



DAVID EBAUGH BIBLE SCHOOL
102 Park Ter., Harrisburg, Pa. 17111

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YOU SALTY BELIEVER YOU

You are.

You are the SALT.

You are the SALT of the earth.

You are really a very special SALTY person.

Yes. JESUS called us SALTY. "Ye are the SALT of the earth." (Matt. 5:13) What did He mean by that? The answer is revealed in the Old Testament, world history and the SALT COVENANT.

Ezra 4:14 demonstrates our new understanding of what the Bible means when it speaks of SALT. "We have maintenance (at this point my margin note says, "We are SALTED with the SALT of the palace") from the King's palace." The context established that the King was sending money (like our welfare system) to keep those people alive.

"Eating the SALT of a man means, to derive one's sustenance from him, to take pay from him, or to be hired by him." (Jewish Encyclopedia)

SALT IS A REWARD

Webster's Dictionary says, "In addition to being a condiment for food, SALT is sustenance or support provided as by a host or employer: food, hospitality, keep. SALT is used often in the phrase, 'to be worth one's SALT.'" Most everyone has heard, "He's not worth his SALT."

SALT IS A REWARD FOR SERVICE

YOU ARE THE SALT/REWARD OF THE EARTH Was JESUS thinking of REWARD when He called us SALT OF THE EARTH? He sure was. He said, "Great is your REWARD." (v12) one verse before He called us the SALT of the earth. REWARD is the subject of the whole text. In fact, all the beatitudes are about REWARD.

YOU AND YOUR CITY

God placed believers in different cities and neighborhoods in order to REWARD the people of that place. You are GOD'S REWARD/SALT, to your own city. The people in your city did something good sometime in the past. Now, our GOD is paying them for their goodness - by sending you to live with them. Now you know why our GOD placed you in your neighborhood.

KEEP YOUR VALUE

We must stay SALTY to keep our VALUE. "But, if the SALT have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be SALTED? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." (Matt 5:13)

Do you know of any Christian ministries that have recently lost their VALUE to their community due to their inflated ideas and actions? Well, pray that they will be restored to their former SALTINESS - restored to their former VALUE. To keep being SALTY we must keep on being a valuable REWARD to the community in which we live. If a Christian loses his VALUE it is because he backslides.

DESIRABLE REWARD - FIRE REWARD

And SALT/REWARD is like a two sided coin. It has two stories to tell. SALT symbolizes the REWARD of the good guys. But on the other side, SALT symbolizes the REWARD of the bad guys.

SALTED WITH FIRE

Here is a story of the REWARD/SALT for the bad guys. "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea...Every offender shall be SALTED with fire." (Mark 9:42-50)

Was JESUS thinking about REWARD when He said the offenders would be SALTED with fire? He sure was. Just before that story is the one about giving a cup of water in JESUS name. Concerning the good giver JESUS said, "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his REWARD. (Mark 9:41-50) Remember, in the Bible, REWARD and SALT go hand in hand.

"For every one [of the offenders (v42)] such as:

1. the hand that offends (v43)
2. the foot that offends (v45) and
3. the eye that offends (v47) shall be SALTED with fire (punishment), and every sacrifice shall be SALTED with SALT." (Mark 9:49) The hand, foot and the eye are symbols of believers who are all different members of the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:1-31) JESUS was not telling us to amputate body parts. He was telling us to avoid bad people, even if they are Christians.

SALT EVERY OFFERING

JESUS told us why MOSES said that every offering must be SALTED with SALT. The act of SALTING an offering was a prediction of the time when every offender who is "cut off" shall have his REWARD/SALT - FIRE. The Bible says that the Old Testament was a type and shadow of things to come. We know that JESUS was thinking about MOSES' command to SALT every offering when He taught about SALTING the offense with fire because He put them together. Here is the way MOSES said it, "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." (Lev. 2:13)

LOVE BRINGS SALT

SALT is also a symbol of loving care in Ezekiel. "as for thy nativity...thou wast not SALTED at all." (Ezek. 15:4) Jerusalem was rejected and unloved from her birth - until the Lord found her. Also see Ezek. 43:24.

JESUS surely was thinking about our GOD's loving care for Jerusalem, the city of PEACE, when he called us the REWARD/SALT of the earth. He wants to REWARD/SALT Jerusalem and the whole world with us. When He places (SALTS) believers in a city, it is a sign of His love for that place.

SALT BRINGS PEACE

Also, remember that Jerusalem is the city of PEACE. SALEM, from JeruSALEM is the Hebrew word for PEACE. That may be the reason JESUS said, "Have SALT in yourselves, and have PEACE one with another." (Mark 9:50)

HATE YOUR FRIENDS?

JESUS also said, "If any man come to me, and HATE not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple...SALT is good:" (Luke 14:25-35) He connected SALT with HATE, not love.

The word "HATE" is too heavy for us to use in this century, i.e., JESUS told us to "HATE" our father, mother, wife, etc. The KJV word "HATE" doesn't mean HATE like we use the word nowadays. The English word "HATE" is Strong's 8130 which is Hebrew SANE (transliterated) which is the same as 8132 which means to ALTER or to CHANGE. In other words, "HATE" is based on a desire to CHANGE things (someone, something). Conversely, LOVE is acceptance of things (someone, something) the way it is (they are). I cannot believe that JESUS would tell us to HATE our wives and Paul would command us to LOVE our wives. What JESUS really said is, "If any man come to me, and does not CHANGE his own mind about potential REWARDS/SALT from his father, mother, wife, etc., yea and also CHANGE his own mind about potential REWARDS/SALT from his own life (life should be SOUL-MIND), he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26)

JESUS also talked about HATING your own life. The explanation is the same. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that HATETH his LIFE (PSYCHE, SOUL, MIND) in this world shall keep it unto life (ZOE) eternal." (John 12:25) "He that CHANGES his mind about receiving REWARDS from his own LIFE (really, his own SOUL-MIND) in this world shall keep his own SOUL-MIND unto life eternal (ZOE - a state of overcoming death)."

CHANGE YOUR MIND

If a christian expects to be REWARDED/SALTED by his/her loved ones or his/her society for entering the service of JESUS (doing some good deed for JESUS) then he/she is wrong. REWARD/SALT comes from our GOD (JESUS), not from your family, friends or society. However, our GOD may choose to use your family or friends to REWARD/SALT you for your good actions. That's His business - not yours.

We are to CHANGE our minds about who will REWARD/SALT us for our good deeds and service to our GOD and our society. Our GOD will REWARD/SALT us - our family, friends and/or society may not. Don't expect anyone to REWARD/SALT you for any good that you do. They probably won't. GOD will. Change your mind about it. You may HATE what I've said - but CHANGE you mind about it.

LOT'S WIFE

A SALTY STATUE OF AN UNNAMED WOMAN?
Everyone has some questions about the woman who turned into a pillar of SALT. "But his (Lot's) wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of SALT." (Genesis 19:26) JESUS said, "Remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17:32)

JESUS' command makes her story doubly important. Lot's wife looked back to Sodom, hoping for a REWARD. She got her REWARD. But SALT sure wasn't what she expected.

When JESUS told us to remember Lot's wife, He followed with the thought, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life (SOUL) shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life (SOUL) shall preserve it." (Luke 17:33) That's like the passage in John 12:25 and in Luke 14:25-35, and that ended up with SALT. And Lot's wife ended up with SALT, too.

Here is the way that STRONG'S CONCORDANCE says the words in the passage have been translated other places in the Bible.

LOOKED, 5020, to regard with pleasure

BACK, same as above

BEHIND, 310, afterward

PILLAR, 5333, officer

"But his (Lot's) wife regarded her (Sodom) life with pleasure after (the destruction) so she was REWARDED/SALTED as an officer (of Sodom)." That improved translation does no violence to the Hebrew. It uses words exactly as they were translated other places in the Bible. It is in perfect harmony with the words of JESUS. It makes more sense.

COVENANT OF SALT FOREVER

We first notice the COVENANT OF SALT when we read about the REWARD/SALT given to the priests, the sons of Aaron, by an ordinance FOREVER. "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 FOREVER: IT IS A COVENANT OF SALT FOREVER before the Lord unto thee and to thy seed with thee." (Num 18:19) The PAY/REWARD/SALARY/SALT that was given to the priests for their service was a COVENANT OF SALT FOREVER.

SALT FOR THE KING

When Solomon's son Rehoboam visited the northern ten tribes for the purpose of receiving the crown of that separate Kingdom - the coronation was marred. There was a big argument about money - the REWARD/SALT for the King. I Kings. 10:14, II Chron 9:13 says that the weight of gold that came to Solomon (Rehoboam's father) in one year was 666 talents of gold. 666 is the REWARD/SALT for the King. The ten tribes said - "that is too much, 666 is heavy oppressive taxes." (II Chron. 10:1-19) Rehoboam answered that he wanted more money than that! As a result, the ten tribes seceded from the two tribes. (II Chron. 10:16-19)

Abijah was the son of Rehoboam the son of Solomon the son of King David. They were the Kings of the two southern tribes, called the Kingdom of Judah. (The word "ISRAEL" changed from meaning all 12 tribes to just include only the northern 10). After the death of Rehoboam, Abijah became King. He made war against Jeroboam, the (false) King of Israel (the northern 10 tribes). Abijah gave us insight into the meaning of the COVENANT OF SALT when he said, "Ought ye (Jeroboam) not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the Kingdom over Israel to David (my great grandfather) FOREVER, even to him and his sons (that means me) by a COVENANT OF SALT?" (II Chron. 13:5)

Abijah used the COVENANT OF SALT as his reason for waging war with Jeroboam and the northern ten tribes, even though they were all cousins and were intermarried. It was a war between relatives for economic reasons. Abijah reminded Jeroboam (and us) that the COVENANT OF SALT was to last FOREVER - to all the generations of King David.

With his own personal right to the COVENANT OF SALT/REWARD/MONEY as his battle cry, Abijah and his army, made up of only the two southern tribes of Judah, slew Jeroboam and half a million men of the northern ten tribes of Israel. So Abijah received his COVENANT OF SALT/REWARD/SALARY/MONEY through the power of his sword and the blessing of his GOD. (II Chron. 13:1-22)

JESUS knew what this story meant when He called you the SALT of the earth. You SALTY believer you. You are a great reward to your community. You are worth fighting for.

CLEAN UP THE ACT

JESUS knew all the details of the time when Elisha put SALT into the bad water in order to make it clean. "And the men of the city said unto Elisha...the situation of this city is pleasant...but the water is naught, and the ground barren. And he said, bring me a new cruse, and put SALT therein...And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the SALT in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." (II Kings 2:19 - 22)

When JESUS said that you are the SALT of the earth he meant that you would also cleanse the earth. When He placed you in your neighborhood it was to also cleanse the place to which you were sent.

Now we see that you are not only a REWARD/SALT to your city - you are also a CLEANSER/SALTER of the things that still need to be changed where you live.

A SALTY SAILOR

While writing this Bible lesson about SALT - I believe that my mind did wander back some years to the time of the Korean war. A SALTY sailor with stinging face and SALT crusted beard stood lookout watch on the cold open bridge of a surfaced submarine. Wind and icy SALT spray snapped at him as the ship sailed at full speed toward home port and a three day pass. Little did he know that 38 years later he would again be in the SALTY service. But the Commander in Chief changed from the President to the King of Kings. And instead of getting SALTY from stinging icy spray he got SALTY from the loving, caring and warming words of JESUS. With memories like those, it's no wonder that I wanted to find what JESUS really meant when He said that we are the SALT of the earth.

HEAVE HO - YOU CAN DO IT

Heave lively, me lads
There's a stiff wind
And a strong wave
And a heavy oar
Till we berth.
But the King of Kings
Thinks we'r up to it, me lads
He said, We're the SALT o' the earth.

SPECIAL REWARD

Believers might take a lesson from a SALTY sailor in one respect, at least. When a SALTY sailor goes ashore on liberty, he thinks that he's God's gift to all the girls in that port. When a SALTY believer goes ashore with liberty, he should believe that he's God's gift to everyone in that port.

You are really a very special REWARD/SALT.
You are the SALT of the earth.
You are the SALT.
You are.
You.