

Mark 9:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

Analysis

Jesus taught: 'For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt' (πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται, καὶ πᾶσα θυσία ἀλὶ ἀλισθήσεται). This cryptic saying uses salt and fire metaphorically. In Old Testament, sacrifices were salted (Leviticus 2:13), symbolizing covenant permanence and purity. Fire purified offerings, consuming what was unacceptable. Jesus may mean:

1. believers are 'salted with fire'—purified through trials (1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12)
2. unbelievers are 'salted with fire'—judged in hell (connecting to previous verses about hell fire), or
3. both—trials purify believers while judgment consumes unbelievers.

The 'every one' (pas, πᾶς) is universal—all face fire, whether purifying or punishing. Disciples must embrace sanctifying trials rather than compromise to avoid suffering. Salt preserves and purifies; fire refines and judges. Both work toward God's purposes.

Historical Context

Leviticus 2:13 commanded: 'with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt'—the 'salt of the covenant.' Salt symbolized preservation, purity, and covenant permanence. Ancient sacrificial system used both fire (consuming offerings) and salt (seasoning them). Jesus likely connected these elements to disciple suffering and sanctification. Early church understood Christian life involves fiery trials (1 Peter 4:12, 'fiery trial which is to try you') that purify faith like refiner's fire (Malachi

3:2-3; 1 Peter 1:7). Salt's preservative quality also relates to believers being 'salt of the earth' (Matthew 5:13)—preserving moral purity in corrupt world. Church fathers debated this verse's meaning, generally connecting it to purifying trials. The saying's difficulty demonstrates Jesus taught challenging truths requiring careful interpretation.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the metaphor of being 'salted with fire' help understand suffering's purifying purpose in Christian life?
2. What does salt's preservative quality teach about Christians' role in morally corrupt culture?

Interlinear Text

Πᾶς	γὰρ	πυρὶ	ἁλισθήσεται	καὶ	πᾶσα	θυσία	ἅλι
Everyone	for	with fire	will be salted	and	every	sacrifice	with salt
G3956	G1063	G4442	G233	G2532	G3956	G2378	G251

ἁλισθήσεται
shall be salted
G233

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 2:13 (Sacrifice): And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.

Ezekiel 43:24 (Sacrifice): And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the LORD.

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