

## Doctrine of Salt

1. Salt is a familiar compound. Its chemical name and symbol is sodium chloride--NaCl.

2. Salt is used by Job in Job 6:6 as one of several analogies describing how natural is his dislike of God's discipline.

Job 6:4 The arrows of the Almighty are in me, my spirit drinks in their poison; God's terrors are marshaled against me.

Job 6:5 Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass, or an ox bellow when it has fodder?

Job 6:6 Is tasteless food eaten without **salt**, or is there flavor in the white of an egg?

Job 6:7 I refuse to touch it; such food makes me ill.

Job 6:8 "Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant what I hope for,

Job 6:9 that God would be willing to crush me, to let loose his hand and cut me off!

2.1 Job observes that even animals do not complain without reason (verse 5). And it is only natural for a man to reject insipid, loathsome food (verses 6 and 7). Then in response to his friend Eliphaz' critique of Job's status, Job declares that death is precisely what he longs for (verses 8 and 9).

3. Salt was used to express certain covenant relationships in antiquity. This was true of contractual relationships between people as well as relationships with God.

3.1 Two people after entering into a contract would symbolically seal their agreement by mixing their bags of salt--one party pouring a little from his bag into the bag of the other party.

4. Similarly salt was used in the Levitical offerings. This is true both during the Jewish Age and will be true during the Millennium. The salt signified an inviolable covenant between God and the priests.

### Jewish Age

Lev 2:13 And every oblation of thy meal offering shalt thou season with **salt** neither shalt thou allow the **salt** of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meal offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer **salt**.

Num 18:19 The heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute forever: it is a covenant of **salt** forever before the Lord unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

### Millennium

Eze 43:24 And thou shalt offer them before the Lord, and the priests shall cast **salt** upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the Lord.

5. Salt is used in three categories of judgment:

Personal judgment in the case of Lot's wife

Gen 19:26 "But his wife looked back from behind, and she became a pillar of **salt**."

Temporal judgment in the case of the cities of the plain of Jordan

Deu 29:23 and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and **salt**, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath," (Also see Hos 11:8)

Hos 11:8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused.

Unbelievers at the Great White Throne

Mar 9:49 For everyone shall be **salted** with fire.

6. Salt is used for believers in the world who are positive to the Word.

Mat 5:13 "You are the **salt** of the earth, but if the **salt** has lost its savor with what shall it be **salted**? It is therefore good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men."

7. Salt which has lost its savor is used to portray reversionistic believers.

Luk 14:34 **Salt** is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

Luk 14:35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

8. Salt is used as a metaphor to describe divine viewpoint which comes from metabolized doctrine. Divine viewpoint must flavor the speech of all positive believers.

Col 4:6 The negative believer's work is described by "**salt water**" in Jam 3:12

Col 4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with **salt** that ye may know how to answer every man.

Jam 3:12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? Either a vine figs? So can no fountain yield both **salt** water and fresh.

9. Salt was used as an antiseptic. The believer is also to be capable of producing antisepsis in the devil's world.

Ezek 16:4 And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to cleanse thee; thou wast not **salted** at all, nor swaddled at all.

10. New Testament Etymology

10.1 The common word for salt in the New Testament is **Halas**. **Halas** can be found six times in Scripture where it is used metaphorically. Five examples will illustrate its meaning.

Mat 5:13 "You are the **"salt"** of the earth. But if the **"salt"** loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

10.1.1 Wycliffe writes in his Commentary: "Salt is a common food preservative, often used symbolically. Believers are a restraint upon the world's corruption. Unbelievers are often kept from evil deeds because of a moral consciousness traceable to Christian influence. Whether salt can lose its savor has been disputed. Thomson in his book *The Land and the Book* avows that the impure salt of Palestine became insipid, however, Christ's illustration describes the anomaly of a useless believer.

Mar 9:50 Salt is good: but if the **"salt"** have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have **"salt"** in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

10.1.2 Jesus exhorts His followers to be as salt, letting their influence be felt in the world He commanded the disciples to be permeated with this purifying influence. In order to be a wholesome influence, they must themselves be the possessors of this wholesomeness. These commands are in the present tense, calling for an enduring practice. A similar teaching appears in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5:13).

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## 11. Summary

11.1 A number of different uses of salt are disclosed in the Bible. A common association with food in the life of the ancient Near East is intimated by Job's query. "Can that which is tasteless be eaten without salt?" (Job 6:6).

Job 6:6 Is tasteless food eaten without **salt**, or is there flavor in the white of an egg?

11.1.1 It has a sacred use as seen in connection with the ceremonial offerings in Israel's worship of God. Salt was to be mixed with the cereal offering (Lev 2:13) and in later times was sprinkled on the burnt offering (Eze 43:24).

Lev 2:13 Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the **salt** of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.

Eze 43:24 You are to offer them before the LORD, and the priests are to sprinkle **salt** on them and sacrifice them as a burnt offering to the LORD.

11.1.2 It was a commodity to be kept on hand in the temple (Ezr 6:9). Sometimes it was mixed with incense as well. (Exo 30:35)

Ezr 6:9 Whatever is needed--young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, **salt**, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem--must be given them daily without fail,  
Ezr 6:10 so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.

Exo 30:35 and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be **salted** and pure and sacred.

Exo 30:36 Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

Exo 30:37 Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the LORD.

11.2 The expression "covenant of salt" (Num 18:19; Lev 2:13; 2Ch 13:5) likely refers to an ancient custom of confirming a pact between parties by eating food. This is a practice still continued in our day by the Arab, who says: "There is salt between us," after eating with another.

Num 18:19 Whatever is set aside from the holy offerings the Israelites present to the LORD I give to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. It is an everlasting covenant of **salt** before the LORD for both you and your offspring."

Lev 2:13 Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the **salt** of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.

2Ch 13:5 Don't you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of **salt**?

11.3 Salt was also rubbed on the newborn infant (Eze 16:4), suggesting some medicinal or religious significance. As the latter, some think heathen parents had originally applied salt as a deterrent to potential attacks of demons.

Eze 16:4 On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with **salt** or wrapped in cloths.

11.4 Perhaps the most significant and familiar use of salt in the Bible occurs in those contexts dealing with salt's preservative.

11.5 The fact that good salt has curative and seasoning properties is used as an illustration by our Lord to enjoin His followers to responsible living (Mat 5:13; Mar 9:50; Luk 14:34-35 and Col 4:6).

Mat 5:13 "You are the **salt** of the earth, but if the **salt** has lost its savor with what shall it be **salted**? It is therefore good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men."

Mar 9:50 Salt is good: but if the "**salt**" have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have "**salt**" in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Luk 14:34 "**Salt**" is good: but if the "salt" have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

Luk 14:35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Col 4:6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with **salt**, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

11.6 One final use is embodied in our Lord's statement: "Every one shall be salted with fire" (Mar 9:49), which associates salt with impending divine judgment.

Mar 9:49 For everyone shall be **salted** with fire.

11.7 A vivid illustration of this figurative use of salt is seen in the unusual reference to the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26).

Gen 19:26 But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of **salt**.

11.8 The incident is shockingly descriptive of the spiritual disobedience of her neighbors as well as that of her own life, for the wrath of God fell on the whole area in the form of utter devastation and barrenness. (Deu 29:23; Psa 107:34; Jer 17:6 and Zep 2:9)

Deu 29:23 The whole land will be a burning waste of **salt** and sulfur--nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in fierce anger.

Psa 107:33 He turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground,  
Psa 107:34 and fruitful land into a **salt** waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there.

Jer 17:6 Cursed is the one who trusts in man He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a **salt** land where no one lives.

Jer 17:7 "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.

Zep 2:9 Therefore, as surely as I live," declares the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, "surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah-- a place of weeds and **salt** pits, a wasteland forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them; the survivors of my nation will inherit their land."

Zep 2:10 This is what they will get in return for their pride, for insulting and mocking the people of the LORD Almighty.