

1. **Introduction:** After comments on the severe penalty for deliberately causing someone to sin, Jesus adds three comments about salt.
  - Jesus first statement about salt begins with “For” connecting the salt statements to His previous warnings.
  - The phrase *“For everyone will be salted with fire”* is only in Mark.
  - The source for this comment lies in the rituals of OT sin offerings.
2. **Lev. 2:13:** *“You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.”*
  - As we see in Leviticus, salt is (1.) a symbol of the covenant and (2.) Salt was a required ingredient for all sacrifices.
  - The context for Jesus’ comments on “salt” is His warnings of the personal dangers of being the cause of someone falling into sin.
  - Jesus first statement about salt begins with “For” to connect that statement to His previous warnings.
  - In the present context, the expression seems to mean that like a sin sacrifice, everyone will face a fiery trial whose purpose is purification.
  - Jesus often used OT symbols to illustrate the cost of discipleship which could require suffering and sacrifice. Jesus uses salt in the illustrations of 9:50a and 9:50b.
3. **Mark 9:50a:** *“Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again?”*
  - Salt is good. It both combats deterioration of food and imparts flavor.
  - But if salt is contaminated with other minerals, it loses its value both for combating deterioration and for imparting flavor.
  - Contamination of salt was familiar to the Jews. Around the Dead Sea and other sources for salt, there were many undesirable alkaline minerals that could and often did contaminate salt.
  - When that occurred, the alkaline mixture was only good for throwing away and trampling under foot.
  - The phrase about salt losing its saltiness seems to be directed toward people like scribes, priests, and Pharisees who, though trained in the truth of the Prophets, become contaminated by formal, legalistic principles.
  - The implication is such “contaminated” people are worthless for imparting knowledge and wisdom to true followers of God.
  - The error they convey overwhelms any truth they might provide.

- The problem of people who know and understand Scripture but fail to follow its principles continues to be a significant issue today.
4. **Mark 9:50b**: ***“Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.”***
    - A person must have internal goodness to influence others for good. Having salt within yourself means having the qualities that are the fruit of the Holy Spirit’s work.
    - Being salty, you can be salt to the world and have speech that is seasoned with salt and be true to Christ’s New Covenant.
  5. **Mark 9:50b**: ***“Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.”***
    - A person must have internal goodness to rightly influence others.
    - Having salt within yourself means having the qualities that are the fruit of the Holy Spirit’s work. Being salty, you can be salt to the world and have speech that is seasoned with the salt of the Word.
    - The Bible extolls peacemakers!
  6. **Mark 9:50b**: ***“Be at peace with one another.”***
    - **Mt. 5:9**: ***“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”***
    - **James 3:18**: ***“And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”***
  7. **Mark 10:1**: ***“And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.”***
    - Jesus and the 12 leave their Capernaum headquarters going southeast. They begin once again to encounter crowds, and Jesus taught them.
    - The area of Judea visited is southeast of Capernaum ***“beyond the Jordan”*** (i.e., east of the Jordan). That portion of Judea is called Perea (see the map). No precise timing for details is given.
    - In Perea they travel south and eventually recross the Jordan to Jericho.
    - Mark records events in Perea and the crossing to Jericho. From Jericho they will go to Jerusalem and the events of Passion Week.
  8. **Mark 10:2-4**: ***“And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”<sup>3</sup> He answered them, “What did Moses command you?”<sup>4</sup> They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.”***
    - The Pharisees is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife. Marriage for the Jews was usually by legal agreement. Divorce required a legal document.
    - What the Pharisees were attempting to do was to get Jesus to commit to one of the two popular interpretations ( by Shammai or Hillel). They wanted to know which method of Scripture interpretation Jesus followed.

- The Scripture in contention was Dt. 24:1-4.





# Map of Israel In The Time of Christ



- In Deuteronomy 24:1, is the phrase ***“found some indecency in her”*** limited to sexual indecency or does it have much broader implications?
- Two prominent Rabbis disagreed on the meaning of Dt. 24:1.
- Shammai and his followers adhered to the limited view that a man should divorce his wife only for sexual immorality.
- Hillel and his followers said that two types of divorce were acceptable. (1.) For sexual immorality. (2.) For any cause.
- Jesus’ response to the Pharisees was to send them to the Scriptures to examine what Moses said.
- They came back with their flawed “any cause” understanding of Dt. 24.

9. **Mark 10:4-9**: ***“And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. <sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ <sup>7</sup> ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, <sup>8</sup> and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”***

- Notice, Jesus doesn’t side with Hillel, but neither does He fully side with Shammai. Jesus clearly objected to the presuppositions of both.
- Jesus’ point was that Dt. 24 doesn’t sanction divorce. It does recognize the practice among the Jews and establishes limits to keep divorce and remarriage from becoming an unlimited way of changing wives.
- God permitted divorce as a concession because the people were hardhearted. In their culture, to be hardhearted meant to be spiritually underdeveloped and resisting or rejecting wisdom.
- Both the Shammai and Hillel schools of interpretation took God’s concession to mean His approval of divorce.
- Jesus refuted that view by appealing to Genesis 1 and God’s ordaining the institution of marriage with established parameters.
- Marriage is one man and one woman leaving the family to which they were born to be joined together as ***“one flesh”*** (one indivisible pair).
- Hence, the command, ***“What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”***
- Jesus thus declares marriage to be an act of God, not a legal action of the courts, the church, or any human agency.
- No matter how a couple are brought together, God joins them together as husband and wife.
- Matthew records the reason a person can pursue a divorce without violating God’s moral standard.

- **Matthew 5:32**: *“But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”*
  - The Greek word used is “*Porneia*” which describes a wide range of sexual sin, not just adultery. Divorce is permitted if *Porneia* severs the marriage bond.
10. Next lesson we begin with Mark 10:10.