

*“Discussion forums in neighborhoods and churches  
where Americans decide what to do about matters that matter.”*

# SALTSHAKER MISSION

To shake the Salt (Mat 5:13) of the highest principles neighbors know (including the Bible) into those public forums where America decides whether to “legislate” the “morality” of Satan, or of God -- whether to criminalize evil, or legally protect it -- whether to honor the decent and innocent, or sue and slay them. *Pro 29:2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.*

Salt is clumped by cold water thrown on it. *Americans* are told “never talk about Politics or Religion” if they don’t want to spoil lukewarm friendships that limit passion to frivolity. *Christians* are told to never organize against government-promoted sins exposed in their sermons on church property where “Bible” is spoken freely, (which has been “Controversial” since 1954\*), so they have to work with strangers with unfamiliar theologies who have not been moved by the same sermons. [\*“Controversial” now means “quoting Bible verses that make sinners uncomfortable”. God is controversial: “The LORD hath a controversy with [sinners]. Jer 25:31.” Senator Lyndon B. Johnson added limits on political activity to nonprofit law in 1954 as payback for sermons, during his campaign, about his adultery.]

**To study God’s standards of right and wrong, as applied to issues before our community - to stand against corruption (sin) and for justice (righteousness) - within first, and then without.** *Mat 7:5 ... first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. 1 Cor 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

It is hard to *do* evil, and then vote to *punish* evil. Conversely, it is hard to vote to promote sin, (or “bad choices”), and yet remain free of it, or abhor its tentacles snaking through community, Church, and family.

Likewise, church consideration of what God says to do about what God calls sin, will not just shine light outside the church but will help immunize members against sin. Taking a stand against sin greatly strengthens one’s resolve to resist it. *2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

*“Freedom was inspired by the Bible but equally guarantees the rights of those who do not honor it, or even know or accept the particular theology which gave it birth in 1620. Saltshaker Forums, inspired by that same theology, are designed to restore Freedom of Religious Expression for all, without requiring any to study or agree with that theology.”*

**To create a laboratory of relationship skills which will deepen our fellowship, strengthen our marriages, and embolden our testimony of the highest principles we know, through the challenge of developing consensus on controversial but vital issues with others with whom we do not always agree.**

*Proverbs 9:8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 ...and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

The mission of Salt involves changing Americans. Let’s not kid ourselves: only a few rare “wise men” appreciate being changed. If we as a nation are serious about getting others to love and do the right thing, Heb 10:24, we must be prepared for at least some resistance. Who is more gracious than God, and who more reasonable and open to correction than you and me, and yet look at us! Even *we* get mad at God for chastening us into Heaven too hard, too fast! We need our relationship skills to grow beyond what they are now.

But the benefits! (1) Better marriages! Practice expressing ourselves in love, spiritually correcting in love, receiving spiritual correction with gratitude, under challenging conditions – important in all human relationships. (2) Better communication skills! Practice persuading those who disagree – important in raising the vision of customers, employers, friends, our children, lawmakers, and the public. (3) More intimate friendships! – capable of weathering interaction over important matters. (4) Preserving Freedom! Suing for Peace in America’s ideological Civil War! America is a wagon with horses pulling in opposite directions! We can discuss which way to pull with a little more intelligence and a little lower temperature. (5) Creation of News That Matters which makes current news sources simplistic and embarrassingly biased by comparison.

Discussion tests various arguments. We learn which are persuasive and which are simply wrong. Discussion where profound principles are not censored lets us learn how they shape behavior and ideology. It motivates Americans to sharpen their ideological “swords”, to think more clearly and persuade more effectively.

# SALTSHAKER OPERATION

## *How to handle Philosophical, Theological, and Logistical challenges*

Our **work** is distribution of “educational” reports about public issues and candidates, based on our discussion of the facts and any relevant **guiding principles** we may find in the Constitution, writings of America’s Founders, court decisions, Scriptures, etc.

Our **reports** are not simplistic “endorsements” which win a majority of our votes, but “educational” articles which report the whole range of positions of participants, including arguments presented and relative support for each: like Supreme Court rulings except our reports are binding on nobody.

Our **format** is regular discussion forums, such as panel discussions, in which participants select topics, any guest panelists, and any rules. Subcommittees may be appointed to produce reports for approval by the whole group, the way county political conventions review Platform Committee recommendations.

Our **venues** (meeting locations) are neighborhood homes, schools, etc. for meetings of neighbors; churches for meetings of church members; businesses or offices of organizations for meetings of employees; and blogs and cable access TV for broadcasting discussions. Participants may seek time on talk radio.

Our **goal** is to make some progress toward a shared vision for America, however elusive that goal may at times appear. *Proverbs 29:18 “Where there is no vision, the people perish...” Matthew 12:25 “...every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:”* The goal of persuasion is intellectual unity; however, we reject appearances of “unity” achieved by under-representing minority views. *Our failure to agree on everything will always, and should always, frustrate us.* But we will definitely learn from each other, and our reports will faithfully record our range of opinion, thoroughly enough to be educational, and indeed even useful to public leaders (pastors, politicians, etc.) who may be inspired to pass on some of the ideas revealed by this process.

Our **forums** within participating discussion sponsors (churches, offices, etc.) are whatever is allowed of the following: event announcements and/or articles in newsletters and/or websites; a table in the lobby; handouts; “information center” space; and oral announcements during gatherings. Our inter-discussion group meeting reports may be posted on a website, and available as handouts from discussion sponsors (who may edit them).

Our **theology** is as diverse as America. Our theological diversity is not something we celebrate, but that we are committed to work with. We neither boast of, nor hate, disagreement, but work through it. Participation in these forums does not imply agreement with, or even knowledge of, whatever theology inspired the establishment of these forums, any more than participation in Freedom by all Americans implies that they all agree with, or even know about, the theology which gave birth to it in 1620. In fact most Americans do not know that theology, and few who know about it agree with it, yet they enjoy freedom and even take freedom for granted. The theology which inspired Freedom then, articulated by the Pilgrim’s Pastor, John Robinson, is the same theology which inspires The Partnership Machine’s Saltshaker forums. These forums are an effort to restore the degree of Freedom of Religious Expression which Americans enjoyed for three centuries. It is important that the theology behind this restoration be available for the few willing to scrutinize it, wanting to know “where we are coming from”, but not necessary that all participants study it or agree with it.

The label “Christian” is used throughout this outline, but it is meant as very general. To call oneself “Christian” is to have at least tolerance for, and some reverence for the Bible, but our understanding of its degree of inspiration is not monolithic. Even among “Bible Believers”, the name adopted by those who say every word of the Bible was inspired by God, there are differences over (1) which translations to trust (modern translations occasionally omit whole verses included in the KJV), (2) where “literal” stops and “metaphor” or “spiritualized” begins, and (3) how many teachings are “not for us” but were for an earlier, or a future “dispensation” (the animal sacrifices were for an earlier dispensation; many churches teach that certain gifts were for the dispensation that ended when the Bible was completed). Among those who do not trust every word of the Bible yet who are devoted to most of it are the “higher critics” who speculate how various phrases were added by interpolators, and those who say Paul’s opinions, for example, were “influenced by his culture”. This

illustrates how endless our fragmentation would be if we excluded participants according to theology.

Our **participants** will be, as much as we can attract, a cross section of Americans willing to exercise the freedom we offer to express the highest principles they know, (not excluding Christian principles, so long as they are relevant to the chosen subject), so that our discussions will represent the whole spectrum of convictions and prejudices. (Not that artificial reverence is expected from anyone for anything. Not that any apparent error is above scrutiny, immune to challenge.) In addition to participation in person, we will encourage the limited participation that is possible by email: all are invited to submit topics and discussion. 1 Cor 14:32. Because participants of all spiritual backgrounds are welcome, no doctrinal test will be a condition for participation.

Let's address the alarm this vision will produce in many Christians and a few nonChristians:

*Christians* will object: "if a witch (for example) is allowed to speak, why should I come listen to that?" And yet no church will exclude a witch! We won't exclude nonChristians *any more than any church would, so long as they don't make us shut our Bibles*. We would love to have them come and participate. Some Christians will reply, "The difference is that in church, they can't talk. We don't have to listen to their heresy." But you let them talk in most Sunday Schools, don't you? 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 describes an ideal church where literally "all" talk, including unbelievers who come and express themselves freely among believers. The promised result is revival! Besides, we all know such "litmus tests" fail to exclude all the pretenders they mean to exclude, and succeed in tragically excluding some who are as close to God as we are, whose fellowship we need.

*NonChristians* will object: "I'm not coming to any meeting where Christians are allowed to read their Bibles out loud! I don't even believe the Bible! And I certainly don't want to listen to any Bible thumper telling me I'm going to Hell because I don't agree with him! Let Christians come, but not their Bibles, if you want anyone but a Christian there!"

The advertised purpose of these forums is to discuss public issues, but participants may choose any topic, and some public issues have clearer religious dimensions than others. Should a few choose a topic not of general interest to everybody, they would be welcome to meet separately as a subcommittee.

As for the importance of letting Christians quote their Bible, or the Moslems their Koran, or the Hindus their Vedas, when relevant to the topic you have selected, remember your purpose for meeting: only part of it is for you to be persuaded by new evidence, as commendable as it is that you would like to limit evidence to what will persuade *you*. Your other reason for meeting is to persuade *others*. To do that, you need to know what drives their opinions. You need to know how much of your political differences are driven by theological differences. Once you know, you can prepare a line of reasoning to refute it.

*If you never learn, you may find your arguments irrelevant*. You will be like a German trying to understand Hitler who has never read Mein Kampf; or a Russian trying to understand Stalin who has never read the communist Manifesto; or an Arab trying to understand terrorism who has never read the Surahs which terrorists quote.

Some of the most emotional political issues wouldn't even exist were it not for the Bible. To listen only to lesser reasons than the reasons that actually persuaded your ideological opponents, cripples you in your effort to understand and reason with them.

When you know a Christian's belief is founded upon a Scripture which you do not believe, that is not the end of the line for productive dialog. There are at least three directions you might still proceed:

(1) Present facts against which the verse, as it is being interpreted, doesn't make sense. Bible believers generally accept their 1 Peter 3:15 responsibility to defend the wisdom of Scripture against challenges from every direction. When they cannot, that triggers doubt in their minds about their interpretation.

(2) Directly challenge their interpretation with alternative interpretations based on context, exegesis of the original language, etc. Although this approach will be the most grievous and difficult for those who do not honor the Bible, much work has already been done for you by others.

(3) Challenge the application of the verse to the specific situation before you. Scripture seldom directly applies to public issues; application is mostly the domain of reason.

*Both Christians and nonChristians*: Even if you make no headway against an entrenched Bible- or philosophy-based position, it is still important to take it as far as you can so you know the extent of the disagreement, and its degree of intractability, before you give up, draft your report, and move on to an issue with more hope of agreement.

But remember also that consensus is not the only useful outcome of meetings. You want to persuade the

public though reports. So after the other side has given it its best shot, and they still look ridiculous to you after your answer, they will probably look ridiculous to many who read the reports, too.

In other words, participants need to be sincerely committed to consensus, for dialog to occur, and for you to be able to hear the other side's best case for their position. Often, consensus will be achieved. When it is, reports of consensus will be very influential. But even when it is not, the reports will be very educational.

Our **unity** is our commitment to working with each other, patiently interacting, listening, exhorting, not our intellectual agreement on everything. (Some Christians will need further explanation, because they will be concerned that trying to cooperate with unbelievers will make them "unequally yoked", 2 Cor 6:14. 1 Cor 14:24-25 promises revival if we will open the forum up even to the "unlearned". Perhaps this is because our goal is not something that requires pulling in the same doctrinal direction, but that in fact requires the opposite: a cross section of community thought. We do need to pull in the same direction, but only in our commitment to reason with one another with a minimum of the kinds of disruption which moderators control. The Bible frequently appeals to unity. (Ac 2:1 4:32 Ro 12:16 15:5 1Co 1:10 Php 3:16 1 Pet 3:8) But Romans 14 shows God does not mean doctrinal agreement should be the precondition of our fellowship. We may understand Biblical "oneness" by considering the ultimate Biblical unity: Jesus says a man and his wife are "one flesh" (Mat 19:6). Obviously not because they intellectually agree on everything, but because they are committed to working things out with one another both when it is easy, and when it is not.

Our **tolerance** will be for Freedom of Religious Expression of others to share with us the highest principles they know, as applied to the topics we select. We are wary of our own impatience with challenges to our own values. As tempted as we are, we resist demanding "tolerance" that is defined as "1. Reverence for MY values. 2. Censorship of any challenge to MY values. 3. Laws against expressing values which OFFEND me." We realize that "tolerance", defined this way, is the enemy of tolerance of Freedom of Religious Expression to articulate the highest principles we know.

We accept our responsibility to unnecessarily offend, such as by stooping to "personal attacks" (attacking the spiritual, moral, or intellectual credentials of the messenger instead of addressing his evidence), but when our project is steering our nation back towards good, we cannot afford to accommodate those who choose to be "offended" by a discussion of what is good.

(Bible study for Christians who think they must have strayed from the Gospel if anyone doesn't like them: Heb 10:24 calls us to "provoke unto love and to good works" whenever we meet. *παροξυσμὸν* (KJV "provoke") means to stir up; the word almost always means to make someone mad. In Acts 17:16 Paul was really angry at idolatry. In Acts 15:39 Paul and Barnabas had a really bad argument, even though 1 Corinthians 13:5 says Love does not let itself be "provoked". Same Greek word in all four verses. Lexicon writers assume the word must mean merely "inspire" – not "provoke" – in Hebrews 10:24 because surely Paul would not tell us to make fellow church members mad or "offended". Certainly we are out of line if we approach others hatefully or unreasonably, and certainly it is not our *goal* to be hated! But we sacrifice our comfort and safety in love, if required of us, because we are serious about being Salt and Light. *John 15:18 "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."*

*Here is how Bible commentators explain it:*

*"Provoke" The word usually means "to stir to anger," passive "to be irritated," "incensed"; ...The word is common in this sense in the Septuagint, while the more neutral sense is almost completely absent* Kittel, Gerhard (Hrsg.); Bromiley, Geoffrey William (Hrsg.); Friedrich, Gerhard (Hrsg.): *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids, MI : Eerdmans, 1964-c1976, S. 5:857

*The verb means "to spur," "to stir to anger," passive "to be provoked, incensed." The noun is rare and means "provocation" or "irritation." In the NT the verb occurs in Acts 17:16, where the meaning is not that Paul is stimulated to preach but that he is honestly angered by the idolatry. Similarly in 1 Cor. 13:5 love does not let itself be provoked-there were many provoking things at Corinth. The noun has the sense of "irritation" in Acts 15:39 when Paul and Barnabas disagree about taking Mark with them. In Heb. 10:24, however, the neutral sense of "stimulating" is the obvious one.* Kittel, Gerhard; Friedrich, Gerhard; Bromiley, Geoffrey William: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : W.B. Eerdmans, 1995, c1985, S. 791

*encouragement, a causing of something by spurring on, or stirring up (Heb 10:24); 2.... intense argument, sharp contention implying exasperation, i.e., an intense (unreconcilable) difference of opinion (Ac 15:39+)* Swanson, James: *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*. electronic ed. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. GKG4237

Our **moderators** will never censor sincere convictions, but will control problems like redundancy, rumors (pursuing conspiracy theories, or accusations, that are not only undocumented but untestable), personal attacks (attacking the spiritual, moral, or intellectual credentials of the messenger instead of addressing his evidence), straying from the subject voted upon by the group, proven prevarication, etc. In addition moderators may employ Robert's Rules of Order to the extent the group chooses, or any other rules the group creates.

Our **priorities** will be timely issues requiring action. 1 Corinthians 14:26

Our **backburner issues** are those where the facts are too difficult to confirm, and where even after we

understand them correctly, we know of nothing that can be done about them. 1 Timothy 1:4.

Our **subjects** will be public policy issues selected by our participants. When a minority wants to address a subject which the majority declines to consider, the majority can appoint a subcommittee to meet, either simultaneously or at another time, to develop a report into which the majority can add its input later. If the whole group still declines to consider it, the subcommittee may publish the report itself. A normal part of vigorous discussion will be the occasional advice how to develop, together, solid relationship skills – the inspirational thought, or the prod to love. (Heb 10:24). Participants may naturally make such points with the support of principles they revere. These interruptions should not become lengthy. Lengthy information may be offered in handouts or emails.

Our **activities** may include researching issues, interviewing candidates, lobbying elected officials, and scheduling guest experts for panel discussions at our meetings. Any handling of money which should be handled through a nonprofit, but which should not be handled through a church, may be handled through The Partnership Machine, Inc. Should money be generated for a lobbyist, or to contribute to candidates, a “political action committee” should be organized to legally process it.

Our **officers** include a *reporter* who publishes arguments raised and conclusions reached, and a *moderator* who makes sure the forum remains open to all. Especially appreciated are the skills of *parliamentarians*, who know how to maintain fairness and order even when personalities are at their worst; *lawyers*, who know how to conduct logical discussions without yelling, even under “trying” conditions (although we will discourage the disposition of lawyers to argue just as forcefully for allegations which they know are wrong); and *theologians*, who can help subject theological innovation to the test of Scripture.

Our **website organization** for each issue we address is an “executive summary” of all the arguments and verses raised, with links to the full report, to supplementary reports, and to any audio or video. Next follows the full report, with any footnotes. Next come the supplementary reports, which attendees choose to submit, in order to clarify, correct, flesh out, or challenge parts of the full report. Following each article is opportunity for the general public, who did not attend the meeting, to comment. There is a profanity filter, but otherwise comments are instantly posted. Comments have 1500 character limits. Readers may rate articles and comments. In addition to issues addressed by the whole group in this manner, any participant may post his own article on any subject, and if another participant takes an opposite position on the same subject, the two competing articles are displayed side by side. [A Wikipedia of ideas](#): At the head of each article will be sentence summaries of other articles on the same subject, and whether pro or con; at the end of each article will be the same thing with paragraph summaries. They will be listed in the order of how they are rated by readers.

Our **disclaimers** following our reports could say: “This report is the consensus of participants in our last Saltshaker meeting. You are welcome at our next meeting on \_\_\_\_\_. The more who attend, the better our reports can represent our whole (name of neighborhood, church, sponsoring business, etc.) family. You are welcome to join our online discussion of this report at [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#). Our goal is to establish the facts of issues as well as we can, search the highest principles we know for what to do about them, and report to you any consensus we can achieve. For the complete report of our discussion, see [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#)” When we can’t reach complete consensus, those in the minority are welcome to write a minority report. In that case, our report could begin: “Even though we were unable to achieve consensus for this report, we are publishing it now because your action is needed on it now, in the view of \_\_\_\_\_% of us. Some of the objections are explained here to help you become “fully persuaded in your own mind”, Romans 14:5; our complete discussion notes are reported at [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#). We presume these objections are shared by others within our \_\_\_\_\_ family. Romans 14 teaches us not to question one another’s faith just because we will need a little more time to agree on every detail of it. 1 Corinthians 4:5 warns us not to draw rigid assumptions about one another’s standing with God before God reveals all of our hidden motives to one another on judgment day. Romans 2:14-29 teaches that it is not one’s theology, alone, that determines our acceptance by God, but also our behavior. This does not mean we should be apathetic when our Neighbor, whom we are to love as ourselves, is, as nearly as we can determine, destroying himself; but our urgency to correct him should be no greater than our urgency to correct fellow believers, Hebrews 10:24-25, and our urgency to correct each other should be no greater than our willingness to receive correction, Matthew 7:1-5. We welcome your input on this unfortunately controversial but still important issue at [Salt@Saltshaker.US](mailto:Salt@Saltshaker.US), and at future Saltshaker meetings.”

# SALTSHAKER HISTORY

*“How can people who disagree, agree? How can Democrats agree with Republicans? How can atheists agree with Christians? How can husbands agree with wives, when they disagree? The world says “they can’t. It’s no use talking to you. You will never change your mind anyway.” Jesus says “go ye into all the world” and try; much of your seed will not bear fruit, but some of it will bear 100 times as much as you planted. Matthew 13:8. Considering how high the stakes are, we must try.”*

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FALL OF FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN AMERICA**

1960 saw, already failing, Freedom of Religious Expression in those forums where America decides whether to criminalize good or evil.

In 1892 the Supreme Court (Trinity v. U.S. 143 US 457) ruled that America is a Christian nation, based on criteria which are just as true today: federal offices are closed on Sundays, the day of Christians; oaths of office are taken on Bibles, and America’s founders spoke of the Christian Bible as the inspiration for Freedom, and reverence for it, Freedom’s maintenance. (An April, 2009 Rasmussen Poll says 79% of Americans still believe Jesus was the Son of God and was raised from the dead.)

Baseball superstar Billy Sunday’s powerful sermons, beginning a decade later, inspired America to clean house and pour its liquor down the drain, passing Prohibition in 1920. That supercharged our economy until the fascination of crime edged out fulfillment through opportunity. Repeal efforts began, and speculation leveled the economy in 1929. Even under Prohibition there was still exactly half as much drinking, according to Sclerosis of the Liver rates. Afterwards Prohibition was declared a failure. (Although at the county level, “dry” counties – where liquor was outlawed – persisted in Iowa through the 1960’s, and in Oklahoma through the 1970’s.) Americans began to wonder if “you can’t legislate morality”, even though it is impossible to legislate anything *but* morality: every law is someone’s idea of what is right or wrong in that situation.

By 1935 if not before, American Christians were telling each other that they shouldn’t “offend” nonChristians by talking about Jesus or the Bible, but should just “live a good example” so that people will come and ask why you are such a good person, and *then* you can explain it is because of Jesus. (Of course, until they ask, whatever “good example” you can muster leads people to associate good behavior with atheism. It also seems unfortunate if the best glimpse we give others of the love of Jesus is our *own* behavior!)

1954 was the year Congress added “one nation under God” to our Pledge of Allegiance.

But in that same year Senator Lyndon Johnson (who was vice president under John Kennedy and became president in 1963 when Kennedy was shot) slipped into the IRS Code that churches can’t endorse candidates. That was payback for many sermons preached during his Senate campaign against his adultery.

That limitation succeeded beyond Johnson’s wildest dreams! Still in place today, it only outlaws simplistic endorsements by a pastor which consume significant church resources.

The threat to churches from political activity is so low, that in the one single case when the IRS actually withdrew its advance assurance of deductibility, the DC Circuit Court ruled that all contributions made to the church were still exempt, except just those made for *future* political involvement! (Branch Ministries v. IRS, U.S.Ct.App. DC, May 12, 2000 (No. 95cv00724). The Church at Pierce Creek, in Binghamton, NY, took out a full page ad in USA Today and the Washington Times in 1992 stating that a vote for Bill Clinton would be a sin because his policies were “in rebellion to God’s laws”. The ad even said “[T]ax-deductible donations for this advertisement gladly accepted. Make donations to: The Church at Pierce Creek.” The Court said:

...the impact of the revocation is likely to be more symbolic than substantial. ...if the Church does not intervene in future political campaigns, it may hold itself out as a 501(c)(3) organization and receive all the benefits of that status. All that will have been lost, in that event, is the advance assurance of deductibility in the event a donor should be audited.

In other words, the only contributions ruled not tax exempt were those made while the church was buying political ads, and made after the revocation of exempt status was made public by the IRS. After the church stopped buying ads, contributions made to it were once again deductible. The only inconvenience would be for someone who made a contribution, and later was audited; without the advance letter, the burden would be on the contributor to prove the church hadn’t bought any more ads, in order to retain his deduction. In fact, if

the church “renounces future involvement in political campaigns” they could apply for another “advance assurance of deductibility”. And any time the church wants to make the IRS go away,

the Church may form a related organization under section 501(c)(4) of the Code. See 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(4) (tax exemption for “[c]ivic leagues or organizations not organized for profit but operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare”). Such organizations are exempt from taxation; but unlike their section 501(c)(3) counterparts, contributions to them are not deductible.

But no one wants churches to make simplistic endorsements or financial contributions to candidates anyway. What is needed is Freedom of Religious Expression for church members to freely communicate with each other about what to do about sin. This doesn’t require any money from any church. A church willing to allow communication is unlimited by nonprofit law.

So far as nonprofit law is concerned, a church could spend 100% of its resources distributing “nonpartisan, educational” information. That is, information which may draw a partisan or Biblical conclusion but which is supported by enough documentation and acknowledgment of alternative views “to enable the reader to reach an independent conclusion”.

But Pastoral Paranoia began driving Christians off church property who wanted to organize against sins identified in their pastor’s sermons, because that would be “political”. How different than during America’s founding, when “Election Sermons” that advised voters were even published in newspapers!

1954 also saw the resurrection of witchcraft, with the publication in England of “Witchcraft Today” by Gerald Gardner. Gardner claimed to report on covens he had joined, but there is little enough evidence of covens before then to lead some to speculate he invented his details of witchcraft from scratch. He attracted many “initiates” into his Bricket Wood coven in London. Many U.S. covens have applied for 501(c)3 Nonprofit status in order to secure legal recognition. Their status as a “religion” was formally recognized in *Dettmer v. Landon*, 799 F.2d 929 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1986).

Shortly before 1960, laws against sodomy, adultery, and working on Sunday (called “Blue Laws”) were repealed as Christians decided “you can’t legislate morality”. Translation: “Christians can’t quote the Bible while serious politicians are deciding what to do to Americans.” That New Morality never stopped Satan’s friends from calling their legislation “moral” and their opponents “immoral”.

Not that America is ready to return to sodomy, adultery, and blue laws. The tragedy is that these repeals were made while Bibles were taped shut. While the laws were in place, there were almost no prosecutions of violations. But once America declared adultery and sodomy were so innocent that any prosecutions at all were unthinkable, the floodgates opened. The 1960’s gave us “The Sexual Revolution”. Love was redefined, not as commitment or sacrifice for another, John 15:13, but as sex. Even the terminology of Freedom was invoked: “free sex” seemed noble, instead of the height of irresponsibility. Family fabric tore and bled. Pregnant, diseased “welfare bums” populated the countryside. Children were forgotten.

By 1960 Martin Luther King was reintroducing Bible citations into the national psyche as he awakened our consciences to the sin of racial discrimination.

The Supreme Court had other ideas in 1961. It overturned a requirement in Maryland’s constitution requiring elected officials to take an oath affirming “a belief in the existence of God”. A footnote in the ruling written by Hugo Black classified “Secular Humanism” as one of several atheistic “religions”. (*Torcaso v. Watkins*, 1961)

In 1962 the Supreme Court started telling Christians to go get in the closet because some other groups want to come out. *Engel v. Vitale*, 1962, and *Abington v. Schempp*, 1963, removed prayer and 10 Commandments displays from public schools, causing academic scores to instantly plummet and crime, disease, and pregnancy rates to instantly skyrocket.

In 1964, when the Civil Rights Act was passed, a curious thing happened: “religion” was added to “national origin” and “color” as illegal reasons not to hire somebody. Why? There had been no national awareness of anyone not being able to work because of what church they attend. In fact, it was right after John F. Kennedy was elected president even though one of the most controversial things about his campaign was that he was Catholic. Electing him proved religious discrimination was too weak to seriously limit opportunity, in the same way Obama’s election proved racial discrimination is too weak to seriously limit opportunity.

The addition was made after the Supreme Court had already prohibited prayer, and the posting of the Ten Commandments, in public schools. So the only one guilty of discrimination was the Supreme Court.

Perhaps “religious discrimination” was just kind of thrown in there to make the bill look more comprehensive. Or to make the prohibition of racial discrimination appear to have a precedent, since our First Amendment “freedom of religious expression”, which all Americans accept, seem vaguely like a law against religious discrimination.

The legal difference is not great. It has probably not inconvenienced very many, especially since churches are exempt – churches don’t have to hire preachers from other denominations! Very small businesses are also exempt. The difference is that the First Amendment restricts Congress, and civil rights law restricts employers, landlords, and bankers.

The First Amendment prohibits Congress from requiring anyone to attend, or tithe to, a particular church, (“establishment of religion”), and from limiting anyone’s freedom to promote their religion at any time.

Civil Rights law prohibits employers, bankers, and landlords from refusing to hire, rent to, or lend to someone of another religion. It was no longer legal to “express” one’s religion by preferring Christian employees on the ground that, for example, they are trustworthy, or have a good work ethic.

But the psychological impact was great, of outlawing “religious discrimination”. There is no skin color which is “wicked”, but there are certainly religions which are wicked! It was good that Americans were taught not to think less of anyone for their skin color, but it is dangerous to think all religions equally righteous! God certainly makes this distinction, calling Christianity the only “way” to Heaven, John 14:6, and competing bloody religions intolerable, while treating racial differences as insignificant.

For example, Zephaniah, one of the books of the Bible, was written by a black man. Verse 1 tells us his name was Cush, which means “black”; he was the grandson of Hezekiah, one of the most righteous kings. Three books of the Bible honored interracial marriage as a central theme: Ruth, Esther, and Song of Solomon. (Song 1:5). In Numbers 12, Moses’ sister raised sedition because Moses’ wife was black, so God said in effect, “so you like white? Here’s white…” and made her “white as snow” with leprosy!

But God was so censored that it was “controversial” to even say so. “Free Love” and the “Sexual Revolution” were full steam ahead. Martin Luther King was no help: he was pretty adulterous. J. Edgar Hoover, the super popular FBI director, forfeited his popularity by exposing King’s adultery, although Black leaders today acknowledge it. But then, Americans resented being informed that their moral hero violated God’s sexual standards. God’s standards were irrelevant to public discussion.

In the name of ending “religious discrimination”, the Supreme Court discriminated against the Christian religion by making case law suppressing the free expression thereof. Where Court jurisdiction ended, Christians voluntarily censored their own witness.

By 1964, conservative champions like Reagan and Goldwater still took positions based mostly on the Bible, but they stopped saying so. Government got involved in protecting more and more sins, so preachers stopped preaching against more and more sins, since that was “getting involved in politics”, the new sin. Freedom of Religious Expression, in those forums where America decides whether to criminalize good or evil, gasped its death rattle.

In this new spirit of discernment-censoring “tolerance”, Anton LaVey founded his Church of Satan in 1966, released his record album, “Satanic Mass” in 1967, and published his Satanic Bible in 1969.

In 1968, “Rosemary’s Baby” featured a scene where Satan raped semi-willing Rosemary, giving birth to a human demon.

By 1970, Americans were ready to make divorce easy and automatic. Not without cause. The previous system required that “Fault” be proved, which was vaguely like Biblical grounds of divorce but was a scandalous perversion.

Biblical grounds of divorce are (1) adultery, Mat 19:9; (2) crippling spousal abuse, Ex 21:26-27; (3) crippling child abuse, Gal 4:1, which gives children the same rights as servants in Ex 21, implying the right to separation from the abusive parent, which would require leaving with the nonabusive parent; (4) nonsupport, Ex 21:10-11, 1 Cor 7:3, 1 Tim 5:8; (5) abandonment, 1 Cor 7:10-15; (6) refusal to mediate marital disagreements in good faith, Mat 18:15-17.

Not that these 6 grounds were generally acknowledged, but God has provided them for any society which would like to heal its marriage bonds. (For further discussion: [www.Saltshaker.US/AmericanIssues/Divorce/6GroundsOfDivorce.htm](http://www.Saltshaker.US/AmericanIssues/Divorce/6GroundsOfDivorce.htm) )

By contrast, “Fault Divorce”, before 1970, generally recognized only 3 grounds of divorce: adultery, abandonment, and “cruel and unusual punishment”. The third ground was so subjective that one court accepted a wife’s “mixing peas with potatoes” as the “cruel and unusual punishment” justifying granting the divorce to the husband.

Another scandal of the previous system is that a court’s finding that a spouse was “cruel” or unfaithful did not disqualify that spouse from having custody of the children and 90% of the family fortune! Of course, that scandal remains

in our current system, in which irresponsible destruction of the marital bonds is not considered relevant to measuring parental commitment to “the best interests of the children”.

The new system is called “no fault divorce”. It allows divorce without having to prove the other spouse is guilty of “fault”. However, the law, as written then and as it remains to this day, does not allow the automatic divorce which we experience today. The law says the court still has to be persuaded by “competent evidence” that there has been a “breakdown of the legitimate objects of matrimony” with no reasonable hope of reconciliation. As late as 1975 the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that this requirement can’t be satisfied even by a “stipulation” (agreement of both parties) that this breakdown has occurred. There has to be evidence; and where evidence is required, a spouse who still wants to save the marriage is allowed to prevent rebuttal evidence that the marriage can still be saved.

Former Governor Robert Ray and state senator Bill Winkleman are two lawmakers who gave Iowans No Fault Divorce in 1970. I have talked to them about whether they imagined, as they enacted it, that it would become as automatic as it has. No, that is not what they intended or anticipated. What they intended, is what they wrote.

What happened, then? No one bothered to define the “legitimate objects of matrimony”. I would have thought that “the best interests of the children” would constitute a “legitimate object of matrimony”, so that proving divorce would harm the children would be evidence against granting the divorce. The family finances would surely count as another “legitimate object of matrimony”; isn’t hard to prove that divorce wrecks family finances!

I don’t think it is too late to block decrees with these points. See [www.Saltshaker.US/AmericanIssues/Divorce/DivorceKit.htm](http://www.Saltshaker.US/AmericanIssues/Divorce/DivorceKit.htm). But because “legitimate objects of matrimony” were never defined, judges got in the habit of viewing that phrase as a huge escape clause for anything and everything, like “cruel and unusual punishment” had become before it.

The tragedy of all that national discussion that tinkered with the family bonds of America, is that it was conducted in darkness. The Light of the Word of God was hidden under a bushel. A few Christians spoke publicly about what they thought was right and wrong, but without publicly quoting the Bible in support of their reasoning. They weren’t passing on to the public the Scriptures in their pastors’ sermons which had motivated them to action.

Equally tragic, pastors weren’t learning from activists the details of the controversy, so that they could apply God’s principles to them intelligently and usefully. The Salt was getting cold water thrown on it. It was clumped up, unable to get out of the Saltshaker.

In 1973 our “Supreme” Court stuffed abortion down America’s throat, an abomination so unthinkable that even God said He never imagined it! Jeremiah 19:5, 32:35!

Where were the Scriptures? Where were the calls for impeachment? What happened to the calls to define an unborn baby as a “person”, which, according to *Roe v. Wade*, would cause that decision to fall?

*“We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins...the judiciary, at this point in the development of man’s knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer.” [In other words, the Court regarded the question of whether an unborn baby counts as a “person” as a “fact” issue, not an issue of “law”. Were it an issue of “law”, the Court would have considered itself the world’s supreme authority on the question. But the Court recognized preachers and doctors, and of course juries, as superior authorities on a “fact” issue like “when life begins”.] If this suggestion of personhood is established, [our ruling]...of course, collapses, for the fetus’ right to life is then guaranteed specifically by the [14th] Amendment.” [“...nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law... Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.”] - *Roe v. Wade*, 1973*

Where were the calls to limit the jurisdiction of the Court on this issue, invoking Article III, Section 2, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution:

In all the other cases before mentioned, the Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction, both as to law and fact, with such exceptions, and under such regulations as the Congress shall make.

Pastors are generally unaware of these details, and therefore unable to preach what God’s Word says about them, because they deliberately avoid learning from the activists in their congregations who pray for the freedom to organize to do something about the sins identified in their sermons. The myth grows that Satan is the prince of this world, Eph 6:12, 2 Cor 4:4, and we can do nothing about it, while Scripture says, to the contrary, that the prince of this world has already been cast down, John 12:31, Col 2:15, and God has given us the power to walk all over him, Luke 10:19, if we will just rise out of our TV chairs! 2 Cor 4:3-7.

Christians almost stopped voting altogether. Fewer than half of “evangelical Christians” are even registered to vote. Jerry Falwell encouraged us in 1979, calling us the “Moral Majority”. That slowed our exodus from being the “salt and light” of our nation. In 1987, Pat Robertson ran for President on a semi-overtly Biblical platform and came in second

in the Iowa caucuses.

But now it is a rare politician who ever quotes the verses that are the real reason for any of his positions. We Bible believers make “social conservative” a code word for “Biblically based”, and we wink at each other that our positions are generally Biblical. But no longer do we actually check the Bible to see if they still are. Pastors are under great pressure not to help us because that would be “getting involved in politics”.

Ergo, an issue new to pulpits arises, like immigration. A few politicians take a position, and because they were “conservative”, their new position is called “conservative”, which many Christians equate with “Biblical”. On rare occasions they might even quote a verse, even though their position is difficult to reconcile with several other verses where God expresses pretty strong feelings on the subject. More frightening than any particular position that any politician has taken, is that Christians are battling each other from opposite sides of this very heated debate, and the Bible is seldom consulted or even welcome.

Sins, as the Bible defines them, which were prosecuted as crimes 50 years ago, are now protected and promoted by our government. When they are preached against on rare occasions *compared with the events of their proliferation*, pastors feel the pressure of the new moral doctrine which did not occur to Christians 50 years ago: “that is ‘getting involved in politics’”.

Government takes its marching orders from voters, so Christian voters literally *are* the government. So the Bible passages about Stewardship govern the spiritual responsibility we have for their use or non-use of our vote. But information about how to vote – how to apply the principles of right and wrong from our pastor’s sermons to the choices before them as heads of their government – is lacking in most local church bodies. That is the lack which the Saltshaker Forums are designed to fill.

Nor is spiritually accurate information available outside local church bodies. The “social conservative” or “moral conservative” movement hopes that its positions generally line up with Scripture. But almost never do its leaders publicly double check their positions by the Bible, which leads in some cases to positions whose compatibility with certain passages cannot be explained.

Can you imagine adopting any church doctrine without exhaustive Scripture study? Can you imagine a convention of pastors drafting an updated Creed, without ever quoting Scripture during their discussions, and expecting Christians to accept its theological accuracy just because they are pastors? Wouldn’t that be just as scandalous as Congress passing a bill they haven’t read, and expecting us to support its legitimacy just because they are lawmakers? How then can we assume that just because we are Christians, our public policy positions will be Biblical, without thorough Bible study?

Because the connection between Scripture and Moral Conservatism is only winked at but not carefully documented, and because public policy is so heavily involved in Biblically defined sins, and because Christians are taught to obey laws, Christians are caught off guard by a government which protects, endorses, and promotes sin. From the state lottery to the \$300 million federal subsidy of Planned Parenthood to teach public school students about sex, if it’s “the law”, how can it be evil? If it’s “just a choice” for others, why not for me? It is difficult to vote for greater government promotion of sin, and then to still abhor the tentacles of sin in one’s own life. It is difficult to vote for sin, and yet remain free from it.

Likewise, church consideration of what God calls sin, and what God says to do about it, will not just shine light outside the church but will help immunize members against sin. Taking a stand against sin greatly strengthens one’s resolve to resist it.

# SALTSHAKER BIBLE STUDY

The following study is a compilation of points from several Bible commentaries. Actual excerpts from the commentaries follow.

Introduction: Even though Saltshaker meetings won't be a place for "salvation sermons", nonChristians who come, and who hear or read our reports online or in other media, will hear "The Rest of the Gospel" which has seldom been heard in America's churches for 50 years: the application of Scripture to "lifestyles" over which God and government are at war. Infrequent is the sermon which wades through such "controversy", and rare is the sermon which treats God's position as more than theoretical; as actually relevant to the national debate, as worthy of being proclaimed by Christians even where it is not welcome; as so practical, and fair to all, that even God's enemies are hurt by laws that protect what God prohibits, and that mistreat whom God declares innocent.

Laws are all about restraining evil doers who would not otherwise choose to be restrained. Yet it is also a powerful teacher, Galatians 3:24, shaping our culture because many believe if it's legal, it's good. God's information is inspiring, and yet it is routinely censored both in pulpits ("controversial") and in Christian activist meetings ("irrelevant"). Therefore it is reasonable to expect that many will be reconciled with God through our reports. It may be that these will prove more useful "Salt" than existing Christians whose traditions resist "The Rest of the Gospel", just as Paul found that pagans, farthest from Christian theology, made easier Christians than Jews, who were next door theologically but who resisted that final step. It is the same principle that if you want to build a folk guitar, it is easier to build it out of a new tree, than to try to rebuild it from a solid body electric guitar.

Bible study:

"Mt 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

How does salt lose his savour?

Salt have lost his savour. That is, if it has become insipid, tasteless, or have lost its preserving properties. The salt used in this country is a chemical compound--muriate of soda-- and if the saltiness were lost, or it were to lose its savour, there would be nothing remaining. It enters into the very nature of the substance. In eastern countries, however, the salt used was impure, mingled with vegetable and earthy substances; so that it might lose the whole of its saltiness, and a considerable quantity of earthy matter remain. This was good for nothing, except that it was used, as it is said, to place in paths, or walks, as we use gravel. This kind of salt is common still in that country. It is found in the earth in veins or layers, and when exposed to the sun and rain, loses its saltiness entirely. Maundrell says, "I broke a piece of it, of which that part that was exposed to the rain, sun, and air, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savour. The inner part, which was connected to the rock, retained its savour, as I found by proof." (Albert Barnes Commentary, about 1880)

Jesus is acknowledging through this analogy that even Christians start with a little of the world still in us. A common theological term that must describe the same thing is "original sin". Our danger is in allowing the elements of the world to so overcome us that all we have left is the form and appearance of Christianity, but we no longer behave like salt, while the portion of the world still in us, now unrestrained, takes over.

Salt today is very unlike salt then. Our salt today is pure. It can't lose its saltiness. Could Jesus have intended part of His metaphor to be understood only by us today who have salt more pure than was known then? The possibility of salt so pure that it cannot lose its saltiness is a metaphor of hope for us today: the more we "overcome" – the more we cooperate with God working in us to purify ourselves of the "world" in us – the less vulnerable we become to losing our saltiness.

How do we stop behaving as salt? When we no longer change the world. When we no longer preserve, from corruption, everyone we come in contact with. When Christians do not change the world, just gathering into a solid clump on Sunday mornings, still working and living in the world the rest of the week but afraid to allow our saltiness "bleed" into the people around us, we have no "savour". (KJV spelling. Meaning: fragrance, flavor.)

But what about people who are unwilling to voluntarily stop being corrupt? Salt is not about voluntary purification. Salt even kills germs who are unwilling to die. Likewise Christians who raise the light of the

Gospel upon the sins of powerful leaders, prevent even the most corrupt, ruthless dictators (ie. John the Baptist v. Herod) from freely continuing their corruption. The point being that salt, to the extent we dare allow ourselves to be shaken, stops corruption even under the very worst, most unlikely circumstances. How much more will it work in ours? Whether with our government, our church, or our families?

Salt is irresistible to the world. God sent us to change the whole world, though we be few and weak, and the world resists us with all its earthly powers of the sword. Islam attempts to change the world by the power of the sword, but God commissions us to change the world by the power of salt. The germs that would rot meat cannot resist the power of salt, though they attack it with all their force.

*1 Cor 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?*

Islam is like a rock, its followers united into a military force attempting to knock down the whole world. But a rock lacks the inertia to destroy all flesh, before the mass it slams against finally brings it to a stop. But salt changes by its very brokenness into tiny, individual units. Salt can't even work if it is clumped into a large ball, such as under a theological dictatorship. It does not overcome sin by slaughtering sinners, but by transforming sinners into saints.

Salt is useful only when it is scattered. Gathering salt from natural deposits where it does not interact with anything, into a large heap, through a church, is part of the role of a Saltshaker. But if the Saltshaker is not then shaken, so that salt is scattered where it will change men, the gathering has been for nothing.

“Lost his savour”, KJV, literally means “become a moron”. 2 Corinthians 2:14 says the “savour”, that we are in danger of losing, is the knowledge of Christ – or knowing Christ. All “knowledge” without that is moronic.

This reminds us of:

*1 Co 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. ....23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; ....25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.....2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ....3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*

How can *Christian* political leaders dismiss the Word of God as irrelevant to their job of creating laws for a secular society?

*De 4:8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?*

The Word of God is not designed to collect dust on forgotten shelves in our homes. Neither did God give it to lie unopened on the shelves of our “personal” politics, unshared with the theological “Gentiles” around us.

*Isaiah 49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*

*Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

## EXCERPTS FROM COMMENTARIES

Highlighted in red: points alluded to in the preceding compilation.

**Salt, by its very nature, flavors and preserves everything that it comes in contact with. If it did not do these things, then it would not be salt.** Salt, a valuable commodity in the dry Middle East, was used in the biblical period for barter. In fact the word “salary” comes from the Latin *salarius* (“salt”). **A person lacking integrity might have mixed white sand with the salt and then had more for trade. But salt mixed with sand lost some of its salty quality and became useless.** Hughes, Robert B. ; Laney, J. Carl: *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 2001 (The Tyndale Reference Library), S. 401

**Lost its savour** (μωρανθη [mōranthēi]). The verb is from μωρος [mōros] (dull, sluggish, stupid, foolish) and means to play the fool, to become foolish, of salt become tasteless, insipid (Mark 9:50). It is common in Syria and Palestine to see salt scattered in piles on the ground because it has lost its flavour, “hae tint its tang”

(*Braid Scots*), the most worthless thing imaginable. Jesus may have used here a current proverb. Robertson, A.T.: *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, 1997, S. Mt 5:13

Have lost his savour (μωρανθῆ). The kindred noun (μωρός) means *dull, sluggish*; applied to the mind, *stupid* or *silly*; applied to the taste, *insipid, flat*. The verb here used of salt, *to become insipid*, also means *to play the fool*. Our Lord refers here to the familiar fact of salt losing its pungency and becoming useless. Dr. Thompson (“The Land and the Book”) cites the following case: “A merchant of Sidon, having farmed of the government the revenue from the importation of salt, brought over a great quantity from the marshes of Cyprus — enough, in fact, to supply the whole province for many years. This he had transferred to the mountains, to cheat the government out of some small percentage of duty. Sixty-five houses were rented and filled with salt. Such houses have merely earthen floors, and the salt next the ground was in a few years entirely spoiled. I saw large quantities of it literally thrown into the road to be trodden under foot of men and beasts. It was ‘good for nothing.’” Vincent, Marvin Richardson: *Word Studies in the New Testament*. Bellingham, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002, S. 1:38-39

Salt was used to season food (Job 6:6), and mixed with the fodder of cattle (Isaiah 30:24). All meat-offerings were seasoned with salt (Leviticus 2:13). To eat salt with someone was to partake of his or her hospitality, to derive subsistence from him; and hence he who did so was bound to look after his host’s interests. Ezra 4:14 reads: “We have maintenance from the king’s palace” (KJV), or “We share the salt of the palace” (NRSV).

A “covenant of salt” (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5) was a covenant of perpetual obligation. Newborn children were rubbed with salt (Ezekiel 16:4). In our text-verse, disciples are likened unto salt, with reference to its cleansing and preserving uses.... Freeman, James M. ; Chadwick, Harold J.: *Manners & Customs of the Bible*. Rev. ed.]. North Brunswick, NJ : Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998, S. 408

**Notes. 13** Either of the main functions of *salt*, as flavour or as preservative, fits the image. The rabbis used *salt as a symbol for wisdom (loses its saltiness is literally ‘becomes foolish’)*. **14** The image is of a *brightly lit city on a hill-top, representing the corporate effect of the combined ‘lights’ of individual disciples*. **16 compare** 6:1. The difference is between *deliberate ostentation for one’s own prestige* in ch. 6 and the natural testimony of a godly life here. Carson, D. A.: *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*. 4th ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA : Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, S. Mt 5:11

**Our attitude toward the world (vv. 10–16)**. It is not easy to be a dedicated Christian. Our society is not a friend to God nor to God’s people. Whether we like it or not, there is *conflict* between us and the world. Why? Because we are different from the world and we have different attitudes.

As we read the Beatitudes, we find that they represent an outlook radically different from that of the world. The world praises pride, not humility. The world endorses sin, especially if you “get away with it.” The world is at war with God, while God is seeking to reconcile His enemies and make them His children. *We must expect to be persecuted if we are living as God wants us to live. But we must be sure that our suffering is not due to our own foolishness or disobedience*. Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Mt 5:1

**Ye are the salt of the earth**—to preserve it from corruption, to season its insipidity, to freshen and sweeten it. The value of salt for these purposes is abundantly referred to by classical writers as well as in Scripture; and hence its symbolical significance in the religious offerings as well of those without as of those within the pale of revealed religion. In Scripture, mankind, under the unrestrained workings of their own evil nature, are represented as entirely corrupt. Thus, before the flood (Ge 6:11, 12); after the flood (Ge 8:21); in the days of David (Ps 14:2, 3); in the days of Isaiah (Is 1:5, 6); and in the days of Paul (Eph 2:1–3; see also Job 14:4; Jn 3:6; compared with Ro 8:8; Tit 3:2, 3). The remedy for this, says our Lord here, is the active presence of His disciples among their fellows. The character and principles of Christians, brought into close contact with it, are designed to arrest the festering corruption of humanity and season its insipidity. But how, it may be asked, are Christians to do this office for their fellow men, if their righteousness only exasperate them, and recoil, in every form of persecution, upon themselves? The answer is: That is but the first and partial effect of their Christianity upon the world: *though the great proportion would dislike and reject the truth, a small but noble band would receive and hold it fast; and in the struggle that would ensue, one and another even of the opposing party would come over to His ranks, and at length the Gospel would carry all before it*.

**but if the salt have lost his savour**—“become unsavory” or “insipid”; losing its saline or salting property. *The meaning is: If that Christianity on which the health of the world depends, does in any age, region, or individual, exist only in name, or if it contain not those saving elements for want of which the world languishes, wherewith shall it be salted?*—How shall the salting qualities be restored it? (Compare Mk 9:50). Whether

salt ever does lose its saline property—about which there is a difference of opinion—is a question of no moment here. The point of the case lies in the supposition—that *if it should lose it*, the consequence would be as here described. So with Christians. The question is not: Can, or do, the saints ever totally lose that grace which makes them a blessing to their fellow men? But, What is to be the issue of that Christianity which is found wanting in those elements which can alone stay the corruption and season the tastelessness of an all—pervading carnality? The restoration or non-restoration of *grace*, or true living Christianity, to those who have lost it, has, in our judgment, nothing at all to do here. The question is not, If a man lose his grace, how shall *that* grace be restored to him? but, Since living Christianity is the only “salt of the earth,” if men lose that, *what else* can supply its place? What follows is the appalling answer to this question.

**it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out**—a figurative expression of indignant exclusion from the kingdom of God (compare Mt 8:12; 22:13; Jn 6:37; 9:34). **and to be trodden under foot of men**—**expressive of contempt and scorn. It is not the mere want of a certain character, but the want of it in those whose profession and appearance were fitted to beget expectation of finding it.** Jamieson, Robert ; Fausset, A. R. ; Fausset, A. R. ; Brown, David ; Brown, David: *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. Mt 5:13

5:13-16. To demonstrate the impact these people would make on their **world**, Jesus used two common illustrations: **salt** and **light**. **Jesus’ followers would be like salt in that they would create a thirst for greater information.** When one sees a unique person who possesses superior qualities in specific areas, he desires to discover why that person is different. It is also possible that salt means these people **serve as a preservative against the evils of society. Whichever view one takes, the important quality to note is that salt ought to maintain its basic character.** If it fails to be **salty**, it has lost its purpose for existence and should be discarded. Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:29

I. *Ye are the salt of the earth.* This would encourage and support them under their sufferings, that, though they should be treated with contempt, yet they should really be blessings to the world, and the more so for their suffering thus. **The prophets, who went before them, were the salt of the land of Canaan; but the apostles were the salt of the whole earth, for they must go into all the world to preach the gospel.** It was a discouragement to them that they were so few and so weak. What could they do in so large a province as *the whole earth*? Nothing, if they were to work by force of arms and dint of sword; but, being to work silent as salt, one handful of that salt would diffuse its savour far and wide; would go a great way, and work insensibly and irresistibly as leaven, ch. 13:33. The doctrine of the gospel is as *salt*; it is penetrating, *quick*, and *powerful* (Heb. 4:12); it reaches *the heart* Acts 2:37. It is cleansing, it is relishing, and preserves from putrefaction. **We read of the savour of the knowledge of Christ (2 Co. 2:14); for all other learning is insipid without that.** An everlasting covenant is called a *covenant of salt* (Num. 18:19); and the gospel is an everlasting gospel. Salt was required in all the sacrifices (Lev. 2:13), in Ezekiel’s mystical temple, Eze. 43:24. Now Christ’s disciples having themselves learned the doctrine of the gospel, and being employed to teach it to others, were as salt. Note, Christians, and especially ministers, are the salt of the earth.

1. If they be as they should be they are *as good salt, white, and small, and broken into many grains, but very useful and necessary.* Pliny says, *Sine sale, vita humana non potest degere*—*Without salt human life cannot be sustained.* See in this, (1.) What they are to be in themselves—seasoned with the gospel, with the salt of grace; thoughts and affections, words and actions, all seasoned with grace, Col. 4:6. *Have salt in yourselves*, else you cannot diffuse it among others, Mk. 9:50. (2.) What they are to be to others; they must not only *be* good but *do* good, must insinuate themselves into the minds of the people, not to serve any secular interest of their own, but that they might transform them into the taste and relish of the gospel. (3.) What great blessings they are to the world. Mankind, lying in ignorance and wickedness, were a vast heap of unsavoury stuff, ready to putrefy; but Christ sent forth his disciples, by their lives and doctrines, to season it with knowledge and grace, and so to render it acceptable to God, to the angels, and to all that relish divine things. (4.) How they must expect to be disposed of. They **must not be laid on a heap, must not continue always together at Jerusalem, but must be scattered as salt upon the meat**, here a grain and there a grain; as the Levites were dispersed in Israel, that, wherever they live, they may communicate their savour. Some have observed, that whereas it is foolishly called an ill omen to have the salt fall towards us, it is really an ill omen to have the salt fall from us.

2. If they be not, they are as *salt* that has *lost its savour*. If you, who should season others, are yourselves unsavoury, void of spiritual life, relish, and vigour; if a Christian be so, especially if a minister be so, his condition is very sad; for, (1.) He is *irrecoverable*: *Wherewith shall it be salted?* Salt is a remedy for *unsavoury*

*meat*, but there is no remedy for *unsavoury salt*. Christianity will give a man a relish; but if a man can take up and continue the profession of it, and yet remain flat and foolish, and graceless and insipid, no other doctrine, no other means, can be applied, to make him savoury. If Christianity do not do it, nothing will. (2.) He is *unprofitable: It is thenceforth good for nothing*; what use can it be put to, in which it will not do more hurt than good? As a man without reason, so is a Christian without grace. **A wicked man is the worst of creatures; a wicked Christian is the worst of men; and a wicked minister is the worst of Christians.** (3.) He is doomed to ruin and rejection; He shall be *cast out*—expelled the church and the communion of the faithful, to which he is a blot and a burden; and he shall be *trodden under foot of men*. Let God be glorified in the shame and rejection of those by whom he has been reproached, and who have made themselves fit for nothing but to be trampled upon.

II. *Ye are the light of the world*, v. 14. This also bespeaks them useful, as the former (*Sole et sale nihil utilius—Nothing more useful than the sun and salt*), but more glorious. All Christians are *light in the Lord* (Eph. 5:8), and must *shine as lights* (Phil. 2:15), but ministers in a special manner. Christ call himself *the Light of the world* (Jn. 8:12), and they are *workers together with him*, and have some of his honour put upon them. Truly *the light is sweet*, it is welcome; the light of the first day of the world was so, when it *shone out of darkness*; so is the morning light of every day; so is the gospel, and those that spread it, to all sensible people. The *world sat in darkness*, Christ raised up his disciples to shine in it; and, that they may do so, from him they borrow and derive **their light**. Henry, Matthew: *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible : Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody : Hendrickson, 1996, c1991, S. Mt 5:13

Our Saviour compares Christians in general, and his ministers in particular, unto salt, for a double reason. First, Because it is the nature of salt to preserve things from corruption and putrefaction, and to render them savoury and pleasant. Thus are the ministers of the gospel to labour and endeavour, by the purity of their doctrine, to sweeten putrifying sinners, that they may become savoury to God and man; and may be kept from being fly-blown with errors and false doctrine. Secondly, Because **salt has a piercing power in it, which subdues the whole lump, and turns it into its own nature**: such a piercing power is there in the ministry of **the word, that it subdues the whole man to the obedience of itself**.

As it Christ had said, "Ye are to be preachers and patterns to the world; ye are appointed by your pure doctrine, and good conversation, to purge the world from that corruption in which it lies: but if you lose either soundness of doctrine, or the savour of a good conversation, you will be wholly useless, as to these great ends, and must expect to be cast off by me, as unsavoury salt is cast to the dunghill." (Burkitt)

Ye are the salt of the earth, etc. Salt has been used from time immemorial as an agent in the preservation of meats. The multitudes which heard Jesus were familiar with its use in curing fish. "The pickled fish of Galilee were known throughout the Roman world" (G.A. Smith). It is worthy of note that **the salt of Palestine gathered from the marshes is not pure. Because of the foreign substances in it, it loses its savor and becomes insipid and useless, when exposed to the sun and air, or when permitted for any considerable time to come in contact with the ground; but pure salt does not lose its savor.** The verse teaches that God's people keep the world from putrefaction and corruption. There was not salt enough in the antediluvian world to save it from the flood, in Sodom to save it from fire, nor in Canaan to preserve its people from destruction. It also teaches--as does experience--that a disciple may lose those qualities which make him salt. See [Mr 9:50] and see [Lu 14:34]. (The Fourfold Gospel, page 234)

What will you have to salt with? And so are **fools in the Latin tongue called "saltless"**, as you would say, men that have no salt or savour and taste in them. (Geneva Bible)