

~FISH (467)

- .. Fish As Food
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- .. Figurative Usage

- These and other water animals were brought into existence by God on the fifth creative day.
- And God went on to say; Let the waters swarm forth a swarm of living souls and let flying creatures fly over the earth upon the face of the expanse of the heavens. ([Genesis 1:20](#))
- And God proceeded to create the great sea monsters and every living soul that moves about, which the waters swarmed forth according to their kinds, and every winged flying creature according to its kind. And God got to see that it was good. ([Genesis 1:21](#))
- With that God blessed them, saying; Be fruitful and become many and fill the waters in the sea basins, and let the flying creatures become many in the earth. ([Genesis 1:22](#))
- And there came to be evening and there came to be morning, a fifth day. ([Genesis 1:23](#))
- Although not authorized to use **fish** for food until after the Flood, man was from the beginning to have these creatures in subjection.
- Further, God blessed them and God said to them; Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the **fish** of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth. ([Genesis 1:28](#))
- And a fear of you and a terror of you will continue upon every living creature of the earth and upon every flying creature of the heavens, upon everything that goes moving on the ground, and upon all the **fishes** of the sea. Into your hand they are now given. ([Genesis 9:2](#))

- **Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you. As in the case of green vegetation, I do give it all to you. (Genesis 9:3)**
- **But instead of exercising proper dominion over the animals, some men became empty-headed in their reasonings and came to venerate the creation.**
- **For his invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and godship, so that they are inexcusable. (Romans 1:20)**
- **Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God nor did they thank him, but they became empty-headed in their reasonings and their unintelligent heart became darkened. (Romans 1:21)**
- **Although asserting they were wise, they became foolish (Romans 1:22)**
- **And turned the glory of the incorruptible God into something like the image of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed creatures and creeping things. (Romans 1:23)**
- **For example, the Babylonian Ea, a god of the waters, was depicted as a man covered with a body that was part **fish**, the Syrian Atargatis was a **fish** goddess, and in Egypt certain kinds of **fish** were viewed as sacred and were even mummified. Such **fish** worship was, of course, prohibited in God's Law to Israel.**
- **And you must take good care of your souls, because you did not see any form on the day of Yehowah's speaking to you in Horeb out of the middle of the fire. (Deuteronomy 4:15)**
- **That you may not act ruinously and may not really make for yourselves a carved image, the form of any symbol, the representation of male or female. (Deuteronomy 4:16)**
- **The representation of any beast that is in the earth, the representation of any winged bird that flies in the heavens. (Deuteronomy 4:17)**
- **The representation of anything moving on the ground, the**

representation of any **fish** that is in the waters under the earth.
([Deuteronomy 4:18](#))

- **It was most appropriate that Jesus Christ, the Son of man**
- **It was while they were gathered together in Galilee that Jesus said to them; The Son of man is destined to be betrayed into men's hands. ([Matthew 17:22](#))**
- **Who was to have even the **fish** in subjection, on two occasions demonstrated his power by filling the nets of his apostles with miraculous catches of **fish**.**
- **What is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and the son of earthling man that you take care of him? ([Psalms 8:4](#))**
- **You also proceeded to make him a little less than godlike ones, and with glory and splendor you then crowned him. ([Psalms 8:5](#))**
- **You make him dominate over the works of your hands. Everything you have put under his feet. ([Psalms 8:6](#))**
- **Small cattle and oxen, all of them, and also the beasts of the open field. ([Psalms 8:7](#))**
- **The birds of heaven and the **fish** of the sea, anything passing through the paths of the seas. ([Psalms 8:8](#))**
- **For it is not to angels that he has subjected the inhabited earth to come, about which we are speaking. ([Hebrews 2:5](#))**
- **But a certain witness has given proof somewhere, saying; What is man that you keep him in mind, or the son of man that you take care of him? ([Hebrews 2:6](#))**
- **You made him a little lower than angels, with glory and honor you crowned him, and appointed him over the works of your hands. ([Hebrews 2:7](#))**
- **All things you subjected under his feet. For in that he subjected all things to him God left nothing that is not subject to him. Now, though, we do not yet see all things in subjection to him. ([Hebrews 2:8](#))**

- But we behold Jesus, who has been made a little lower than angels, crowned with glory and honor for having suffered death, that he by God's undeserved kindness might taste death for every man. ([Hebrews 2:9](#))
- When he ceased speaking, he said to Simon; Pull out to where it is deep, and you men let down your nets for a catch. ([Luke 5:4](#))
- But Simon in reply said; Instructor, for a whole night we toiled and took nothing, but at your bidding I will lower the nets. ([Luke 5:5](#))
- Well, when they did this, they enclosed a great multitude of **fish**. In fact, their nets began ripping apart. ([Luke 5:6](#))
- So they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and assist them, and they did come, and they filled both boats, so that these began to sink. ([Luke 5:7](#))
- He said to them; Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. Then they cast it, but they were no longer able to draw it in because of the multitude of the **fishes**. ([John 21:6](#))
- Faced with the paying of the temple tax, Jesus also exercised his dominion when he instructed Peter; Go to the sea, cast a **fishhook**, and take the first **fish** coming up and, when you open its mouth, you will find a stater coin. Take that and give it to them for me and you.
- After they arrived in Capernaum the men collecting the two drachmas tax approached Peter and said; Does your teacher not pay the two drachmas tax? ([Matthew 17:24](#))
- He said; Yes. However, when he entered the house Jesus got ahead of him by saying; What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive duties or head tax? From their sons or from the strangers? ([Matthew 17:25](#))
- When he said; From the strangers, Jesus said to him; Really, then, the sons are tax-free. ([Matthew 17:26](#))
- But that we do not cause them to stumble, you go to the sea, cast a **fishhook**, and take the first **fish** coming up and, when you open its mouth, you will find a stater coin. Take that and give it

to them for me and you. ([Matthew 17:27](#))

.. Fish As Food

- **Fish**, a highly nutritious and easily digestible food, evidently was an important item in the diet of the Egyptians as well as of the enslaved Hebrews, for in the wilderness the mixed crowd and the sons of Israel longed for the **fish** they used to eat in Egypt.
- How we remember the **fish** that we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers and the watermelons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic! ([Numbers 11:5](#))
- The Egyptian economy therefore suffered heavily when the **fish** in the Nile died as a result of Yehowah's turning Egypt's waters into blood.
- Immediately Moses and Aaron did so, just as Yehowah had commanded, and he lifted up the rod and struck the water that was in the Nile River under the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile River was turned into blood. ([Exodus 7:20](#))
- And the **fish** that were in the Nile River died, and the Nile River began to stink, and the Egyptians were unable to drink water from the Nile River, and the blood came to be in all the land of Egypt. ([Exodus 7:21](#))
- **Fish** continued to be an important food to the Israelites once they were established in the Promised Land. One of the gates of Jerusalem was called the **Fish Gate**, suggesting that a **fish** market was located there or nearby.
- And after this he built an outer wall for the City of David to the west of Gihon in the torrent valley and as far as the **Fish Gate**, and he ran it around to Ophel and proceeded to make it very high. Further, he put chiefs of the military force in all the fortified cities in Judah. ([2 Chronicles 33:14](#))
- In a later period, as mentioned by Nehemiah, the Tyrians sold **fish** at Jerusalem even on the Sabbath.
- And the Tyrians themselves dwelt in the city, bringing in **fish** and every sort of merchandise and making sales on the Sabbath to

the sons of Judah and in Jerusalem. (**Nehemiah 13:16**)

- Commonly prepared by broiling or salting and drying, **fish** was often eaten along with bread. Likely the **fish** used by Jesus in miraculously feeding 5,000 men and later 4,000 men, besides women and children, was dried and salted.
- They said to him; We have nothing here but five loaves and two **fishes**. (**Matthew 14:17**)
- He said; Bring them here to me. (**Matthew 14:18**)
- Next he commanded the crowds to recline on the grass and took the five loaves and two **fishes**, and, looking up to heaven, he said a blessing and, after breaking the loaves, he distributed them to the disciples, the disciples in turn to the crowds. (**Matthew 14:19**)
- So all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the surplus of fragments, twelve baskets full. (**Matthew 14:20**)
- Yet those eating were about five thousand men, besides women and young children. (**Matthew 14:21**)
- At this Jesus said to them; How many loaves have you? They said; Seven, and a few little **fishes**. (**Matthew 15:34**)
- So, after instructing the crowd to recline upon the ground. (**Matthew 15:35**)
- He took the seven loaves and the **fishes** and, after offering thanks, he broke them and began distributing to the disciples, the disciples in turn to the crowds. (**Matthew 15:36**)
- And all ate and were satisfied, and as a surplus of fragments they took up seven provision baskets full. (**Matthew 15:37**)
- Yet those eating were four thousand men, besides women and young children. (**Matthew 15:38**)
- After his resurrection Jesus ate some broiled **fish** to prove to his apostles that they were not seeing a spirit, and on another occasion he prepared a breakfast of bread and fish cooked over a charcoal fire.

- While they were speaking of these things he himself stood in their midst and said to them; May you have peace. (Luke 24:36)
- But because they were terrified, and had become frightened, they were imagining they beheld a spirit. (Luke 24:37)
- So he said to them; Why are you troubled, and why is it doubts come up in your hearts? (Luke 24:38)
- See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself, feel me and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones just as you behold that I have. (Luke 24:39)
- And as he said this he showed them his hands and his feet. (Luke 24:40)
- But while they were still not believing for sheer joy and were wondering, he said to them; Do you have something there to eat? (Luke 24:41)
- And they handed him a piece of broiled fish. (Luke 24:42)
- And he took it and ate it before their eyes. (Luke 24:43)
- However, when they disembarked onto land they beheld lying there a charcoal fire and fish lying upon it and bread. (John 21:9)
- Jesus said to them; Bring some of the fish you just now caught. (John 21:10)
- Simon Peter, therefore, went on board and drew the net to land full of big fishes, one hundred and fifty-three of them. But although there were so many the net did not burst. (John 21:11)
- Jesus said to them; Come, take your breakfast. Not one of the disciples had the courage to inquire of him; Who are you? because they knew it was the Lord. (John 21:12)

.. Fish Of Israel

- Fish are plentiful in the inland waters of Palestine, with the exception of the Dead Sea. Among the varieties encountered there are bream, carp, perch, and the unusual mouth-breeding fish such as *Chromis simonis*.

- The male of *Chromis simonis* takes the eggs, about 200 in number, into his mouth, and the young remain there for several weeks after being hatched.
- Certain kinds of **fish** live even in the salt springs near the Dead Sea, but these soon die if placed in water from the sea itself. The reason for this has been ascribed to the presence of a large percentage of magnesium chloride in the Dead Sea.
- The swift current of the Jordan, particularly at flood stage, sweeps many **fish** into the Dead Sea, where stupefied **fish** become food for birds of prey or where their dead bodies are washed up on the shore and eaten by carrion birds.
- In sharp contrast with this, the prophet Ezekiel, in vision, saw issuing forth from Yehowah's temple a stream that healed the waters of the Dead Sea, giving rise to a flourishing **fishing** industry.
- And gradually he brought me back to the entrance of the House, and, look! There was water going forth from under the threshold of the House eastward, for the front of the House was east. And the water was going down from under, from the right-hand side of the House, south of the altar. ([Ezekiel 47:1](#))
- And he went on to say to me; This water is going forth to the eastern region and must go down through the Arabah. And it must come to the sea. It being brought forth into the sea itself, its water is also actually healed. ([Ezekiel 47:8](#))
- And it must occur that every living soul that swarms, in every place to which the double-size torrent comes, will get life. And it must occur that there will be very many **fish**, because there is where this water will certainly come, and the seawater will be healed, and everything will be alive where the torrent comes. ([Ezekiel 47:9](#))
- And it must occur that **fishers** will actually stand alongside it from En-ge-di even up to En-eglaim. There will come to be a drying yard for dragnets. In their kinds their **fish** will prove to be, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many. ([Ezekiel 47:10](#))

•• Clean And Unclean Fish

- Although King Solomon's wisdom embraced the field of natural history, including a knowledge of **fish**.
- And he would speak about the trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that is coming forth on the wall, and he would speak about the beasts and about the flying creatures and about the moving things and about the **fishes**. (1 Kings 4:33)
- Not once is a specific kind of **fish** named in the Scriptures. However, the Law did make a distinction between clean and unclean water animals.
- Only water animals having fins and scales were ceremonially clean for food, this ruled out such creatures as catfish, eels, lampreys, rays, sharks, and the crustacea, many of which live on sewage and decaying matter and often are contaminated by the bacteria that cause typhoid and paratyphoid fevers.
- This is what you may eat of everything that is in the waters. Everything that **has fins and scales** in the waters, in the seas and in the torrents, those you may eat. (Leviticus 11:9)
- And everything in the seas and the torrents that has no fins and scales, out of every swarming creature of the waters and out of every living soul that is in the waters, they are a loathsome thing for you. (Leviticus 11:10)
- Yes, they will become a loathsome thing to you. You must not eat any of their flesh, and you are to loathe their dead body. (Leviticus 11:11)
- Everything in the waters that has no fins and scales is a loathsome thing to you. (Leviticus 11:12)
- Israelite **fishermen** therefore had to separate the fine **fish** from those unsuitable for food, a point highlighted in Jesus illustration of the dragnet.
- Again the kingdom of the heavens is like a dragnet let down into the sea and gathering up **fish** of every kind. (Matthew 13:47)
- When it got full they hauled it up onto the beach and, sitting down, they collected the fine ones into vessels, but the unsuitable they threw away. (Matthew 13:48)

· The Fish That Swallowed Jonah

- In spite of the fact that the Son of God himself testified to the truthfulness of the account about Jonah's being swallowed by a huge **fish**, this incident is frequently cited with a view to discrediting the reliability of the Scriptural record.
- For just as Jonah was in the belly of the huge **fish** three days and three nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. (**Matthew 12:40**)
- Of course, it should be remembered that the Bible simply states that Yehowah appointed a great **fish** to swallow Jonah, the kind of **fish** not being named.
- Now Yehowah appointed a great **fish** to swallow Jonah, so that Jonah came to be in the inward parts of the **fish** three days and three nights. (**Jonah 1:17**)
- There definitely are sea creatures capable of swallowing a man, among them being the white shark and the sperm whale. [See **Walkers Mammals of the World**, revised by R. Nowak and J. Paradiso, 1983, Vol. II, p. 901] [Australian Zoological Handbook, The Fishes of Australia, by G. P. Whitley, Sydney, 1940, Part 1. The Sharks, p. 125]

· Figurative Usage

- In the Scriptures men are at times likened to **fish**. The congregator compared men to **fish** from the standpoint of their being ensnared at a calamitous time like **fish** in a net.
- For man also does not know his time. Just like **fishes** that are being taken in an evil net, and like birds that are being taken in a trap, so the sons of men themselves are being ensnared at a calamitous time, when it falls upon them suddenly. (**Ecclesiastes 9:12**)
- Jesus Christ constituted his followers as **fishers** of men, and he likened righteous persons to fine fish and the wicked to unsuitable fish that are thrown away.
- So Jesus said to them; Come after me, and I shall cause you to become **fishers** of men. (**Mark 1:17**)

- Again the kingdom of the heavens is like a dragnet let down into the sea and gathering up **fish** of every kind. (**Matthew 13:47**)
- When it got full they hauled it up onto the beach and, sitting down, they collected the fine ones into vessels, but the unsuitable they threw away. (**Matthew 13:48**)
- That is how it will be in the conclusion of the system of things, the angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the righteous (**Matthew 13:49**)
- And will cast them into the fiery furnace. There is where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth will be. (**Matthew 13:50**)

See Also HUNTING AND FISHING