

~POTSHERD (188)

[Hebrew, *che'res*, Greek, *o'stra-kon*]

.. Archaeological Discoveries

.. Used In Illustrations

- **A shard or broken piece of pottery, a fragment of earthenware.**
The Hebrew word *che'res*, though sometimes applying to an earthenware vessel or earthenware flask that is unbroken.
- And the priest must take holy water in an **earthenware vessel**, and the priest will take some of the dust that happens to be on the floor of the tabernacle, and he must put it in the water.
(Numbers 5:17)
- This is what Yehowah said; Go, and you must get an **earthenware flask** of a potter and some of the older men of the people and some of the older men of the priests. (Jeremiah 19:1)
- Is possibly related to an Arabic word meaning, **scrape** or **scratch**, and can thus denote something rough, like a **potsherd**. When Satan struck Job with a malignant boil from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, Job proceeded to take for himself a **fragment of earthenware** with which to scrape himself.
- So Satan went out away from the person of Yehowah and struck Job with a malignant boil from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. (Job 2:7)
- And he proceeded to take for himself a **fragment of earthenware** with which to scrape himself, and he was sitting in among the ashes. (Job 2:8)
- And concerning Leviathan it is stated; As pointed earthenware **fragments** are its underparts.
- Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook, or with a rope can you hold down its tongue? (Job 41:1)
- As pointed **earthenware fragments** are its underparts, it spreads out a threshing instrument upon the mire. (Job 41:30)
- The Greek word *o'stra-kon* appearing in LXX at;

- And he proceeded to take for himself a fragment of earthenware with which to scrape himself, and he was sitting in among the ashes. (Job 2:8)
- Was applied by the Greeks to **potsherds** on which they recorded votes.

• Archaeological Discoveries

- **Potsherds, or pieces of pottery**, are the most numerous items found by archaeologists during excavations of ancient sites. In the past, **a broken piece of pottery** might be used for such things as **raking ashes or dipping water**.
- And one will certainly break it as in the breaking of a large jar of the potters, crushed to pieces without ones sparing it, so that there cannot be found among its crushed pieces **a fragment of earthenware** with which to rake the fire from the fireplace or to skim water from a marshy place. (Isaiah 30:14)
- But especially were **potsherds** employed as inexpensive writing materials in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and elsewhere in the ancient Middle East. For instance, earthenware fragments were used for the well-known Lachish Letters, which repeatedly contain the divine name, Yehowah, in Tetragrammaton form **YHWH**.
- In Egypt, archaeologists have found numerous pieces of limestone and **earthenware fragments** on which there appear drawings and inscriptions written in ink, generally in cursive hieroglyphic script, many said to date from about the **16th** to the **11th Centuries B.C.E.** and some thus possibly reaching back to the days of Moses and of Israel's bondage in Egypt.
- Certain of these inscribed **fragments** consist of stories, poems, hymns, and the like, some of which were probably written as school lessons.
- **Earthenware fragments** apparently were used as writing material by people generally much as memo pads and other pieces of paper are today, to record accounts, sales, marriage contracts, lawsuits, and many other matters.

- More than 60 ostraca inscribed with ink in Paleo-Hebrew script were discovered in the ruins of the royal palace in Samaria. They seem to be records of vineyard production, many possibly dating from the time of Jeroboam II.
- They give names of places and persons, the latter including some compound forms involving the use of the names Baal, El, and Yehowah.
- Greek ostraca found in Egypt include various types of documents but principally tax receipts. They give some insight into the Greek language as spoken by the common people of that land during Ptolemaic, Roman, and Byzantine times, and so they are of some use in studies of the Koine used by writers of the **Christian Greek Scriptures**.
- Twenty Greek **ostraca** found in Upper Egypt were inscribed with portions of the four Gospels, these probably dating from the **Seventh Century C.E.**

•• **Used In Illustrations**

- **Potsherds** are also used with figurative associations in the Scriptures. David, distressed and surrounded by enemies, said in a Psalm prophetic of the Messiah's sufferings; My power has dried up just like a **fragment of earthenware**.
- Do not keep far off from me, because distress is nearby, because there is no other helper. (**Psalms 22:11**)
- Many young bulls have surrounded me, the powerful ones of Bashan themselves have got around me. (**Psalms 22:12**)
- They have opened against me their mouth, as a lion tearing in pieces and roaring. (**Psalms 22:13**)
- Like water I have been poured out, and all my bones have been separated from one another. My heart has become like wax, it has melted deep in my inward parts. (**Psalms 22:14**)
- My power has dried up just like a fragment of earthenware, and my tongue is made to stick to my gums, and in the dust of death you are setting me. (**Psalms 22:15**)

- As articles made of clay were baked they would become very dry, and their brittleness became evident when a vessel was reduced to fragments.
- Glazing methods were evidently common in King Solomon's day, for
- As a silver glazing overlaid upon a fragment of earthenware are fervent lips along with a bad heart. ([Proverbs 26:23](#))
- States; As a silver glazing overlaid upon a **fragment of earthenware** are fervent lips along with a bad heart. Like silver glazing that would hide the earthenware it covered, fervent lips could conceal a bad heart when there was only a pretense of friendship.
- Oholibah, or Jerusalem, was warned by Yehowah that she would be filled with drunkenness and grief, drinking the cup her sister Oholah, or Samaria had drunk.
- Judah would drink this figurative cup to the limit, God's judgments being fully executed upon her. Thus, through Ezekiel, God said; You will have to drink it and drain it out, and its earthenware fragments you will gnaw.
- And their names were Oholah the older one and Oholibah her sister, and they came to be mine and began to give birth to sons and daughters. And as for their names, Oholah is Samaria, and Oholibah is Jerusalem. ([Ezekiel 23:4](#))
- This is what the Sovereign Lord Yehowah has said; The cup of your sister you will drink, the deep and wide one. You will become an object of laughter and derision, the cup containing much. ([Ezekiel 23:32](#))
- With drunkenness and grief you will be filled, with the cup of astonishment and of desolation, the cup of your sister Samaria. ([Ezekiel 23:33](#))
- And you will have to drink it and drain it out, and its earthenware fragments you will gnaw, and your breasts you will tear out. For I myself have spoken, is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Yehowah. ([Ezekiel 23:34](#))

- **The utter folly of man's complaining about God and finding fault with the divine way of doing things is shown in the words;**
- **Woe to the one that has contended with his Former, as an earthenware fragment with the other earthenware fragments of the ground! Should the clay say to its former; What do you make? And your achievement say; He has no hands? ([Isaiah 45:9](#))**
- **I myself have roused up someone in righteousness, and all his ways I shall straighten out. He is the one that will build my city, and those of mine in exile he will let go, not for a price nor for bribery, Yehowah of armies has said. ([Isaiah 45:13](#))**