

# Numbers 18:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

## Analysis

**All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.** This verse summarizes verses 8-18, confirming all priestly portions as perpetual divine gift. "By a statute for ever" (lechoq olam, לְחֻקָּת עֹלָם) establishes permanence, but "covenant of salt" (berit melach olam, בְּרִית מֶלֶךְ עֹלָם) adds profound significance.

Salt symbolized preservation, incorruptibility, and permanence in ancient cultures. Salt prevented decay, making "covenant of salt" metaphorical language for an unbreakable, enduring agreement. Leviticus 2:13 required salt with every grain offering. 2 Chronicles 13:5 also describes God's covenant with David's house as a "covenant of salt." The phrase conveys absolute reliability—this arrangement won't spoil, decay, or be revoked.

God's covenant of salt with Aaron's descendants guaranteed perpetual priestly support as long as the sacrificial system functioned. While Christ's priesthood superseded the Aaronic order (Hebrews 7), the principle remains—God faithfully provides for those called to spiritual service. The "salt covenant" teaches that

God's commitments are absolutely dependable; He doesn't renege on promises or abandon those who serve Him. Our covenant relationship through Christ's blood is even more secure than a covenant of salt—it's guaranteed by God's unchanging character (Hebrews 6:17-20).

## Historical Context

---

Salt had immense value in the ancient world—it preserved food, purified water, and was essential for life. Roman soldiers received salt rations (origin of 'salary' from Latin *salarium*). In covenant-making, sharing salt symbolized permanent friendship and loyalty—you wouldn't betray someone whose salt you'd eaten. Arab Bedouin culture still honors salt covenants (*dhimmat al-milh*) as sacred bonds. God using this metaphor assured Aaron's descendants of unshakeable support. The covenant continued until the temple system ended. While the Aaronic priesthood has ceased sacrificial functions, the principle that God faithfully sustains His ministers remains applicable to Christian pastoral and missionary support.

## Related Passages

---

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

---

1. How does the 'covenant of salt' metaphor assure you of God's faithful, unchanging commitment to His promises?
2. What does it mean that your relationship with Christ is secured by something even more permanent than salt—the unchanging character of God?
3. How should churches honor the 'salt covenant' principle by providing stable, reliable support for ministers across years of faithful service?

## Interlinear Text

---

כְּלָא תְּרֻומָּת תְּרֻומָּת כְּלָא  
H3605 All the heave offerings H8641 of the holy things H6944 offer H7311

וְלֹבֶת יְבָנֶת יְבָנֶת  
thee and thy sons of Israel the LORD have I given H0 thee and thy sons H1121

וְלֹבֶת יְבָנֶת יְבָנֶת  
and thy daughters H1323 with thee by a statute H2706 for ever H5769 it is a covenant H1285 of salt H4417

אַתָּה עֹלֶם  
for ever H1931 before the LORD H6440 H0 unto thee and to thy seed H2233 H854

## Additional Cross-References

---

**2 Chronicles 13:5** (Covenant): Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?

**Leviticus 2:13** (Covenant): 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.

**Numbers 18:11** (Sacrifice): And this is thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.