

Parashat Vayikra

פרשת ויקרא

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The Salt of the Covenant of Our God

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Leviticus 1:1-5:26

הפטרה: Isaiah 43:21-44:237

הברית: Luke 1-3

החדשה

Triennial cycle: Vayikra / Leviticus 1:1-2:16

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This week's Parashat, Parashat Vayikra (*Vayikra / Leviticus 1:1-5:26*), details five types of korbanot (sacrifices). The Torah states that only three of all the kosher animals would be acceptable to offer as a korban upon the altar. These animals were to be defect-free oxen, sheep, and goats, and only two birds were allowed, turtledoves and pigeons. In addition to this, a poor person may offer a grain offering and this grain was used to provide bread for the Kohanim (Priests).

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The five types of korbanot are (i) the Olah Offering ("Ascending offering"), (ii) the Minchah Offering ("Meal offering"), (iii) the Shelamim Offering ("Peace offering"), (iv) the Chatat Offering ("Sin offering"), and (v) the Asham Offering ("Guilt offering"). While reading through this week's Parashat, the verse in *Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13* caught my eye which says *2:13 'Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt. (NASB)* According to the Scriptures, all of the flesh that is offered upon the altar is to be salted but here we find the command to salt even the grain offering before it is to be offered upon the altar. What is the significance of salting the Minchah offering? What does God want us to learn about adding salt to the grain offering in the covenant that He has made with us?

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ויקרא 2:13-16

13 הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא-יֵעָלוּ לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ: וְכָל-קָרְבַּן מִנְחָתֶךָ
בַּמִּלַּח תִּמְלַח וְלֹא תִשְׁפִּית מִלַּח בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעַל
מִנְחָתֶךָ עַל כָּל-קָרְבְּנֶיךָ תִּקְרִיב מִלַּח:

14 וְאִם-תִּקְרִיב מִנְחָת בִּכּוּרִים לַיהוָה אָבִיב קִלּוֹי
15 בְּאֵשׁ גֵּרֶשׁ כַּרְמֶל תִּקְרִיב אֶת מִנְחָת בִּכּוּרֶיךָ: וְנָתַתָּ
16 עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן וְשִׁמְתָּ עָלֶיהָ לְבִנְיָה מִנְחָה הוּא: וְהִקְטִיר
הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-אֹפְרֵתָהּ מִגֵּרְשָׁהּ וּמִשֶּׁמֶנָּה עַל כָּל-לִבְנֵתָהּ
אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה:

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Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13-16

2:13 'Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt. 2:14 'Also if you bring a grain offering of early ripened things to the Lord, you shall bring fresh heads of grain roasted in the fire, grits of new growth, for the grain offering of your early ripened things. 2:15 'You shall then put oil on it and lay incense on it; it is a grain offering. 2:16 'The priest shall offer up in smoke its memorial portion, part of its grits and its oil with all its incense as an offering by fire to the Lord. (NASB)

Before we begin, look up the following verses in your bible: *Bereshit / Genesis 19:26, Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13, Divrei Hayyamim bet / 2 Chronicles 13:5, Yoav / Job 6:6, Melechim bet / 2 Kings 2:20, Ezra 6:9, Matthew 5:13, Mark 9:49-50, and Luke 14:34-35*. Salt has a great amount of significance in the Scriptures. To be seasoned with salt was a picture of preservation. Especially in a time (biblical time) when refrigeration was not available, salt in those days was not only valued for seasoning food but was necessary for preserving food. The preservation of food provides for us the imagery and understanding that salt is also symbolic for the preserving of life itself. Thus, it can be said that salt was a picture of preservation, preserving life, and interestingly according to the Torah, preservation of the covenant of God. In the Ketuvim (Writings) section of the Tanach (OT), it is written in *Divrei Hayyamim bet / 2 Chronicles 13:5* that the Lord God of Yisrael gave rule to David as king over Yisrael by a covenant of salt.

וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: הֲלֹא לָכֶם לְדַעַת בְּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל נָתַן מִמְלָכָה לְדָוִד עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעוֹלָם לֹ
 וְלָבָד וְלָבָדוֹ: בְּרִית מֶלַח: וַיִּקַּם יְרָבָם בְּיָנֹכְט עֶבֶד

Divrei Hayyamim bet / 2 Chronicles 13:5
 13:5 'Do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt? (NASB)

Here it is written "berit melakh" meaning "covenant of salt." According to the scriptures, salt is used for seasoning food (*Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13, Yoav / Job 6:6*), used as a part of the offering (*Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13, Ezra 43:24*) used in purifying waters (*Melachim bet / 2 Kings 2:20-21*), and strewn upon the site of a destroyed or sinful city to indicate a place that is not capable of sustaining life (*Zephaniah 2:9*). In addition to this, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt (*Bereshit / Genesis 19:26*) as a result of her disobeying God. The last two references in *Bereshit / Genesis* and *Zephaniah* indicates that the preserving characteristic of salt is used to prevent wickedness to continue, in the sense that a life was destroyed (pillar of salt) because of disobedience, and a land is incapable of sustaining life (Sodom and Gomorrah) because of the greatness of sin of the people inhabiting the land.

In the Ketuvei Shalchim (Apostolic Writings) Yeshua told his disciples that they were the "salt of the earth." The use of "salt" in this context suggests that as salt season's food, so too must we season the earth by living in accordance with God's Way of life. The Scriptures indicate that by obeying God, we preserve the earth by slowing the decay of morals in the society around us.

KATA MATΘAION 5:13

13 τοὺς προφήτας τοὺς πρὸ ὑμῶν . ὑμεῖς ἐστέ τὸ ἅλας τῆς γῆς ἐὰν
 δὲ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῇ ἐν τίνι ἁλισθήσεται εἰς οὐδὲν ἰσχύει εἶτι εἰ
 14 μὴ βληθῆναι ἔξω καὶ καταπατεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων . ὑμεῖς

Matthew 5:13
 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt becomes insipid, by what means shall it be salted? For nothing it is strong for any longer, unless to be thrown outside and to be trampled upon by the men. (Literal translation)

Here the Greek word "alas" meaning "salt" is used to describe us as believers. Yeshua makes the statement that if salt "lost its savor" or becomes "insipid" how is it to be salted again or how shall it become salty again? Today we know that NaCl (sodium chloride) is the chemical composition of normal table salt. In reality we do not know how salt would taste if it lost its saltiness. The only

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75 reasonable conclusion would be that for salt to lose its saltiness there would need to be a change in its chemical composition. Sodium Chloride will always taste salty as long as it remains chemically unchanged or “pure.” So, in a similar manner, we too must be pure in order to remain salty and be a blessing to the earth, to mankind, and most importantly to be a blessing to God. If we are mixed with another substance, we would cease to be useable as salt. When we mix the clear instruction of the Bible on the way God wants to be worshiped with the traditions of men, the result is a vain attempt to please him as Yeshua said in 80 *Mark 7:7-9* saying 7:7 *‘But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’* 7:8 *‘Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.’* 7:9 *He was also saying to them, ‘You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. (NASB)*

85 Looking carefully at the Hebrew Scriptures, we see God working in our lives to confirm the covenant he has made. According to Parashat Ekev in Sefer *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18* the Lord is essentially seasoning us like salt, preserving, and enabling us to live and work so that He can establish His covenant in us.

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הַיְהוָה: וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי הוּא הֵנִיחַ לְךָ בָח
 לַעֲשׂוֹת חַיִּל לְמַעַן הַקִּים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע
 לְאֲבוֹתֶיךָ בְּיוֹם הַיְהוָה:

95 These scriptures literally say “You remember the covenant of the Lord Your God, He is giving you the ability/power to make wealth, for the purpose of rising up His covenant which he swore to your fathers, this day.” The modern translation of this verse is 8:18 *‘But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (NASB)* Do you see how God preserves us by giving us the power to live and to earn a living?

100 So what was the purpose of salting the meat for the animal sacrifices? I believe one of the reasons was so bugs, flies, insects, etc would not be swarming the altar at any point during the daily sacrifice. The meat was sufficiently salted and the result was preventing insects from laying their eggs. The imagery here was that the altar is holy, and salting kept these detestable things away from that which is holy. In a similar way, God salting us will keep the detestable things, the wickedness and sin away from that which God has now made holy in Yeshua the Messiah. The command to salt the Minchah (Meal) offering was not meant to preserve the grain. The salting of the meal offering was designed to show us that God is preserving us each day. He has made a covenant of salt with us to 105 preserve us and keep us during the good times and the bad. The significance of the scripture verse in Parashat Ekev (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18*) is that God is confirming the covenant in us, He is enabling. According to the Hebrew, to “confirm or establish” something is to “lift up” or “raise up” onto a foundation of some sort. The scripture says that God gives us the power to make wealth for the 110 purpose of establishing his covenant. For certain He has *lifted up / raised up (established)* His covenant in us today; God has preserved a way for us to

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approach him, to draw near to Him in this time, by providing salvation in His Son, Yeshua the Messiah.

120 When we exert ourselves and sweat, our skin taste salty and when we cry,
our tears taste salty. In addition to this, when we consume too much salt it is
possible to raise our blood pressure. Now, when the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy
Spirit) lives inside of you, and you abide in Christ and Christ abides in you, the
Ruach HaKodesh sets you on fire for God, and you burn with zeal for the things
of God; this is much like the physical response to salt in our bodies and the raising
125 of the blood pressure. If you labor for Him and sweat, the saltiness on the inside
comes to the outside. And as you know, when salt gets in the mouth, on cloths, of
anything that comes in contact with salt becomes salty. In the same way
everything in your life, everything you do, and everyone you come in contact with
will become salted with the things of God. As it says in *Luke 6:45* *'The good man
130 out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man
out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that
which fills his heart. (NASB)* our speech will be seasoned with salt, the salt of
God's covenant in our lives, and so we should be speaking of God, Yeshua, and
the Scriptures all of the time. All of the Scriptures, the Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim,
135 and the Ketuvei Shelachim point and direct us to these concepts (salt and
saltiness) and ultimately point us to Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah (Christ). Has
your life been salted by God's covenant? Do you want your life to be salted,
preserved, and established in the covenant that God has provided? If would like
140 to be lifted up, established, and set on a solid foundation, a foundation of
salvation that is not made with man's hands, come say the following prayer with
me.

Heavenly Father,

145 Your Word is truly wonderful, I thank you so much for the revelation of
Your Word and for the Covenant you have established and built by Your hand. I
want to leave man's ways and follow Your ways Lord. I believe the Scripture
historical account of the Covenant You have made in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus
the Christ). I want to become salt for You Lord as You said in *Matthew 5:13*.
150 Please forgive me of my sins and lead me into your righteous ways. Season my
life with the salt of Your Covenant and help me to be the salt of the earth as you
have lain out in Scripture. Thank you Lord for all that You have done, all that
You are doing in my life, and all that You will do. I praise Your Holy Name! I
pray all of these things in Yeshua's (Jesus) Name.

155 Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever