

# 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, לְחֻק־עוֹלָם) establishes permanence, but "covenant of salt" (berit melach olam, בְּרִית מֶלַח עוֹלָם) 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 While Christ's priesthood superseded the Aaronic order (Hebrews 7), the principle remains—God faithfully provides for those called to spiritual service.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

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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

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

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

## Study Questions

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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

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כָּל	תְּרוֹמַת	הַקֹּדֶשׁ	יִמּוֹ	אֲשֶׁר	רַ
H3605	All the heave offerings	of the holy things	H834	offer	
	H8641	H6944		H7311	
וּלְבָנֶי יִשְׂרָאֵל	יְהוָה	נָתַתִּי	לָךְ	וּלְבָנֶי יִשְׂרָאֵל	
thee and thy sons	of Israel	the LORD	have I given	thee and thy sons	
H1121	H3478	H3068	H5414	H1121	
וּלְבָנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל	אִתְּךָ	לְחֵק	עוֹלָם	בְּרִית	מֶלַח
and thy daughters	H854	with thee by a statute	for ever	it is a covenant	of salt
H1323		H2706	H5769	H1285	H4417
עוֹלָם	הוּא	לִפְנֵי	יְהוָה	לָךְ	וּלְזֶרְעֶךָ
for ever	H1931	before	the LORD	H0	unto thee and to thy seed
H5769		H6440	H3068		H2233

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.