

The Just shall live by Faith

Volume 2 - Study 8 **Mark9:49 ...salted with fire, and every sacrifice salted with fire**

C. Ronald Johnson, Christian Wilderness Press: **Matthew 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men:**

Studies – Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another

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Volume 2, Study 8

Salted with Fire

Sunday evening not long before heading for church, and not wanting to go into the living room where the news was on, and not wanting yet to turn off the computer, and not yet knowing where to begin on this study, I did what I never do when studying; I did a search on the internet for 'salted with fire'. The reason I never look up what others are saying is because I do not want to bias my thoughts with anything except my own digging in scripture. Afterward I may very well want to know what others think.

To my surprise there was much guessing about meanings of salt and fire, the general consensus being that for a very long time scholars had been scratching their heads about the verse (see below) and were still doing so. (I only checked the sites on the first search page, which are the more popular sites for this particular search.) The thinking was from consideration of the subject primarily from a New Testament viewpoint such that 'cleansing', 'judgment', 'preserving', etc., were put forward. (As you will see in this study, the intent of the passage in Mark is not about these.)

Yet, in the passage of our study Jesus had made several statements that in total had led my thoughts in another direction, which had led me earlier to other scriptures, first in the Old Testament and then back to the New Testament. So I am giving you that which have I studied along with some of my comments and you can judge for yourself.

However, you might first want to do an internet search on 'salted with fire' and see what others have said. But if you do not do that, then take the time to look at this link; you should find it interesting. <http://bible.cc/mark/9-49.htm>

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In this study we are heading toward Mark 9:49, but we need first to pass through other passages and so we begin with Matthew 10. Here instruction was given to Jesus' twelve disciples, yet it instructs in regards to all of Jesus' true disciples through the ages. Moreover, this amounts to Jesus' *definition* of a true disciple following him ...for a tree is identified by its fruit, and a tree of God is identified by how the world treats it. Here I will list only some verses in Matthew 10 pertinent to the study.

**Matthew 10:1** And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

**10:9-10** Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

**10:12-15** And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

**10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.**

These things did not happen to the disciples in this particular mission upon which Jesus had sent them; therefore, Jesus was referring to situations that would befall apostles and disciples in the coming days, years, and centuries following Jesus' death and resurrection.

**10:19-20 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.**

The Holy Spirit in fact is *the Spirit of the Father* and is stated as such by the Son. Interesting, is it not?

**10:22-25 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?**

**10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**

**10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.**

**10:32-34 Whosoever [i.e.] therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever [i.e. the disciple] shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.**

**10:35-39 For I am come to set a man at variance against [i.e. set apart and stepping down or away from] his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He [i.e. a disciple] that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.**

The word translated 'foes' has as its root 'odious'. The world also will find the true disciple 'odious', but the first (and lasting) such experience to the disciple is as Jesus describes.

Jesus said these things in regards to all those who would enter discipleship and would stick with it to actually become a disciple.

**10:40-42 [Moreover] He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.**

Switching from the topic of disciple, Jesus spoke in verses 40-42 regarding any person that would 'receive' a messenger of God, and thereby the person would become an *enabler* in the work that God was accomplishing through the messenger (i.e. even if the shall-be messenger is yet in training).

In our journey through passages, and reaching into the Old Testament, we shall see this written into the law regarding priests doing service in the temple. Here it has to do

with God's messengers and the people sacrificing so as to aid God's messengers. And in the Old Testament passage it has to do with priests and those Israelites sacrificing so as to aid the priests.

Note that the '**receiver**' (*enabler*) sees clearly and properly the specific purpose of the messenger, therefore '**receiving**' him properly according to the messenger's purpose (i.e. the messenger comes not for any other purpose). The '**reward**' that arrives to the receiver-enabler is not the same as that of the messenger who in the end will be given his reward. Instead, it is the *kind of reward* which the messenger is authorized to request of heaven. Regarding the twelve disciples in their mission, then, see verses 12-15 and verse 1.



## The Grain Offering and Salt

Please bear with me as we go through some passages in Leviticus. Jesus was fully trained in the Mosaic Law (among other things) and so were all Israelites (and in the case of our study, so were Jesus' disciples). Jesus regularly quoted from his Bible (the Old Testament) and so did the Apostle Paul in his writings that have come to us in the New Testament. I do not know why in the King James Version that the word '**meat**' was used for what was obviously *grain*. In Leviticus 2 is the particular law regarding this sacrifice. Also note that it is a sacrifice among several other sacrifices in a category of sacrifices '**made by fire**'. Some of the sacrifices '**made by fire**' were totally consumed by the fire; but with others only a small portion of the sacrifices were consumed by fire, and so it was with the grain-sacrifice.

There were several methods in which the grain-sacrifice could be accomplished, all of which when brought to the temple were *holy unto the Lord*. Moreover, every portion of the sacrifice not burned in the altar fire *had to be eaten by the priest officiating in that sacrifice at the time*. Therefore, in this sacrifice, the Lord God was represented to the people of Israel as 1) Fire – the altar fire consumed the memorial portion, and as 2) Priest - the priest consumed the remainder by eating it.

Throughout the year grain-offerings were a part of many other sacrifices. Yet, in itself the grain-offering was a holy sacrifice unto the Lord, and for varied reasons many people individually throughout the year were bringing grain-offerings. Therefore, priests were daily receiving grain-offerings.

Also, each year at the beginning of the grain harvest the grain-offering would be the sacrifice of first-fruits. Nonetheless, at any time the grain-offering could be a sacrifice for thanksgiving or for sins or for simply loving God, etc.

The grain-offering was dual-purposed, a holy sacrifice unto the Lord God. It was an acceptance of the person unto God and it was a daily supply of grain-food in the strict diets of priests when on duty in the temple. Therefore, please make the connection of this knowledge with the verses Matthew 10:10, and 40-42 along with my comments.

For a person bringing a grain-offering to the temple, there were four categories (or types or preparations) of the offering that he could use:

- 1) grain finely ground into flour, along with some oil to be poured on it when handing it to the priest, and some frankincense along side the offering {verse 1};
- 2) a grain-food baked in an oven {verse 4};
- 3) a grain-food baked or cooked in a pan {verse 5}; and
- 4) a grain-food baked or cooked in a fryingpan {verse 7}.

So let us get into the passage -

**Leviticus 2:1** And when any [person for varied reasons] will offer a meat [i.e. donation or tribute of grain] offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be *of fine flour*; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon:

For this method of grain-offering by individual Israelites, note that the person not only provides the oil and frankincense, but he also pours the oil on the sacrifice and then gives it to the priest, along with the frankincense to be placed on the memorial portion that is to be burned in the altar fire. (The frankincense aspect of the sacrifice is the same for each method.) See the next verse also. I suspect that somewhere in the law the amounts are specified.

In this method, since the priest needs to cook the flour with the oil to eat it, this type of offering was set aside for future cooking.

**2:2** And he [i.e. the Israelite] shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he [i.e. the priest] shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD:

The handful of flour and portion of oil with the frankincense is 'the memorial' to be burned in the altar fire.

**2:3** And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.



Now for just a bit we shall turn to Leviticus 6 -

**6:13** The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.

**6:14** And this is the law of the meat [i.e. grain] offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the LORD, before the altar [compare this with 2:1 above].

**6:15-16** And he shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is [placed] upon the meat offering, and shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour, even the memorial of it, unto the LORD. And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with [i.e. as] unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; [also] in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it.

The holy place was not the holy of holies where only the high priest could go once a year. It was the working place in the part of the tent (sanctuary) that is in front of the holy of holies. A heavy curtain was between the holy place and the holy of holies. Moreover, a heavy curtain was in front of the holy place separating it from the court. The altar with its fire was in the court and could be observed by the people bringing their sacrifices. The priests did their work both in the court and in the holy place. The person bringing the grain-offering could observe his sacrifice: a memorial portion burned on the altar, and the rest eaten by the priest.

**6:17-18** It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it unto them for their portion of my offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is [also] the sin offering, and as [also] the trespass offering. All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it [in their duties in the tent and later in the temple]. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations concerning the offerings of the LORD made by fire: every one that toucheth them shall be [i.e. must be] holy.

This gives more information regarding the grain-offering even though this passage primarily refers to category 1). The priest, when active at the holy work, is holy. When not at the work, thus not in his holy garments, he is not holy.



Now back to chapter 2 -

**2:4 And if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.**

**2:5-6 And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it is a meat offering.**

**2:7 And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in the fryingpan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil.**

**2:8-9 And thou shalt bring the meat offering that is made of these things unto the LORD: and when it is presented unto the priest, he shall bring it unto the altar. And the priest shall take from the meat offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.**

**2:10 And that which is left of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.**

**2:11 No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire.**

These offerings (from any Israelite) are of those sacrifices *made by fire*. And there are other offerings also *made by fire*, sacrifices even as large as oxen. Note that no offering made by fire shall ever have in it leaven, or upon it honey, which was also true of any grain-offering made by Israelites or by priests.

**2:12 As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour.**

At the beginning of harvesting an agricultural product, the first-fruits offerings for other than grains were also required, such as for apples, vegetables, etc. These offerings were sacrifices of which no part would be consumed by fire. The priest shall eat them in total.

**2:13 And every oblation of thy meat [grain] 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 [such of] thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.**

Here in our study, 'salt' in the grain-offering is introduced, for there is 'the salt of the covenant'.

**2:14-16 And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears. And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon: it is a meat offering. And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, part of the beaten corn thereof, and part of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD.**

Here, then is a fifth category of grain-offering by an Israelite. The others were at various times, but this one is at the beginning of harvest for grain, and it is true of each type of grain. The KJV translation has it written like the grain was corn grown in ears.

However, 1) the verse is about each type of grain and 2) this particular offering was not collected in the normal fashion of grain. Of the first mature grain stalks, the person had to go out and select the best, clip off the head or grain portion of the stalk, and keeping it whole, then place it by fire (or in a pan over a fire) to cure it. Then the grain was 'beaten' out of the full stalk.

However, because the priest must eat the remnant portion of the grain (left after the

memorial part of the offering was burned on the altar) it is obvious that he would not be eating whole kernels of corn. The word '**beaten**' surly means *beaten as in a bowl (i.e. a mortar) with a hard object (i.e. a pestle)*; this was (and still is) a primitive form of grinding grain.

In other words, the person to bring the grain-offering of first-fruits was to handle carefully each aspect of 1) gathering the grain and 2) preparing it in the most fundamental, personal, and respectful manner.

This then was *received* by the priest in his duties; received with the respect due the sacrifice and due the Israelite offering it. All aspects were incorporated in the sacrifice: 1) The proper preparing of the sacrifice, and 2) the consuming of it in fire, and 3) the eating of it by the priest. This made for the pleasant receiving of it by Almighty God.



### Discussion about Salt in the Offerings

Leviticus 2:13 introduces the topic of salt into these grain-offerings. Salt in an offering was only for these particular grain-offerings. Salt was not normally involved in other offerings.

Now I will discuss it from my perspective after studying it. As noted in the verses and in my comments above, we see that priests had a steady daily diet of grain-foods because grain-offerings daily came in unto them which they must eat. The grain-food was not leavened, nor did it have honey. An offering's only seasoning was the salt. How would you like to have to eat unleavened bread with *no seasoning* day after day for a month for every year of a thirty-year ministry?

Here is compassion of the Lord upon the priests. When the Israelites escaped Egypt they complained a great deal about the Manna that God gave them in the wilderness; yet, the Manna tasted as if it was mixed with honey. Moreover, when the Israelites did not accept becoming 'a nation of priests', God made a priesthood and an office and put that office upon Aaron and his sons forever (read of this in my book *God's Rock*). And when officiating at the altar the priests would have to eat unleavened bread with no honey or seasoning...*except that it had been salted*. Moreover, the priests did not do any of the salting, for it was up to each Israelite who brought in a grain-offering to have salted it.

Consider that the Israelite, who must do the salting of the unleavened bread for the priest, was everyday eating Manna as sweet as honey. Dear reader, I trust that you are gaining the realization that *those chosen by God* for priest, prophet, disciple, or righteous man or woman were (and are) immersed in a walk with God that has its blessings according to his or her nearness to God. Moreover, know that such a walk is separate and is not the same as the rest of God's people. For example, the priest received no pay, only a tithe of the tithe that came into the temple from the people, and often that was very little. On the other hand, the priest and his family *ate of the holy things of sacrifice*. That, too, was often scanty; yet, like the prophet Habakkuk '**...but the just shall live by his faith**' (2:4).

This (i.e. the law of the grain-offering having salt in it) demonstrated God's '**salt of the covenant**'. The '**salt of the covenant**' was not a law or an instruction in and of itself. That is, it was not so stated as *a law*. However, it immediately became obvious to the priests of its blessing to them and so they taught it as such, which God knew they would, for the salt was particularly for the benefit of the priests. Yet also, it joined the common Israelite (from poorest to richest, from least to highest official, even Moses) unto the priest even as he was in the act of holy officiating the sacrifice. Therefore, we see God Himself referring to '**the salt of the covenant**' (as in these verses).

Here is God's *symbolic provision of the Israelite to the priest*. It is meant to manifest

God's caring for priests by this commandment, which provides for the priest through the means of each Israelite. (The grain-offering was from each family and thus it was from each Israelite by means of the head of the house).

This symbolic provision illustrates the *individual link* between the person offering the grain-offering with the priest receiving it; for the person confronted the priest face to face and then the person poured the oil on the sacrifice and placed the frankincense along side the offering, *the salt already having been mixed in*. To repeat, it is *a person to priest moment* of 1) acceptance by God of the person and 2) provision for the priest. As noted, 1) the altar fire and 2) the priest eating the offering together represented God's good pleasure and acceptance of the person. Thus, it was ministry on both sides ...person to priest and priest to person.

And it was ministry from God to both. When we arrive at the Mark passage we shall see Jesus using this offering, and all that was going in it, to teach God's ways 1) to obedient Christians who recognize true called ones (i.e. apostles, disciples, teachers, etc.) and 2) to true called ones like Jesus' disciples (and all such men and women through the ages).

I repeat. The '**salt of the covenant**' was a benevolent gift from God to the priests who soon would have choked on eating flour cooked with no seasoning.

To the Christian and to the majority of workers for God today, this discussion so far probably seems interesting, but not much more. Even so, for the men and women who answered and entered true callings throughout the ages (like the people of faith in Hebrews 11:7-40), they greatly appreciated God's '**salt of the covenant**' as it also extended unto them ...even as to the priests of the Mosaic Covenant in the Grain-Offerings. Again take note of this passage -

**10:40-42** [Moreover] **He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.**

The '**little ones**' in this passage refers to many '**a righteous man**' (and woman) serving the Lord in Truth. Each person that recognizes such a one (in verses 40-42), if the person becomes in some way (large or small) a provider or enabler to such a one (even if for a moment with a drink of water), then that person shall receive appropriate blessing of reward from God.



### **'Salt of the Covenant' continues, as Jesus Instructed his Disciples**

Mark 9:1-35 has interactions in varying degrees between Jesus and his disciples, and also interactions between the disciples. These range from Jesus and three disciples on the mount of transfiguration, to disciples unable to heal, and to Jesus frustrated, to disciples arguing about who would be greater in the kingdom, etc. In other words, in chapter 9, Mark painted a picture of confusion that particularly showed the disciples with *little* understanding acting like *little* children fussing. These disciples, when finished with their discipleship training (trained by Jesus and by the Father) would be continuing the Father's work, which had begun with Jesus.

((Keep in mind the earlier discussion of how mature the disciples must become to work in God's work, and how much they will become like Jesus as he stated that he had "no bed upon which to lay his head". Like true priests and levites during their times of difficulty in the Old Testament, and like the prophet Habakkuk '**...the just shall live by his faith**', the apostles shall be working and surviving as Jesus said in Matthew 6:25-34. Indeed, we see much of this in Paul'-

s writing about himself and the men who were with him in the work.))

In verse 36, Jesus took time out to speak to his disciples about how disciples must humbly *trust and obey* in all things, and *leave the rest to God*.

**Mark 9:35-37** And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, **If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all** [i.e. speaking about disciples and such]. **And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them** [i.e. his disciples]: **and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever** [of you disciples] **shall receive one of such children** [i.e. speaking of future disciples] **in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.**

These three verses are quoted often that Jesus was speaking about little children (i.e. not about important disciples-things). Other passages do speak of little children, but here the context is purely about what these disciples need to know regarding their positions in Christ and what they will need to do with *new disciples coming in under their leadership*. In fact, the next verse clearly indicates that John understood and he went on to say -

**9:38** And John answered him, saying, **Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.**

We see here that the 'child' in Jesus' lap represented not the twelve leading disciples (though they were acting rather childishly), but rather it represented new disciples under the leadership of the twelve and later under the apostles; and later it represented men and women to whom these apostles would 'go and disciple' in all the nations (Matthew 28:19).

Therefore, John seems to have been implying, "Ok, then what about this situation that we ran into and how do we handle it?"

**9:40-43** But Jesus said, **Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall** [even] **give you** [disciples] **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. And** [moreover] **whosoever** [of you in higher authority] **shall offend one of *these* little ones** [under you] **that believe in me, it is better for him** [i.e. for the one in higher authority] **that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.**

Here Jesus continued warning his disciples of the *seriousness* of their office and of the *dangers* that lie ahead for them if they do not carry their authority as pleasing before the Father (see also Matthew 24:45-51).

**9:43-44** And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into *life* maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

**9:45-46** And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into *life*, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

**9:47-48** And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into *the kingdom of God* with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

These warnings apply to apostles, disciples, and such who might defame the trust that God would give them when giving them authority over others (i.e. 'little ones') who had stepped away from the world and security of family and all earthly livelihoods *except the Lord*.

Moreover, God will often provide for such 'little ones' by means of 'mature ones' in authority over the 'little ones'. We see this with Paul when he took care of all the men following him. At times he even built tents to sell while also performing his duties as lead

apostle so that the followers in their duties did not have to wonder when they would eat and where they would sleep. Of course, Jesus did the same in provisions for his disciples as the Father in heaven pulled strings on earth for all of their provisions, which almost always came from individuals whom the Father would inspire, arrange, and prepare to give aid to Jesus and the disciples.

I shall not get into “losing or keeping salvation”. I leave that to you and the Lord.

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

Finally we have arrived at Mark 9:49. It is only in the light of the preceding passages and others like them, that '**salted with fire**' can be understood. In this verse, '**salted**' is equivalent to '**seasoned**' (i.e. '**seasoned with fire**'). And in Jesus' statement is the grain-offering, a long understood symbol for this crucial truth to men and women in such positions of authority, as they deal with underlings dependent on them. Please note the *direct link of reference* for the disciples (soon to be apostles) back to the priests in the temple.

God came out of the temple (from behind the heavy curtains that separated Him from His people) at the moment of Jesus' death to dwell among His people by His Spirit for His New Purpose, in which He would use true apostles, disciples, and such to represent Him even as Jesus represented Him before ascending to sit beside the Father. The responsibility of such men and women is far greater than most Christians realize. These and other passages very plainly tell us and warn us about it.

Why were the apostles '**seasoned with fire**'? Remember that the priests (sons of Aaron) and the levites, to be able to work in the temple, had been *separated* out of the population of Israel such that God could minister to Israel through them. They had not the same kind of promises of provision, etc., as God had given the Israelites. Indeed, God Himself was the Provision to the priests and levites, providing as He saw fit, even as He provided to Jesus and his disciples.

In the grain-offering (a holy provision to the priest), the memorial (a portion of the holy provision) was *separated* from the whole offering and burned on the altar directly unto the Lord. Men and women, as mentioned in this study, have been *separated* to experience things as in Hebrews 11. In modern times, the same is happening around the world. There are differing kinds of '**salting with fire**' by the Lord.

In the context of the grain-offering, any portion of the sacrifice (to experience the altar fire) was *entirely* unto the Lord, *even bypassing the eating by the priests*, and *thus bypassing men altogether*. Here is acceptance of a sacrifice of the highest order.

Paul and his followers experienced much '**salting or seasoning with fire**', but did not die until their time. Suffering for Christ's Name can come in various ways. It can come light or heavy. It can come hard or not so hard. And though it may seem to come by the hand of men or by circumstance, to the men and women such as described in this study it comes always by God's Will *as unto the Lord*.

Even so, fire upon such a one can come for another reason (discussed below). Only the Father and the Son fully see all of these things.

**9:49 ...and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.**

Here is the exact picture of the grain-offering (whereas in the first part of verse 49 the grain-offering is symbolic). The sacrifice of the grain-offering was initiated by God in the Law unto each sincere Israelite who wanted to worship God by this sacrifice, knowing also that it was sustenance unto the priest.

In this verse, then, it means that such grain-offering sacrifices (by individual Christians) would be inspired and/or led by God toward such called men and women separated from the world's means of provision to work for God. Here in this verse, it is a promise by God's Son to both the giver and the receiver that *good and pleasing things before the Father would be happening*, as God leads and manipulates within His workings on this

planet.

But even more, Jesus indicated that such separated men and women in the New Testament Age would themselves become sacrifices, even as the sons of Aaron as priests and the sons of Levi as levites were separated unto God's work of the temple. They were living sacrifices, substitutes for the firstborn sons of each Israelite family. (See the choosing of priest and levites in my book *God's Rock*.)

And, added to them in the Old Testament Age were the prophets; and also added were righteous warriors like Gideon and kings like David and righteous men like Noah and Bezalee and Jethro and Eldad and Midad and Obed-edom the Gittite and the judges of Israel including Deborah; and do not forget the wives of the patriarchs Abraham, Issac, and Jacob.

And in the New Testament many individuals are mentioned in the Gospels and many mentioned by Paul.

Thus '**...and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt**' indicates that all such called and separated men and women for God's work (each a sacrifice unto God) are salted by God Himself. (We are not now speaking of '**salting with fire**'.) In this process (of God making each what he or she will become in the Lord) in varied ways God works His salt into each sacrifice. This has to do with God's goodness in human form as manifest in these separated ones. Therefore, the Son of God said -

**9:50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? ...**

Jesus said that the blessings contained in '**the salt of the covenant**' toward both the givers and the receivers is '**good**', but what happens to such *blessing of salt* if something or someone breaks the links that God has established within '**the salt of the covenant**'? The priests and levites, etc. (OT) and the apostles and disciples, etc. (NT) are *set and fixed* in this process of having been salted with salt (thus, giving with salt and receiving with salt). Therefore, people (both giver and/or receiver) will be hurt. Hurting such 'little ones' and/or 'mature ones' in Christ is a very dangerous thing. Read again Mark 9:35-37 and other such verses. Throughout the scriptures warnings are plenty. So, 'mature one', pay attention to this -

**9:50 ...have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.**

At the time, Jesus particularly said this to his foolish and disputing disciples (see above verses), in that they were to cease foolish discussions...because '**the greatest**' will be at the Father's constant disposal *to minister unto the other disciples*, even as Paul constantly ministered to the men following him while he worked his apostleship work to the churches.

In the Old Testament, the chief priest had this duty unto the other priests and unto the levites ministering in the temple. Jesus had this duty to his disciples. Paul and others had this duty to the men assigned to them by the Father and the Son. It is the ongoing *law of agape* among God's workers from ancient times and always. It, too, is '**the salt of the covenant**'.

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Further Discussion

Believe it or not, Matthew in 10:3-42 and 18:1-22 was quoting Jesus and dealing with the same topic (i.e. what is a true disciple, and how he or she is expected to treat new disciples that shall be coming under their authority). Such passages were not about *how to treat all the little children of the world*. It goes without saying here that Christians should love and nurture little children, but these passages are about more serious kingdom-of-God things.

Ah, but in Mark 9 verses 49 and 50 were added. Mark was not of the original twelve disciples. Young Mark had been invited to go with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but he left the work fairly early and returned home to Jerusalem. In this, then, we see a breaking of '**the salt of the covenant**' by Mark. Later when Paul would begin his second missionary journey, he initiated a quarrel with Barnabas regarding Mark going again with them. Angry Paul chose Silas and Barnabas (also angry) chose Mark and they went separate ways. Later we see that Paul not only made up with Mark, but he stated about Mark '**he is profitable to me for the ministry**'.

Thus, we see breaking of '**the salt of the covenant**', but also forgiveness back into it. Indeed, to my mind, and I believe according to all scripture, forgiveness is fundamental to Godly Salt. As such, it could be that a true forgiving-spirit in a person has been placed there by God. It is one thing (and a very good thing) to *constantly ask* the Lord for a true forgiving-spirit, a spirit that does not have to struggle with the flesh so much, but easily forgives.

But it is another thing to *actually and consistently forgive with little or no effort*. In my morning prayer I always ask that the Father would energize (among other things) in Barbara and in me forgiveness of each other. Nearly all struggling in this has been taken away, and we know that it is entirely pleasing unto the Lord.

But what about Mark 9:43-48 and Matthew 18:7-10? Considering what Jesus said in Mark 9:49-50, he was not indicating that he expected any of his chosen ones to violate the Father's conditions for them in their service (or later regarding chosen ones through the ages). Instead, Jesus was giving serious warnings which *particularly pointed to the seriousness of their position in Christ and in the Father*. Should such a one develop a "spiritual-big-head" in his or her authority over others, then danger awaits. Consider Eve in the garden as she simply wanted to have special understanding of 'right and wrong'. Consider Adam who very quickly chose the blessing of Eve given to him by God over his position under God. Surely Satan the serpent is very good at his trade.

Even so, Adam and Eve were forgiven; yet, they suffered the condition of their violations. They went on to be father and mother of righteous Able and Seth and thus became the patriarchs of the line of Adam, which in God's Plan of the Ages would birth the Second Adam.

On the other hand, God caused the earth to open up and swallow some and serpents to bite others. In this earthly life, what punishment awaits such chosen ones? Indeed, for some of His chosen ones, God might very well cut off a hand or a foot or pluck out an eye (or have him shut up in prison) if the chosen one is drawing near the point of no return.

For is not God the Compassionate One? Is He not the Guardian of chosen ones? Will He not save from destruction?

There is a '**salting with fire**' (mentioned above in the last part of 9:49) that is *suffering for Christ's sake*, but another part of '**salting with fire**' is *God guarding a chosen one that he or she not fall off the cliff of no return*. If one does not stop at God's warnings, then in compassion He might...

God sent the prophet Agabus to warn Paul not to proceed on to Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14). There Paul was indeed arrested and, to our Biblical knowledge, he never again experienced freedom to walk about serving the Lord on mission trips again. He never again visited the churches he started. He never again was able to lead the new disciples and apostles that he had trained, whom he loved dearly. Even so, having been '**salted with fire**', at least for some years he served the Lord from prison.

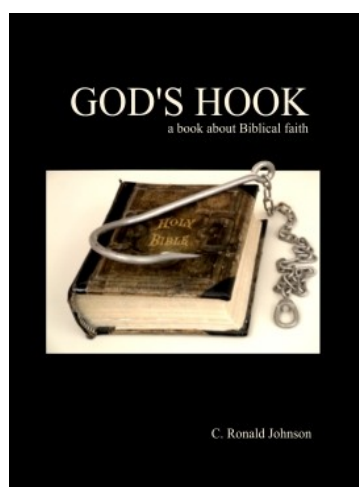
Sampson lost both eyes and he also was imprisoned; yet, in his being '**salted with fire**'

when he cried out to God he was answered from heaven, his strength was restored and he was allowed to enter his rest in the Lord while in one last ministry to his people by ministering God's judgment upon the Philistines. Leaving this earth amid the greatest episode of one's ministry; how good is that?

And what of men and women like Philemon and Lydia? The ages are full of such men and women who in their walk with God were chosen to enable with salted things the chosen ones. How much gold, silver, and precious stones are piled high in heaven reserved in their names?

I pray, dear reader, that you have been blessed by the Holy Scriptures and by Jesus' words. I pray that you seek saltiness from the Lord. I pray that your eyes are opened to '**the salt of the covenant**' as it was designed by God and has been at work down through the ages. I pray that you pray for the Spirit's energizing within this '**covenant**'. May you (giver or receiver) be blessed appropriately by the One who Blesses.

- These are short Bible studies by C. Ronald Johnson at Christian Wilderness Press -



a book
about
Biblical
Faith

the life of
Moses
and the
Exodus

