21, verses 24 through 27 tells us of the kings of the earth who will be able to enter the city of Heaven Jerusalem. Twice the nations of these kings are mentioned: once to walk in the light of the city and once to send their glory and honor by their king. But the people of these nations cannot enter into the Heavenly Jerusalem for themselves.

Most people know their Bibles well enough to understand that Heaven is a city, but what they fail to realize is it is a huge city located on the New Earth. There is not a simple dichotomy of Heaven or Hell as presented by popular culture and Hollywood but a trichotomy of Heaven, New Earth, or Hell. The Heavenly City of Jerusalem is the abode of God. The New Earth is for the believers in Jesus. Hell is the final judgement of Satan, his angels, and all unbelievers. However, those people who are anointed with the Holy Spirit forever are in Christ; they are the kings of the earth allowed to tread upon the New Earth as well as enter the Heavenly City. Without the baptism of the Holy Spirit, those believers are in the nations of the saved, but their bodies were not resurrected. Romans 8:11 clearly states, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you" (ESV). The key word is 'if' and was written specifically to Roman Christians. The Spirit must dwell in a person for them to have a

bodily resurrection, or they will be simply ‘the spirits of the just men made perfect’ mentioned in Hebrews, chapter 12.

We will talk in a future chapter about what it means specifically to be a king of the earth. Oh, yes, the water gets even deeper.

## PREACHING ANOTHER GOSPEL?

At this point in the reading, some of you cannot deny the clear teaching of the Scriptures presented above, but something does not seem right to you because the traditions you learned are in tatters next to the Word of God. How can the most Holy people you know (your pastor and elders), along with denominational leaders, be so wrong? Others may be thinking I am a false teacher because I have presented ‘another gospel’ besides the one they have learned. Please allow me to address both sets of reservations.

The longer I live the anointed life, the chief resistance I hear from people is not Scripturally based. Anecdotally, they know someone holier or more learned than them who does not believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They will say something like ‘I believe the Bible, but my pastor (or elder, or seminary professor) doesn’t believe what you say, so...’ Without throwing too many stones, this is the same argument that led the Pharisees to deny Jesus as the son of God. Their traditions and group thinking blinded them to the fulfillment of all the law and prophets standing in their very midst. Jesus was the Messiah for whom they waited for centuries since Isaiah had predicted His birth and millennia and since God first spoke the promise to Eve. And they missed Him. In fact, they did not just miss Him; they actively sought to kill Him. Jesus warned us in Mark 7:13 that only one thing was more powerful than the Word of God, “thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do” (ESV). Tradition. Human traditions can make God’s word void in the lives of those who ascribe to them. If people choose to deny the Holy Spirit’s power and anointing, then they will miss what God has for them.

Secondly, the Bible pronounces a curse over anyone who preaches a different gospel than the one in the Scriptures, so any variations in the gospel message are serious. “But even if we or an angel from heaven should

preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8 ESV). I would point out two elements. The first is that I walked you through Scriptures in chapter 6 and above, showing the Holy Spirit baptism is unique from believing on Jesus as Lord, even though the Bible is clear the Holy Spirit ‘seals’ the new believer. The second is that the author of Galatians is the Apostle Paul whose Holy Spirit baptism was separated from his belief in Jesus by three days (Acts 9:1-19). In Acts 19: 1-7, Paul also laid hands on believers at Ephesus who had not yet received the Holy Spirit’s baptism for some time after they believed, possibly years since they self-identified as disciples of John.

The ‘different gospel’ is the one presented in many denominations which says believing is the highest and last step in the salvation experience. They treat the truth and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus as a type of eternal fire insurance that once obtained requires no further seriousness or commitment on their part. The Bible actually warns against them, “having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people” (2 Timothy 3:5 ESV). ‘The appearance of godliness’ simply means they try to look holy without actually being holy; they are fakers and imposters. How do they deceive? The verse says they ‘[deny] its power.’ They deny the power of godliness. What is the power of godliness? The Holy Spirit is the power of God. The Bible could not be clearer on this point: In Luke 1:35, the Holy Spirit is called “the power of the Most High” (ESV), Luke 4:14 says, “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit” (NIV), Acts 1:8 states, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (ESV), and Luke 24:49 affirms God’s promise of the Holy Spirit clothing us with “power from on high” (KJV).

The doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was removed from the gospel by men who deny the power of godliness. The apostle commands us to avoid anyone who teaches this folly. Paul continues to tell us about these men so we will know what defines them. They are “always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7 ESV) and “men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all” (2 Timothy 3: 8-9 ESV). The apostates mentioned in the above passage place learning and

their intellect above the clear teaching about the Holy Spirit of God. If these apostates were not clear to you before, then they are plain now after reading this book, and their folly is evident against the teachings of the Scripture. The apostates will also fight against the idea of the anointing and those who have received the baptism. Paul stated, “But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now” (Gal. 4:29 KJV). Be warned; those who deny the power of the Holy Spirit will persecute the anointed.

## WHAT ABOUT JESUS?

One of the most common criticisms I hear in teaching the baptism of the Holy Spirit is ‘you are diminishing Jesus and His sacrifice.’ Nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus said, “I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9 ESV). Door to what? Salvation. In other words, Jesus was saying every believer must enter through Him, but He wants people to move into the ‘pastures,’ the place of blessing and provision.

Jesus is the central figure in Christianity and all of human history; we date our calendars by His birth, live by His Words, and pray in His name. Jesus is Lord. Jesus will return to the earth to rule and reign. Jesus is the savior and Lord of every Christian, and this book does nothing (nor could it) to detract from that role.

The book encourages the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and, as stated above, is a command of Jesus. Instead of diminishing Jesus, I am promoting and honoring His will for your life.

# 11

## THE ANOINTING OIL

*Big Idea: Sometimes the ‘bad’ things that happen in your life are not from the enemy, and they are for your good.*

Most of the chapters up to this point in the book have included large sections of my personal story as I moved from being a believer in Jesus to follow our Lord’s command to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. My account is far from over in these pages. In fact, the greatest tests and trials are a few chapters away, but now you will see a little more Bible exposition start to mix into the chapters. I tried to intersperse as much of the Kingdom lessons into where it ‘fit’ in my narrative, but as I have moved from being a believer into the anointed life, I have learned more about our Lord and His Word than my own story can contain.

Personal anointing is one of those ‘type and shadow’ lessons from

Scriptures, and the teaching is not pleasant because of the nature of the elements. If you have read carefully to this point, then you are familiar with the anointing or the Holy Spirit baptism, and I do not want to mix up terms. Each of us has a personal anointing (this is referred to as our ‘calling’) for the specific task for which God put us on the earth which includes THE ANOINTING as one of five ingredients.

During the Exodus from Egypt and subsequent time in the wilderness, Moses was instructed by the Lord to build a tabernacle and given specific requirements and directions for utensils, furniture, and even the mixture of the oil for anointing. The anointing oil prepared the various parts and implements of the tabernacle for use and symbolized that they were set apart for the service of God. This oil had five ingredients mixed in just the precise order and amounts for the purpose of making the objects holy (meaning set apart) for ministry.

God uses five ingredients to make us holy or set apart for the ministry. The anointing oil is a type or shadow of how God uses these ingredients or events in our lives to prepare us for His unique purposes. As ‘type and shadow’ of spiritual anointing, the Scriptures in the Old Testament hold important information about the oil and how it works in the life of a believer. Just as with everything else in the Bible, we must study both the meaning and the context. The following are the directions God gave to Moses:

Moreover the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: “Also take for yourself quality spices- five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane, five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil” (Exod. 30:22-24 NKJV).

Do not worry if you have no idea how much a shekel is or what it equals in terms of measurement; that is one of those hidden treasures. After giving Moses a list of items and people to anoint, the Lord declares, “This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations . . . It is holy, and it shall be holy to you” (Exod. 30:31-32 NKJV).



Why I am starting a chapter with a set of Scriptures about how to mix an ancient oil for a physical building that no longer exists? Remember in type and shadow lessons, the Old Testament Scripture has the shape of what can only be fully revealed in terms of depth and form to those with the Holy Spirit. I believe every passage in the Old Testament is type and shadow of some aspect of life in the Kingdom, but we as the Church may not have reached the point of revelation to understand it yet. Any person dedicated to the service of the Lord must have their personal anointing oil mixed, so the amounts and ingredients' symbolism is important.

Let's explore the ingredients and what they mean for believers. The first ingredient is five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh. Liquid myrrh is a valuable oil or gummy resin from the ancient world which comes from the thorny myrrh tree. The myrrh tree cycles without discernible seasons which adds the value to the oil because trees in close proximity may produce the resin at different times according to a different cycle, so the oil is always scarce (or at least people do not know when they will be able to get more). Harvesters have begun the practice of slicing the bark to force output, which does not produce myrrh in the amounts when the tree flows naturally, but the practice does add some predictability to the output and yield. The resulting cuts produce the gummy resin or sap but leave the tree with visible wounds.

Myrrh literally means 'bitter,' so the first ingredient in everyone's personal anointing oil is a bitter resin that can flow unexpectedly or as the result of a wound. Are you starting to see the type or shadow? God will use one of your unexpected bitter experiences or one caused by the wounds of others to begin to prepare you for your holy task. Myrrh is also one of the two largest ingredients of the personal anointing. Five hundred shekels corresponds to about 202 ounces or almost six liters in modern measurement.

From my personal story, God had to use the bitter experience of being removed from the ministry and Scarlet and me leaving our home church to begin my distinct personal anointing. Now I can look back and see the clear hand of the Lord and all the positive that continues to come from the experience, but in that moment, I could not. I was only able to see what was lost, feel the sting of the insult, and ask God why He would allow such

a terrible thing if He loved my family. The myrrh is bitter and necessary, but it is only the first of the recipe.

The second ingredient is sweet-smelling cinnamon, which comes from a flowering tree that can reach thirty feet in height. The tree is in the laurel family with yellow and white blossoms, and the oil is a golden-yellow color. Golden-yellow is usually the color in the Scriptures that denotes some type of gift or blessing. In the case of the oil, it is the blessing of broken bondage for the anointed. The method of cutting the inner, softer bark of the branches caused the cinnamon to roll into hollow, straight scrolls. The Hebrew word can be translated as a verb that means ‘to erect’ or as a noun that means ‘upright rolls.’

The placement in history of the recipe for the anointing oil was during the Exodus as the children of Israel were leaving the horrible slavery and pagan practices of Egypt. Popular culture displays the viewpoint of the Jewish people living separate, righteous lives in the midst of the heathen chaos of immorality on the Nile. Although they were treated horribly as slaves and lived separately in the land of Goshen, we have no evidence that the Israelites had not adopted Egyptian worship practices. With all of the rotting meat from sacrifices, blood, organs, and incense from the idolatrous rites, Egypt would have definitely had a unique odor. Even though the children of Israel left Egypt literally, the spiritual and mental yokes of bondage would have traveled with them.

A yoke is a heavy wooden object used to tether animals together, usually oxen, across their necks. It is made to restrict movement and be a means of control; the sheer weight keeps the head of the animal bowed low. Once an animal gets used to the yoke, they bow to it more easily with each use, even changing their posture and the way they stand to accommodate the heavy burden. Isaiah gives readers insight into the function of this ingredient of the anointing oil in a passage about Israel and the Assyrians: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing” (Isa. 10:27 NKJV). Cinnamon means to erect or stand up, an impossible task without breaking the yoke on the neck.

The story of Moses, the deliverance, the plagues, the parting of the

Red Sea, and the Exodus were displays of God's amazing power to break His people free of the subjugation and gods of Egypt. Those historical events can be the source of many great teachings and types for the church. Imagine being delivered by the all-powerful God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to stand in the desert with the smells of pagan Egypt permeating the fabric of everyone's clothing, hair, and even tents. The smell would trigger the memories of sin and exploitation. The fragrance of the cinnamon would cover the smell of Egypt and be a reminder that God had broken the yoke of the Egyptians off of His people. The aroma would also serve as a prompt of their repentance from the heathen lifestyle and practices of their former captors.

The Israelites would have been involved in the gross immorality of the Egyptian worship that ran the gambit of blood, sex, and sacrifice. Although most people usually do not have those kind of cultic connections, God breaks the bonds of any kind of sin and lifestyle. For me, I had grown up in a traditional, religious denominational system of the Southern Baptist Church, and I was bound by religious observance and stank of the traditions of men, similar to the Pharisees of Jesus's day. I had been so blinded by my own self-righteousness and 'the way things ought to be' that I kicked one of God's precious worshippers out of our church for an expression of love for our Lord. Imagine: I was so bound by the yoke of religion that I tried to place it on a person who worshipped the Lord in true freedom. But I repented of that sin and now stand in the sweet fragrance of the Lord's deliverance.

The sweet cinnamon step in the Lord's personal anointing for a believer's life will free the most bound and bent slave, regardless of the captor. Drugs, illicit lifestyles, pornography, pride, gluttony, love of money, selfishness, lying, or whatever else can bind a man to itself with a large yoke cannot stand up to the Lord when He decides to break it. Once the chains and shackles are gone, the Lord causes the former slave to stand erect or upright in the freedom and aroma of His love.

The third ingredient, sweet-smelling cane, commonly known as Calamus, is a reed that grows across Israel. The word for cane translates as 'weak,' as the reeds were flexible and easily broken. The word was so synonymous with weakness that it became an insult later used by the prophet Isaiah,

“Behold, you are trusting in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him” (Isa. 36:6 ESV). The reeds grow in or near the banks of rivers and streams. They are hollow and release their fragrance only two ways: lightly in the breeze (that would preach but is a whole different sermon for a different day) or heavily when made into a valuable powder used in perfumes.

To change the reeds into the valuable powder, they must be pulverized to the point that the plant is no longer recognizable. Having your weaknesses and hurt places pulverized does not sound pleasant, but the action is necessary. The Apostle Paul states the following about weakness:

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak; then I am strong (2 Cor. 12:9-10 NIV).

The Lord’s power is made perfect in weakness? Why would that be the case? Paul had already explained this concept earlier:

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God (1 Cor. 1:27-29 ESV).

Nothing is newsworthy about an Olympic runner winning a local marathon, but when a former soldier with two prosthetic legs finishes a 10K, cameras follow his path from start to finish. A world renown chess master might win a hundred tournaments, but the achievement pales in comparison to a seven-year-old capturing the title. The Israelites would

have been familiar with the concept of weakness. Egypt had the dominant military of the known world, wealth flowing in from all directions, a set of monuments rivaling all other kingdoms, achievements carved into every visible wall, and a class of slaves who had no hope of freedom. Israel lived in a borrowed city, performing the lowliest tasks of slavery, herding sheep and goats to survive, and making the bricks of an empire—building what they could never own. God defeated Egypt’s military, destroyed the economy and accumulated wealth of a dynasty, and left a smoking hole where the world’s mightiest empire had stood on behalf of the slaves who never fired an arrow or picked up a sword. And then to top it off, He put that nation of slaves out of reach by having them cross an ocean on dry ground. That is God getting the glory out of weakness.

From my own story, I was the guy who always had his Christianity squared away, so being branded a renegade, or worse as a false teacher, was humbling. The importance I placed on what my fellow believers thought of me created a weakness and flaw in my personality. God humbled me and even sent me to a place I had considered weird, eccentric, and unorthodox to crush this weakness in me. At Restore Church, people danced, raised their hands, shouted, spoke in tongues, ran around, and a dozen other practices that made me uncomfortable. God was pulverizing the old, legalistic Shawn to make him into something new, a fragrant powder from a weak reed that blew in the wind.

The fourth ingredient is cassia wood. Cassia is a second type of cinnamon plant, an evergreen, but in this case the rough, outer bark is used as the spice. The bark is shriveled and cracked with deep grooves, giving the tree an aged look. The root word literally means to crumple (like the bark) or bend the head and neck in deference. The ideas combine together to equal a bowing down of a person in reverence or respect.

Cassia seems to imply humility as the fourth ingredient of the personal anointing, but that is not all. Cassia is closely associated with the Lord in the Old Testament as if He is wearing the aroma on His clothing. “Your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia” (Ps. 45:8). Jesus’s whole existence on the earth was an act of humility—God becoming man for the purpose of bearing our sins in sacrifice.

Cassia as the element is a significant symbol for the process of the personal anointing. Jesus, even though God in the flesh, was a man of prayer who worshiped frequently in communion with His Father, the Most High. Do not miss the point; prayer and worship should be your reaction, not just in the good times but at all times, including when your life is spinning beyond your control. According to the recipe, the personal anointing has included a bitter trial (myrrh), the breaking of a yoke in repentance (cinnamon), and a crushing for the believer to change them to something different (cane), none of which has been pleasant. When it happens to you, it is not symbolism but your life!

Now the Lord expresses that the fourth ingredient is prayer and worship? Of course, it is! Find the man who can worship through any circumstance, and I will show you the man who has figured out how to live in contentment. The Apostle Paul said, “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 5: 16-18 NIV). As I have stated already, Paul did not live out his life in some ivory tower, writing letters and doling out platitudes to the unwashed masses. He spent much of his time in prison or traveling rough; he was even shipwrecked, beaten severely, and given the death penalty among many other hardships. He said to rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks; if Paul can, then we have no complaint.

Worship is not something that happens on Sunday morning for two to three songs before the preacher speaks. Worship is a lifestyle and a mindset of recognizing the greatness of God and thanking Him for everything (good and bad) in your life. Who was the man after God’s own heart? David. David, the King of Israel? No, before that. David, the slayer of Goliath? No, before that. God called David a man after his own heart in 1 Samuel 13, when he was still watching his father’s sheep, playing his harp, learning to use the sling, and running around in the fields—a nobody to the important people in Israel. David was so overlooked when the prophet Samuel asked Jesse to present all of his sons, he sent for them all except David. David’s own father thought he was insignificant. But God did not overlook him because God recognizes those who recognize Him.

What was it about David that made him a man after God’s own heart?

The Bible is filled with warriors, kings, and even people who crassly sin and repent. David's life encompassed all of these, but what made him different? David was also the Psalmist of Israel. Not all, but many of the Psalms were penned by this man who worshiped God from the time of his youth as a simple shepherd in the fields. The Psalms are praise and worship and reveal the deep love of the David for his Lord. "Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Ps. 141:2 ESV). The incense that burned before the altar at all times, and the evening sacrifice were daily occurrences. With these words, David was telling us about the frequency and continuousness of his prayer and worship. The twenty-third Psalm was not penned by a king or a warrior, but by a shepherd who came to know his God on the hills around Bethlehem.

From my own story, I left Traditional to go to Restore Church, and the first difference I noticed in the service was the length of praise and worship. Sometimes the song of praise would go on for thirty or forty-five minutes, with the worship leader going through choruses several times with no discernible program other than to get before the throne of God. That was definitely a change from the strict culture of the Baptist church which limited worship time to make sure the totality of the service stayed close to an hour and fifteen minutes. When I was a deacon, one of the constant issues from the congregation was the length of service and making sure it stayed in the 75-minute range (or less). I began to crave the worship time at my new church and even started singing and praising God outside of church, something I had never really done. God changed the dynamic in my life by helping me to focus on Him in praise.

The final ingredient is olive oil. Olive oil is a symbol for the Holy Spirit in Scriptures as we talked about in the 'type and shadow' chapter. Notice that the bitter experience, repentance and breaking of the yoke, the crushing of the personality, and praising and worshipping are the 'natural elements' of the divine process. The olive oil is completely supernatural, and though He causes all of the other circumstances of the process, God makes a unique and divine contribution to your personal anointing. And though He is with you through the process and hardship, the olive oil is mixed in 'by

the art of the perfumer’—in other words, a little at a time until the blend is thoroughly fused into a new substance. Praise God!

The Holy Spirit’s involvement makes the series of events transform from human lesson to holy experience for those with the fire baptism. The other four steps cannot be accomplished without the Lord causing or allowing them, but they can happen to a disobedient believer who refuses the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A believer can experience bitter times, repentance, crushing their weaknesses, and even a deeper prayer and worship life—the amalgamation might lead to a richer experience or greater wisdom but will not be the personal anointing intended by the Almighty without the Holy Spirit’s oil.

Personal anointing is not something you hear preached very often because it is not a ‘happy’ topic or filled with moments you want to say ‘Amen, give me some of that, especially the bitter myrrh.’ But the subject is necessary for maturity. There are three related points about personal anointing of which you should be aware.

The first is that often people instinctively know, even if they cannot express it biblically, that their anointing is part of them. Have you ever heard the old Southern phrase, “I wouldn’t take nothing for my journey?” There is an old gospel song by that title. They understand their journey or experiences may have been hard, but the events shaped their thinking, lives, and personality. Without the events, they would not be the same person. The steps of the process to make the oil, the wisdom gleaned, and the Holy Spirit’s power give you greater understanding, enlightenment, and abilities.

The second consideration is the mantle (or office) can be passed but not the personal anointing. ‘Passing the mantle’ is an idea from 2 Kings, chapter 2. Elijah passed his outer garment to Elisha as a sign that the latter would be the new prophet for Israel. Without being trite, Elisha was going to occupy Elijah’s job and calling but not become the other man. Each believer is anointed for a specific task, time, or circumstance, but God may anoint someone else differently for the same calling. Think of the mantle as the task or ministry but the anointing as part of the individual—profoundly tied to life experiences brought about by the Lord. God may call a person to another vocation or endeavor, but he or she will take the anointing with



him or her. Whatever responsibility a person carries can be handled by another, but no one can become the other person.

A third point I would like to make about personal anointing is: a person does not need to be anointed for the same task twice. God's work in an individual's life is thorough and never needs to be redone. One caveat: there is an upward call of God (Phil. 3:14), so you may be anointed for a completely different venture based on God calling you ever higher but never twice for the same task. You will see in my own story how I have received two distinct personal anointings. Joseph is a biblical example of receiving more than one anointing (Gen. 37, 39, 40). The first was learning organizational leadership in humility as a slave in Potiphar's house as he rose to the height of steward. The second was an understanding of justice and mercy for everyone, including the lowliest in Egypt's prisons where he also became the chief trustee. The double anointing would be tough, but the time and shaping allowed Joseph to develop into the man with the vision and ability to save the world from famine.

Just like the anointing oil was to be used on every utensil and instrument of the tabernacle, the anointing affects every part of a person's existence. The altar, the table of showbread, the tent, the ark, the utensils, and everything else was included in the list of items to anoint, and they are type and shadow of different aspects of life. The bronze laver (a type of basin) equates to asking for forgiveness, the altar of burnt offering equates to dying to the flesh, the lamp represents studying the Word of God, the ark was the footstool of God and represents coming before His presence, and the rest correspond to other aspects of a believer's life. Personal anointing affects everything in a person's life. As much as something that is infinite and ever-growing can be defined by a single set of sentences, my personal anointing is to have an understanding of the Kingdom of God and to be a witness to the many believers trapped in denominational systems by tradition. This book has been years in the making, as I was anointed to leave the religious life for the Kingdom of God and show others bound in the denominational systems and the traditions of men the way to freedom.