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Is there Sugar in the Salt Shaker?

By Dianne J. Beale

Can something tasteless be eaten without salt, Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

Job 6: 6. I like my eggs scrambled. If I plan to eat them boiled, it is not uncommon for me to turn them into a yellow paste before adding other ingredients. Egg whites are not only tasteless, but they also offer little nutritional value. In fact, it makes little sense to eat egg whites without their accompanying yolks.ⁱ

My mother doesn't like the taste of eggs. She ate them anyhow so that we, too, would eat them. She understood the importance of setting an example—she did not wish to influence our experience of the egg, so she ate them with us.

It is not the egg that I wish to discuss, however. Instead I would like to consider what Job is saying about salt. Did Job maybe, along with his wealth, lose his access to salt? Did this add to his discomfort?

Can something tasteless be eaten without salt, Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

My soul refuses to touch them; They are like loathsome food to me. Job 6: 6-7. Historically, salt represented wealth. Soldiers, at times, were paid in salt. Salt deficiency causes headaches, weakness, lightheadedness, and finally nausea. A necessity of life, salt once had great symbolic importance and economic value.ⁱⁱ

Without salt, man would die. It is used in the digestive process and all human tissue requires it. Blood, to a certain extent, can be replaced by a solution of common salt.ⁱⁱⁱ And here, in the Bible, we see Job lamenting its absence.

Job was affected by the omission of salt. But the Bible also speaks of salt that has lost its flavor.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. Matthew 5:13.

In this verse, Jesus is speaking to His

disciples—His followers. We, as Christians, are the salt of the earth. But how does salt become tasteless?

According to my studies, salt becomes tasteless through three basic methods:

- Evaporation,
- Dilution, or
- Pollution.

If the weather is significantly hot, seawater that is placed into containers and left out in the sun, to evaporate, can sometimes result in unflavored salt.^{iv} Dilution can also render salt useless—if the amount of water far outweighs the quantity of salt, the flavor of the salt will become indistinguishable. Lastly, when impure (or polluted) rock salt is stored for long periods of time, the exposure to air can, also, eventually cause it to become tasteless.^v

How does this apply to Christians? We are described as the salt of the earth; salt must remain salty for it to be effective.

ⁱ Masterjohn, Chris. The Incredible, Edible Egg Yolk. July, 2005. <http://www.cholesterol-and-health.com/Egg_Yolk.html>.

ⁱⁱ Kurlansky, Mark. Salt: A World History. New York: Walker & Company, 2002.

ⁱⁱⁱ Grolier. The Book of Knowledge. New York, Grolier Incorporated.

^{iv} Freeman, James M. Hand-Book of Bible Manners and Customs. New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1874.

^v Freeman, James M. Hand-Book of Bible Manners and Customs. New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1874.

^{vi} Freeman, James M. Hand-Book of Bible Manners and Customs. New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1874.

^{vii} Kurlansky, Mark. Salt: A World History. New York: Walker & Company, 2002.

^{viii} Freeman, James M. Hand-Book of Bible Manners and Customs. New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1874.

^{ix} Grolier. The Book of Knowledge. New York, Grolier Incorporated.

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