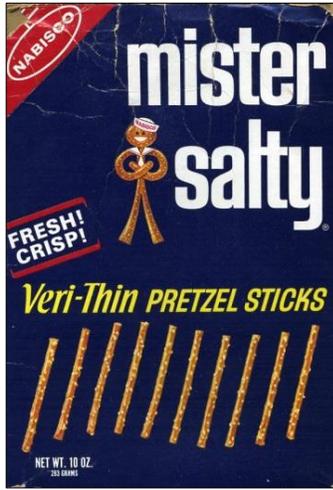


Connect the Jots

A Salted Savior

Part 11 – December 7, 2014

Jesus declared himself Lord of the Sabbath. A healing showdown in the synagogue ensued, followed by murderous plotting against Him. He came to the lake, taught the crowds, confirmed himself with the miraculous catch, chose the twelve, and began to instruct them.



Do you have a taste for truth? Ever crave truth the way you sometimes crave something salty? If not, why not?

Remember Mister Salty pretzels? In Jesus' day, salt was precious, and used to season, preserve, cure, disinfect, and trade.

“You are the salt of the earth. [Not, you should be, could be, or will be] 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 by men.” – Matthew 5:13 NIV

This is a puzzling passage.

What's Jesus' point? Is He scolding 'em? Warning 'em? What?

Salt preserves, cures, and purifies; so ... isn't He the Salt? Why doesn't He at least say, “We” are the salt of the earth? Why does scripture never apply this title to Jesus ... just us?

I think it's an encouragement. And, the key is in His two-part riddle: “If salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?” And, more importantly: How can salt lose its saltiness?



Atheist websites love pointing at this passage to show how “dumb” they believe Jesus to be: “The world was created through Him, and He doesn't even know that salt *can't* lose its saltiness?!”

Salt can be diluted or corrupted with impurities and rendered ineffective. As can we. Good warning.

But they're right: the *salt* doesn't lose its saltiness; and it's easily made salty again.



Gypsum is a counterfeit salt that forms with salt at the Dead Sea, and was thrown out and trampled on paths and roads to kill the weeds.

No cheating! Jesus didn't say *gypsum*; He said *salt*; and gypsum *isn't* salt. So, is Jesus just ignorant, or can salt lose its saltiness?



Actually, there are two ways, because when it comes to saltiness, there are two things involved: 1) salt and 2) a tongue. **People can lose their taste for salt.**

“I know you’re really down about the beat down by the religious leaders you thought would embrace us. But, that doesn’t diminish or discredit your role, or My message. You ARE the salt, but if they can’t taste it, what can you do, except expect to be thrown out?”

Do you have a taste for truth? You can increase whatever taste you have, simply by tasting more truth; but, if your tongue becomes seared, you’ll lose your taste. And, every act of unfaithfulness kills a taste bud for truth. That answer wouldn’t satisfy the atheists: “A physiological change in the functioning of my taste buds wouldn’t be due to any inherent change in the salt itself. It’s still salty, I just can’t taste it.” Yes. Sad *and* true.

There’s only one way salt *itself* can lose its saltiness: fire.



Ever throw salt crystals on a fire to make the flames burn with color? Did you know they were salt crystals? Different salt types make different colors when they burn. **Did you know salt was added to offerings?**

Season all your grain offerings with salt. [Know why? As a reminder of the covenant God made with ‘em when He descended on Mount Sinai in fire (Ex 19:18)] Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings. [Not just grain] ... The priest shall burn the memorial portion of the crushed grain ... as an offering made to the Lord by fire. – Leviticus 2:13b-16 NIV



Think it was mesmerizing to watch it burn? **Why did God want to capture and focus such attention on *this*? Why was God so adamant that offerings be salted?** Hebrews (9:11-10:18) says the sacrificial system was put in place to point to Jesus. I think it’s a strategic piece to solving an incredible mystery.

Don’t you know that the Lord, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants [cresting with Christ] forever by a covenant of salt? – 2 Chronicles 13:5 NIV



Not only does this spell out that the Christ would come as a direct descendant of David, and therefore a human child; but it calls to mind the imagery of the salted, crushed grain offering!

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, [strips of cloth] lying in a manger.” – Luke 2:11-12 NKJ

The sign of the manger is another subject. But, the swaddling cloth holds the key! *That sign* points to the prophet Ezekiel, who details a traditional Hebrew birth with swaddling cloths.

So, Jesus had a traditional Hebrew birth. But, **something's been omitted, concealed in scripture, waiting to be found by all who have eyes to see and hearts to seek, by playing *matchy-matchy* with the vibrant pictures of the prophets!**

Ezekiel is describing how God saved His people, though they were lost in their sin, like One rescuing an abandoned newborn.

As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, [Jesus' was] nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; [Jesus' was] you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. – Ezekiel 16:4 NKJ

The fulfillment of the salt covenant, who offered *himself* for the sins of the world, was rubbed with salt the moment He arrived.

We're the salt. He's the sacrifice.

Jesus' Jewish disciples knew just how peppered scripture is with significant pictures of salt. When Sodom (i.e. *burning*) was being destroyed by fire, **Lot's wife looked back and became a perpetually transfixed statue of salt**, (Gen 19:26) **staring at "burning"**.



Salt was sown as a curse on Shechem, (Judges 9:45) (the inheritance of Joseph, who foreshadows Jesus; and the hometown of the woman at the well). **"Shechem" means *back or shoulders***. And, **our salt was sown on the back, and born on the shoulders, of the One who was born to be cursed on our account.**

He was assaulted by our sin, for our sin, to cleanse our sin.

[Paul says] Devote yourselves to prayer, [For *what?* Seeking and finding and sharing; for solving God's mysteries and sharing your discoveries] being watchful [For *what?* The answers and an opportunity to share 'em] and thankful. [For *what?* The *answers and an opportunity to share 'em*] And pray for us, too, [for the *same thing*] that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ ... make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt ... – Colossians 4:2-6 NIV



And, what's the mystery in a nutshell?

"Everyone will be salted with fire." – Mark 9:49 NIV

... for our "God is a consuming fire." [Deut 4:24] – Hebrews 12:29 NIV

That's the nature of holiness from the perspective of un-holiness.

It's what most separates us from our Dad, who can't *not* be God.

Though He loves us, He can't hug us.

Like salt that loses its saltiness the only way salt can, by burning, His children would simply vaporize in His glory and vanish from His presence.

[That's why Isaiah calls out] Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning? [It's a simple riddle:] He who walks righteously ... – Isaiah 33:14b-15a NIV

[Trouble is ...] All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags ... – Isaiah 64:6b NIV

[So ...] God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. – 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV

[John the Baptist said] He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. – Matthew 3:11 NIV

Everyone will be salted with fire, but the Lamb of God was salted with our sin. Therefore, though we must stand before the All Consuming Fire, we will be renewed by His Spirit within us.

We'll be like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were thrown into the fiery furnace, and the king exclaimed, "I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." (Dan 3:25) **We'll be unbound from this body of salt and unharmed by the fire.**

Jews were commanded to *remember the Sabbath* and keep it holy. (Ex 20:8) So, they fulfilled the remembrance portion by reciting the *Kiddush*: a blessing over bread and/or wine on or before the Sabbath. After the Kiddush, it's customary to pass the bread around the table, for each to dip in salt, to preserve God's covenant.

Many scholars believe Jesus was reciting this remembrance when He took the bread and the cup, *after Supper* (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25) on the night He was betrayed, the night before the Sabbath. If so, it's striking how, immediately after He blesses both, He says, now "Do this in remembrance of Me," *the Lord of the Sabbath*.

If so, the bowl He dipped the bread in, to pass to Judas, was filled with salt. And if so, then the Bread of Life, Jesus, dipped the bread of the Sabbath, into the salt of the covenant, and offered the bread, covered in the salt that represents us, to His betrayer.

"You are the salt of the earth. [Make 'em thirst for the fulfillment of the covenant of salt] But if the salt loses its saltiness, [which we inevitably will, the only way salt can, by fire] how can it be made salty again? [By the Spirit of the One who makes us righteous! But, if there's no taste for truth nor thirst for Living Water] It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men." – Matthew 5:13 NIV