

Pass The Salt

In the Bible, God often made covenants using unusual objects:

- With Noah He used a rainbow in the clouds
- With Abraham He used the stars and the sands of the seashore
- With Moses He used two tablets of stone
- With David He used SALT

2 Chronicles 13:5 Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?

It is from the word SALT that we actually get our word SALARY, because centuries ago people were often paid with this valuable commodity. Caesar's soldiers in particular received part of their pay ("SALARIUM") in this manner. Salt was one of the chief economic products of the ancient world. Roman soldiers built one of the great military roads in history, the Via Salaria ("Salt Road"), from the saltworks at Ostia to the city of Rome.

Salt was a type of mutual exchange – "you work for me and I will pay you in salt." (**Our modern expression "he's not worth his salt" still means someone not working enough to earn their wage.**) Salt thus became a very tangible expression of irrevocable commitment or loyalty. In biblical times, men carried pouches of salt on their belts. When a covenant was made, they would intermingle the salt from these pouches. This reminded them that they could not retrieve their own "pinch of salt" from the other pouch, and symbolized the fact that they could never go back on their word. **So in Bible times, if you exchanged SALT, you actually exchanged COVENANTS.** Some of the Eastern people still use this phrase: "There is salt between us". **PASS THE SALT!**

It was this IRREVOCABLE COVENANT that Abijah, king of Judah, relied upon when he went to war against Jeroboam, king of Israel. He was a godly man, but he was outnumbered two to one. Jeroboam and his 800,000 men, however, were covenant breakers. So before Abijah engaged the battle, he preached ... reminding Jeroboam that David and the Lord had made a covenant of salt (to which Abijah had been faithful, but Jeroboam had not). **That's why the numbers didn't matter!**

2 Chronicles 13:5 Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?

When the men of Judah were surrounded in an ambush, God moved in and smote evil King Jeroboam and his armies. 500,000 were slain, and the rest ran away. **You just don't fool with God's covenant of salt!**

In a similar way, if a covenant or treaty was violated in Bible times it was common for the offending people to have their land or city plowed with salt to ruin the soil and impair its productivity. **The salt which was meant to be a blessing became a curse to the covenant breaker!**

Judges 9:45 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt.

But by far, the most significant use of SALT in ancient times as a symbol of God's covenant was in the SACRIFICES. **No offering was to be made without SALT.**

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

Numbers 18:19 All 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 for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

The New Testament parallel is pretty obvious. As God's people, we have an irrevocable covenant WITH HIM and WITH EACH OTHER. **When we come together to worship, we need to PASS THE SALT!**

When you married you said, "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, till death do us part." That is a godly covenant that you pledged to one another AT YOUR PERSONAL EXPENSE. It is saying that you will keep your promise, NO MATTER WHAT THE OTHER PARTY DOES. **It is the very same way when you are part of God's family, the church.**

Jesus referred to this "covenant of salt" several times, giving us powerful truths about our relationship with God and with each other ...

Matthew 5:13 Ye are the **salt** of the earth: but if the **salt** have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

What does it mean when Jesus calls us "the salt of the earth"? **IT MEANS THAT WE ARE PEOPLE GOD CAN DEPEND ON! AND WE ARE ALSO PEOPLE THE CHURCH CAN DEPEND ON!** This is the challenge of our day – we have been given privilege after privilege, and God wants us to use His blessings to give "savour" to the world. If we don't, we are good for nothing! If we don't, we will be trodden under foot by our circumstances. If we don't, we are a failure as a Christian.

Mark 9:49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with **salt**.

Every sacrifice had to be offered with SALT, and every sacrifice was burned with FIRE. This is the principal from ancient times, that **SALT AND FIRE ARE PARTNERS**. If we as the church become “salty” in this world, then God will respond with revival “fire”!

2 Chronicles 7:13-14 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Can you see what is happening in these verses? GOD sent these problems due to the lethargy and apathy of His people! And God expects US to respond, not by complaining about the state of affairs, but by humbly becoming “salty” once more. Only THEN will He respond!

Mark 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.

God doesn't only expect us to respond to HIM with humility, but to respond to EACH OTHER this way as well! It is our “salt covenant” with one another that “keeps the peace” in the church. We cannot break covenant with each other any more than with God. **PASS THE SALT!**

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

The most tangible way that we need to be “salty” toward other people is with our SPEECH. When SALT is added to our relationships with one another, it purifies them. **YOU CAN'T SPEAK EVIL OF SOMEONE WHEN “THERE IS SALT BETWEEN YOU”!**

MOST CHRISTIANS TODAY ARE NOT THE SALT OF THE EARTH! You can tell it by how they talk about their church, their pastors, their leaders, and their brothers and sisters.

Genesis 19:26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

Luke 17:32-33 Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

After this tragic event, the phrase “a pillar of salt” came to mean quite literally “a monument to one's disobedience.” Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt in much the same way that ancient cities were plowed with salt. The salt which was meant to be a blessing became a curse.

But did you realize that her husband Lot shared a great deal of the blame for her punishment? The angels God sent to rescue them from Sodom instructed Lot, “Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed” (Genesis 19:17). But what did he do? **He begged to escape to an easier place!** “Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither” (Genesis 19:20).

Zoar was convenient, comfortable – and far too close to Sodom! Its name means “little” – in fact, that's why Lot wanted to go there in the first place (“is it not a little one?” – v. 20). He didn't want the uncomfortable challenge of the mountains; he wanted the ease of a “little place.” But that resulted in the destruction of his wife – **because Zoar was in sight of Sodom!** (Fire and brimstone never fell until the next morning; by then Lot could have been far away in the mountains, out of sight of Zoar.)

Lot had never been “salt” in his city, so judgment fell on his family!

2 Peter 2:9 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, **vexed his righteous soul** from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

It was not SODOM that vexed Lot; it was LOT that vexed Lot!

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE! Jesus' very next statement is that whoever seeks to save their “life” will lose it, but whoever gives up their “life” will actually preserve it. God looks for people who will go to a higher place (the mountain) and give up their comfort and convenience for His sake.

IF YOU DON'T LEAVE WHERE YOU'VE BEEN, IT WILL BE THE DEATH OF YOU!

The covenant of salt was also symbolized by a simple “meal” of bread and salt, shared between the covenant parties.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

HE is the bread, but WE are the salt! There's nothing wrong with the bread, but we need to **PASS THE SALT!** Revival comes to a city or a nation when enough Christians become **SALT WITH SAVOUR!**