

SALT AND LIGHT

Matthew 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

VERTICAL TRUTH / HORIZONTAL TRUTH

While the light and salt parables relate primarily to Israel's role on earth there are horizontal truths that may be applied to our Christian witness.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ stands before us in the four gospels as the Master of parables because He is the Master of life. The Lord employed every form of figurative speech and used similes, metaphors, hyperboles and analogies to illustrate His point. The imagery used by Jesus made profound truth simple to understand. This lesson on salt and light will bring further clarity as to the Lord's intended purpose.

PRIMARY FOCUS

Students of the Bible will be wise to remember who Jesus was addressing in these parables and why he taught them this lesson. We now know that the gospels targeted Israel as a Nation chosen by God to bring light to the Gentiles and to provide values that would save the world from corruption and ruin. We also know that Israel as God's chosen people (offspring of the promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), rebelled against God and rejected their Messiah. Jesus came first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (all Greek-speaking nations).

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

If Israel repented of their national sin, Jesus would return and the days of refreshing spoken of by the Old Testament prophets would be fulfilled.

Acts 3:19-23 “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN. HIM YOU SHALL HEAR IN ALL THINGS, WHATEVER HE SAYS TO YOU. AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERY SOUL WHO WILL NOT HEAR THAT PROPHET SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE.'

The kingdom of God on earth was the central theme of the message Jesus and the disciples preached.

THE PARABLE – SALT AND LIGHT

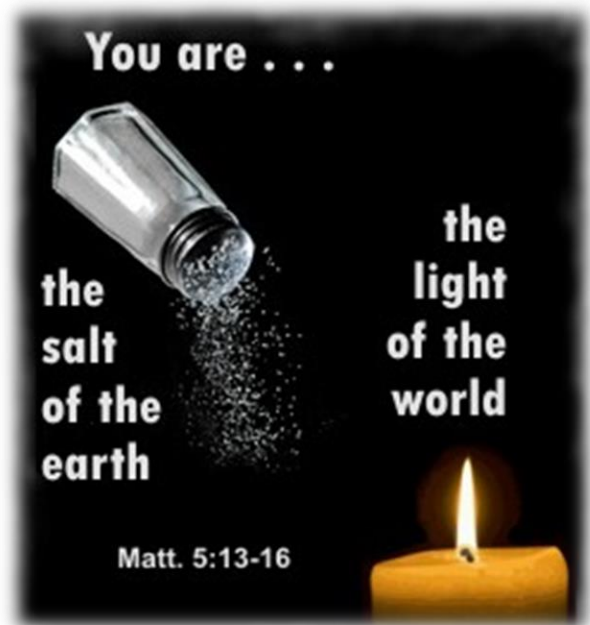
With this background and overview, the salt and light parable becomes easier to understand. The nation of Israel was intended by God to be the salt of the earth.

WHAT IS SALT?

Dr G. Campbell Morgan, dealing with the value of salt, points out that “salt is not an antiseptic.” Salt is not a cure for corruption – it is intended to be a preservative as prevention is better than cure. If meat is tainted or rotten, salt cannot reverse the condition of the meat and make it pure.

The purpose of Israel was to save the nations from decay and prevent the world from sinking deeper into the abyss of depravity.

Only Jesus as their Messiah could redeem lost humanity and the purpose of the Kingdom on earth was to preserve human life on the planet (God’s original plan for mankind.) When the nations embraced paganism and became wise in their own ways, God raised up Abraham to be “salt.” The promised seed from which the Messiah would come was through Israel and the Tribe of Judah.



JUDAISM

Judaism as the nation of Israel's chosen medium, would cradle the Messiah as Prophet, Priest and King and Israel would become a superpower in the family of nations. The parable of salt was designed to show the Jews that unless they embraced this role, decay would follow.

LOSING YOUR FOCUS

Although salt is beneficial, it can lose its usefulness. Once the pungent power goes, salt loses its effectiveness. Naturalists inform us that if salt that has lost its "tang" or effectiveness is thrown into a field, it will lead to the ground becoming barren. Our world is in its current state because God's people have lost their relevance and left the world barren. Corruption prevails because the "salt" has lost its purity and saline content.

When Israel failed to be relevant through their rejection of the new Covenant and the Redeemer Messiah, God's secret plan was to raise up Christianity, the Body of Christ as a preservative. For 2000 years believers have promoted Judaeo-Christian values that served as salt in Western society. The West is as corrupt as the East because these values have been replaced with humanistic and secular systems.

Colossians 4:6, addressing Christians, reminds us to ensure that our conversation is "seasoned with salt." The way we live and speak has an influence on others. If Israel has failed to be salt, we as God's people should not follow such failure. Families and communities are spiritually barren because believers have become like the world.

**LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS
BE GRACIOUS, SEASONED
WITH SALT, SO THAT YOU
MAY KNOW HOW TO
ANSWER EVERYONE.
- COLOSSIANS 4:6**



LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The parable of light is self-explanatory. The world (unbelieving society) remains in darkness and as long as believers become like the world, there will be no light to give direction and purpose. Light has a threefold nature: natural, artificial and spiritual. The light of the sun is natural solar energy. The light of a lamp or torch is artificial light and energy and the Word of God is spiritual bringing energy and life to the soul. The gospel is that light.

The moon is a luminary and gives light – not because of its own energy but because it reflects the light of the sun. As luminaries and believers, we have no light or life in ourselves, but the light we do have comes from God.

2 Corinthians 4:4-6 “...whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Psalms 119:105 “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”

May the Lord inspire you to be salt and light in our world. Do not neglect prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, fellowshiping and confessing your faith. These form the lighthouse of hope for lost hurting people.

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