

## ~GOURD (77)

[Hebrew, *paq-qu-`oth'*, plural]

- The Hebrew word rendered **gourds** appears in the Bible only with reference to an incident occurring during a time of famine in Elisha's day.
- Someone had gathered some unfamiliar wild gourds and sliced them in with a stew. Upon tasting it, the sons of the prophets feared food poisoning and stopped eating, but Elisha miraculously saved the stew from being wasted.
- And Elisha himself returned to Gilgal, and there was famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he in time said to his attendant; Put the large cooking pot on and boil stew for the sons of the prophets. (2 Kings 4:38)
- Accordingly a certain one went out to the field to pick mallows, and he got to find a wild vine and went picking wild **gourds** from it, his garment full, and then came and sliced them into the stewpot, for they were not acquainted with them. (2 Kings 4:39)
- Later they poured it out for the men to eat. And it came about that, as soon as they ate from the stew, they themselves cried out and began saying; There is death in the pot, O man of the true God. And they were not able to eat. (2 Kings 4:40)
- So he said; Fetch, then, flour. After he threw it into the pot, he went on to say; Pour out for the people that they may eat. And nothing injurious proved to be in the pot. (2 Kings 4:41)
- Although a number of other suggestions have been made, the colocynth, *Citrullus colocynthis*, a plant related to the watermelon, is generally favored as the plant whose fruit probably corresponds to the wild **gourds** of the Scriptural record.
- The vine of the colocynth trails like the cucumber and also has similar foliage. The fruit is about the size of an orange, it has a thick, smooth rind with green and yellow mottlings, and it contains a very bitter and poisonous spongy pulp, from which the colocynth of medicine is derived.

- The characteristics of the colocynth would fit the Bible narrative of a wild gourd that was apparently poisonous, as suggested by its very taste.
- Later they poured it out for the men to eat. And it came about that, as soon as they ate from the stew, they themselves cried out and began saying; There is death in the pot, O man of the true God. And they were not able to eat. (2 Kings 4:40)
- When most other plants have withered, it is still green and hence is a temptation to one unfamiliar with it.
- The **gourd-shaped** ornaments, Hebrew, *peqa-`im*, adorning the molten sea and the cedarwood paneling inside Solomon's temple may have been round like the fruit of the colocynth.
- And the cedarwood on the house inside was with carvings of **gourd-shaped** ornaments and garlands of blossoms. All of it was cedarwood, there was no stone to be seen. (1 Kings 6:18)
- And there were **gourd-shaped** ornaments down below its brim all around, encircling it, ten in a cubit, enclosing the sea all around, with two rows of the **gourd-shaped** ornaments cast in its casting. (1 Kings 7:24)
- And there was the likeness of **gourd-shaped** ornaments under it clear around, surrounding it, ten in a cubit, enclosing the sea all around. The **gourd-shaped** ornaments were in two rows, being cast in its casting. (2 Chronicles 4:3)