

Doctrine of Salt

1. Salt is a familiar compound. It's chemical name and symbol is sodium chloride—NaCl. The common word for salt in the New Testament is **Halas**. **Halas** can be found six times in Scripture where it is used metaphorically.

2. 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. 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.

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. "

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?

3.1 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."

3.2 As we will see, salt provides several appropriate metaphors for the believer and his relationships in the world. Salt can, for example, lose its usefulness by way of dilution when subjected to contamination from any number of other chemicals.

3.2.1 So also the believer loses his restraint and preservation when his Christian faith suffers admixture with trends of the world. Judgment either for time (the believer) or eternity (the unbeliever) will follow.

Mar 9:49 Everyone will be salted with fire.

4. Mar 9:49, taken in its context, reaches back to the unquenchable fire of Gehenna and forward to the self-discipline of verse 50. Everyone must be salted somehow, either with the fire of **Gehenna** or with the self-discipline and application of God's protocol. Wise is he who chooses the latter.

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

5. In Mar 9:50, 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.

5.1 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. Luke follows suit with a similar warning.

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.

6. Jesus called His disciples “the salt of the earth.” He warns them not to lose their saltiness. Recall the context they are arguing about who will be the greatest in the kingdom; they have also been rebuked because of their demonstrated sectarianism.

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.

7. If the disciples continue to demonstrate petty jealousies about relative greatness, then the fire which our Lord had brought to earth was clearly not burning in them and thus the question,” how could it or would it be re-kindled?”

8. “Have salt in yourselves” is better translated “Keep the seasoning power within your hearts and be at peace with your brethren.” Disputes about kingdom matters endanger the very existence of the new life.

9. A common association with food in the life of the ancient Near East is intimated by Job's query in Job 6:6. "Can that which is tasteless be eaten without salt?"

9.1 In chapter five of the book of Job Eliphaz tells Job of all the deliveries from danger promised by the Lord; and Job says “easy for you to say.”

9.2 Job responds with several retorts saying effectively: promises are easy to celebrate when things are going well but not when you are in severe emotional and physical pain as I am now experiencing.

Job 6:6. "Can that which is tasteless be eaten without salt?"

9.3 Let's review the condition of poor Job and the well-meaning comments of Eliphaz.

Job 5:19 Eliphaz speaks: From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you.

Job 5:20 In famine he will ransom you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword.

Job 5:21 You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes.

Job 5:22 You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the beasts of the earth.

Job 5:23 For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you.

Job 5:24 You will know that your tent is secure; you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing.

Job 5:25 You will know that your children will be many, and your descendants like the grass of the earth.

Job 5:26 You will come to the grave in full vigor, like sheaves gathered in season.

Job 5:27 "We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself."

9.4 Then Job replied to his so-called-friend.

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!

9.5 Job observes that even animals do not complain when things are going well (verse 5). And it is only natural for a man to reject insipid, loathsome food (verses 6 and 7), just as Job considers Eliphaz's comfort like food without salt.

9.6 Then in response to his friend Eliphaz, Job declares that death is precisely what he longs for (verses 8 and 9).

10. 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 Proper

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.

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.

- 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.

11. It had 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 and in later times was sprinkled on the burnt offering. It was a commodity to be kept on hand in the temple. Sometimes it was mixed with incense as well.

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.

12. The use of salt in the liturgy 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.

13. Salt was also rubbed on the newborn infant, 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. In Eze 16:4 it is used to describe Israel as a child abandoned but adopted by Jehovah God as His own.

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.

14. Perhaps the most significant and familiar use of salt in the Bible occurs in those contexts dealing with salt as a preservative.

15. 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 "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?

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16. Paul used salt figuratively in his letter to Colossae.

Col 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with **salt**, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Col 4:7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

Col 4:8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.

Col 4:9 He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

17. Salt is also used of judgment both for time and for eternity.

18. 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 But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

19. 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 Rebellious Israel 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.

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.

20. Jeremiah also used salt figuratively to describe judgment of those in Judah who placed their trust in man rather than God.

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.

21. The valley of salt, a product of Lot's wife's disobedience located in Edom was the location of a major battle where King David defeated the Edomites.

2Sa 8:13 And David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

2Sa 8:14 He put garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

22. Elisha casts salt into the pool of Jericho to purify their water supply.

2Ki 2:19 The men of the Jericho said to Elisha the city is situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive."

2Ki 2:20 "Bring me a new bowl," he said, "and put salt in it." So they brought it to him.

2Ki 2:21 Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.'"