

“Pass the Salt”

By: **Robert Buckner**

From the very beginning of man’s relationship with his Creator, God has communicated with him. In past-days, directly and through patriarchs and prophets - and today in this present age, God speaks to man through His Son, by His Holy Word – **Hebrews 1:2**.

This makes “*understanding the Bible,*” a first importance of man! From the Bible man can observe *who* God is, come to know of His nature and character, be able to understand what God’s Will is for man and also – receive counsel on *how* to bring all of these important truths together in our daily walk.

Perhaps the first and most important *help* in properly understanding the Bible today is to realize that it was not written to us. Everything in the bible was – quite literally – written to people in other times and in other ages. However, this does not mean that **everything** in the bible is not just as important and relevant to **us** today as it was to those it was actually written to through the ages! It just means that we must try to understand the vernacular, the terminology and phraseology, of those times to be able to receive the full value of that which is written!

For example: A couple of thousand years ago, Jesus lived as man upon the earth and walked and talked with man. There are important things in the Bible that God desired to make available to us today which Jesus spoke to man then. In order for us to attain the maximum value of what Jesus said, those many years ago – we must understand fully – what it meant back then!

Jesus used many methods in which to teach important truths that could be understood then and also could transcend the years necessary to be relevant to us today. One such method Jesus used was the *senses* of man: *sight, hearing, touch, smell* and *taste*.

From the following scripture we can observe that Jesus used the human-sense of “*Taste*” to convey an important spiritual truth to His disciples.

Matthew 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 underfoot.*”

In order for us to gain the full extent of what Jesus is saying here, we must understand what “*salt*” was in the contemporary time in which He offered this truth.

Today, when we pay for a burger and fries, they will throw a couple of packets of ketchup and *salt* in the bag for free. When we sit at a table to eat a meal it is not at all uncommon to expect that there will be some salt and pepper there with the napkins.

Consequently, because today salt is so very common to us, we may not comprehend the relevance of the “*full-value*” which salt represented when Jesus used it in the aforementioned scripture.

In Biblical days, salt was very valuable. In fact, it was actually used as a form of currency. The phrase, “*You are not worth your salt,*” comes from the fact that salt was sometimes used as a wage – a way to pay someone for their day’s labor. If you did not do a good day’s work – “*you weren’t worth your salt.*”

Before refrigeration, salt was used as a “*preservative.*” With salt one could keep meat for long periods of time. It was also used as a disinfectant – to “*purify.*”

Chloride and sodium ions, the two major components of salt, are needed by all known living creatures in small quantities. Salt is involved in regulating the water content (fluid balance) of the body. The sodium ion itself is used for electrical signaling in the nervous system. Separately, these two chemical components can be deadly, but together, in the form of salt, (as God created it) they become invaluable to man!

So, when Jesus compares His followers to “*salt*” – they were able to comprehend the *literal-value*, as well as the *spiritual-context*, of what He was saying! They also were able to comprehend the measure of loss that occurred when salt was no longer - “*salty!*”

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Again, unless we today are able to understand what it meant for salt to lose its saltiness – then we may underrate the importance of Jesus cautioning against that happening within His followers.

For all of the good that salt did represent in those times, if salt lost its saltiness, it was not now just no-good for all of the positive benefits that it had been – it actually became a hazardous and toxic substance. You could not simply dump this sodium/chloride in the fields; it would ruin the ground for crops. You couldn’t dispose of it near a well or river; because it would destroy the water-source. In biblical days, they found that the only way they could deal with salt that had become useless *as salt* – was to pile it upon the roads. They found that on the roads, when man and oxen would walk on it, it would be mashed-down and then set-up, very much like concrete does today. This of course was the *least profitable* use for salt and truly – just a consolation, as a way to get rid of it, when it was no longer good as “*salt*” anymore.

Considering our culture-at-large in “*America 2011*” – I wonder how Jesus would think of the “*saltiness*” of His followers today.

If we view today as a meal, a feast, a banquet; what kind of seasoning are we to this - “*Food-of-life*” each day?

If, as Christians, we are disappointed with the current *moral-demise* of the American culture-at-large which surrounds us – perhaps we should also recall the other important

attributes that “*salt*” possess – in addition to merely being a “seasoning.” Perhaps we need to begin to think of what we can do to “*Purify*” and “*Preserve!*”

Would we really want for Jesus assessment of the *American Christian* to be that *we* are good for nothing – but – “*to be trampled on under the foot of man?*”

For a time, we are all together – sinner and saint – sitting at this table-of-life
“*Please – Pass the Salt!*”



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