**The Gospel of Mark**

**Witness to the Son of God #6**

**The Parables of the Gospel- Part 4**

**Parables of Salt and the Tenants**

**The Parable of Salt –** [**Mark 9:42-50**](http://www.usccb.org/bible/mark9:49)

***42*** *“And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.* ***43*** *And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off: it is good for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire.\** ***45*** *And if your foot causes thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell.\** ***47*** *And if your eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell;****48*** *where*

*their worm dies not,*

*and the fire is not quenched.*

***49*** *For every one shall be salted with fire.*

***50*** *Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its saltiness, wherewith will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another.*

\*Verses 44 and 46 are identical to verse 48; most Bibles do not list 44 and 46.

**Notes and Studies**

1. Bodily mutilation as a form of punishment was known in the Old Law such as ([Deut 25:11-12](http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/niv/deuteronomy/25/) If two men are fighting and the wife of one of them comes to rescue her husband from his assailant, and she reaches out and seizes him by his private parts, 12you shall cut off her hand. Show her no pity.)

2. But under the new covenant there are no bodily banishments. The Injunction to cut off a member of our bodies like the hand, the foot or the eye was given in comparison between the salvation of life at any coast including the loss of a member rather than losing the whole life.

**A Letter from Philemon**

***Lose a little or a lot?***

Brother George,

Peace and joy to you in our Savior who came to save both the body and the soul.

How did this happen to you that you stumble over the words of the Lord of life in Mark 9:42-50? Jesus did not come to teach us to cut off any member of our bodies; the evidence is that He was raised from the dead with His hands, feet and eyes.

His teaching is about how we measure things in comparison: so, to lose a little to save the rest or to lose the whole and save nothing. This is how I see myself with one eye for His sake rather has two eyes as an apostate. Truly it is not the eye that can sin, but the mind, so also the hand and our feet are innocent.

There are two kinds of humans: the first where the mind is locked in the body, but the second where the body is kept whole in the mind.

Which one of these are you?

The second is the renewed man where the body is the soul made visible, so that in our union we are not soul and body but our body becomes the tool of our mind, not the mind becomes a tool for the body. We have spoken on this matter before, but let me remind you, that when our inner life is renewed we no longer live in two rooms; the soul and the body but live in Christ Jesus as one with Him.

Seek Him and He will show you that when you sincerely love Him, His love in you gives you this harmony and you see that there are no two rooms in you but one life in Jesus who is our life eternal.

Philemon

No date

**Salt in the Bible - OT**

The main source of salt in the region was the area of the [Dead Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea), especially the massive salt cliffs, about seven miles long. [Ezekiel (47:11](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Ezekiel+47:11%E2%80%9347:11&version=nrsv)) highlights the importance of the Dead Sea's salt.

The Hebrew people harvested salt by pouring sea water into pits and letting the water evaporate until only salt was left. They used the mineral for seasoning and as a preservative. In addition, salt was used to disinfect wounds.

In 2 [Chronicles 13:5](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chron_13:5&action=edit&redlink=1) King Abijah referred to God's covenant promise to David that he will not lack a man [in his family line] to sit on Israel's throne as a Salt covenant - that is covenant that can never be broken.

An [angel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel) leads [Lot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judeo-Christian_views_of_Lot) out of [Sodom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sodom_and_Gomorrah) and destroys the City; as in Genesis 19:25-26). The fate of [Lot's wife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lot%27s_wife), being turned to a pillar of salt, is found in [Genesis 19:26](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Genesis+19:26%E2%80%9319:26&version=nrsv). This is the reason for the naming of the pillar on [Mount Sodom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Sodom), which is often called "Lot's Wife."

[Leviticus 2:13](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Leviticus+2:13%E2%80%932:13&version=nrsv) and [Ezekiel 43:24](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Ezekiel+43:24%E2%80%9343:24&version=nrsv) illustrate the requirement of salt as part of ancient [Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew) religious sacrifices. Leviticus 2:13 reads: *"And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt."*

Salt was cast on the burnt offering ([Ezekiel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezekiel) 43:24) and was part of the incense ([Exodus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Exodus) 30:35). Part of the temple offering included salt ([Ezra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezra) 6:9).

Salt was widely and variably used as a symbol and sacred sign in ancient Israel [Numbers 18:19](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Numbers+18:19%E2%80%9318:19&version=nrsv) and [2 Chronicles 13:5](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=2+Chronicles+13:5%E2%80%9313:5&version=nrsv) illustrate salt as a covenant of friendship. In cultures throughout the region, the eating of salt is a sign of friendship. “Salt land” is a metaphorical name for a desolate no man's land, as attested to in [Psalms 107:34](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Psalms+107:34%E2%80%93107:34&version=nrsv), [Job 39:6](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Job+39:6%E2%80%9339:6&version=nrsv), and [Jeremiah 17:6](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Jeremiah+17:6%E2%80%9317:6&version=nrsv).

* The land of defeated cities was [salted to consecrate them to a god and curse their re-population](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salting_the_earth), as illustrated in [Judges 9:45](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Judges+9:45%E2%80%939:45&version=nrsv) – To destroy the land of the enemy, *“Abimelech pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it.*”

Even to this day, in the Middle East there is a common saying “we eat bread and salt,” which means we have unbroken covenant of fidelity and friendship.

So, in the OT, the salt covenant is much more than a covenant of friendship. It is an irrevocable pledge and promise of fidelity. Those who have taken salt together would rather die before they would break their covenant. He further states that the penalty for violating such a covenant is death.

Newborn babies were rubbed with salt. A reference to this practice is in ([Ezekiel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezekiel) 16:4: "*As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.*" The significance of rubbing a newborn with salt is to indicate that the child would be raised to have integrity, to always be truthful.

Since all offering had salt – “*With all your offerings you shall offer salt*” Leviticus 2:13 – a covenant of salt was forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you. ([Numbers 18:19](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Num%2018.19)).

* The men of the city said to Elisha, "*Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive." "Bring me a new bowl," he said, "and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. 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.'" And the water has remained wholesome to this day; according to the word Elisha had spoken.”* ([2 Kings 2:19-22](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Kings%202.19-22))

**Salt in the Bible - NT**

The [Salt and Light](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_and_Light) passages in the [Sermon on the Mount](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sermon_on_the_Mount) make reference to salt.

[Matthew's account](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew) differs slightly from that of [Luke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Luke) and [Mark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark). [Matthew 5:13](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Matthew+5:13%E2%80%935:13&version=nrsv) refer to his disciples as "[*the salt of the earth*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_and_light)." This meaning is paralleled in the following verse, [Matthew 5:14](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Matthew+5:14%E2%80%935:14&version=nrsv), in the symbolism of the "*light of the world*." Another view is that the [Salt and Light](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_and_Light) passages refer to a duality of roles in the disciples to be like a light from a city, viewable from all over the world, and to be spread out as salt is to congregate and spread.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke accord in the discussion of salt "that has lost its taste." This is a reference to salt that is contaminated with other minerals, causing a weakness in flavor or a bland unpleasant taste.It may be a symbolic reference to the possibility of abandoning or deviating from the gospel, especially due to the adulteration of its teachings. Another interpretation is that in a world filled with sin and deceit, it is possible for one to become contaminated and thus unsuccessful at being an effective disciple. Therefore, this verse serves as a warning for disciples to be on their guard; to be in the world, but not of the world.

This is how my mentor Philemon read Mark 9:49:

“The salt that preserves us is the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in us. Read the word of God and the word of God will keep you under the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

**Salt in worship and social life:**

1. It is part of offerings to God.

2. Essental part of covenants and goodwill: not only between God and man, but also between men.

3. Used in cocking as a preservative and also as flavoring

4. Used in cleansing newborns and prevent infection, and to heal diseases of the skin.

**The Parable of the Tenants (Mark 12:1-12)**

***1*** *And he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country.* ***2*** *When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.**3 And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed.* ***4*** *Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully.* ***5*** *And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed.*

***6*** *He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, “They will respect my son.”*

***7*** *But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'* ***8****And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.*

***9*** *What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.* ***10*** *Have you not read this Scripture:*

*"The stone that the builders rejected*

*has become the cornerstone;*

***11*** *this was the Lord's doing*

*and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"*

***12*** *And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.”*

**Notes and Studies**

The best note on this is from Isaiah 5:1-7.

***1*** *“Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.*

***2*** *He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.*

***3*** *And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah judge between my vineyard and me.*

***4*** *What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?*

***5*** *And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.*

***6****I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briers and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.*

***7*** *For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!*

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***Pope’s Notes***

**Class Contacts**

George & May Bebawi Bob & Pam Walters

403 Shoemaker Dr. 12281 Blue Springs Lane

Carmel, IN 46032 Fishers, IN 46037

317-818-1487 317-694-4141 / 317-727-7917

*Hear lecture at GeorgeBebawi.com* rlwcom@aol.com