

The Fish God's Teachers

"But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; And let the fish of the sea declare to you. Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this" (Job 12:7-9). We have considered some lessons from the beasts of the earth, the birds of the heavens, and the Planet Earth itself. Now, we will look at some lessons gained from observing fish and other sea creatures.

Some have said, "70% of the world's surface is water. Therefore, God intended man to spend 70% of his time fishing." To be sure, four of the disciples were professional fishermen, but God has other work in mind. Jesus told Simon and Andrew, *"Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men"* (Matthew 4:19). Luke records that Jesus was with Simon, Andrew, James, and John and instructed them where to drop their nets. They caught more fish than two men could handle, but the four working together, landed the catch. Jesus said to the four, *"Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men"* (Luke 5:10). There must be something in the analogy of fishing to help us spread the gospel today.

The Law of Moses contained this directive. *"These you may eat, whatever is in the water: all that have fins and scales, those in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. But whatever is in the seas and in the rivers that does not have fins and scales among all the teeming life of the water, and among all the living creatures that are in the water, they are detestable things to you, and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest. Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you"* (Leviticus 11:9-12).

The fisherman casts the net where fish should be but does not see the fish until the net is drawn up. There will be desirable fish, disgusting things, and other items in between. The Law stated that acceptable fish have fins and scales. Others were *"detestable things to you, and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest. Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you"* (Leviticus 11:11-12). Although all are acceptable as food today, a sorting process is necessary to separate kinds. You never know what you will catch but you fish in many different places. So it is with the Gospel which is preached to all. Compare the kinds of fish caught to the parable of the sower and judgment in Matthew Chapter 13.

We also see fishermen in Ezekiel's vision of the Messiah's Kingdom where a great river flowed from the temple. *"It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many"* (Ezekiel 47:9-10). A great river, flowing from God, with people casting the Word of God, will gather in those that respond to the word. We can see that great river as the living water, given by Jesus through the Holy Spirit (John 6:63), and the preachers and teachers of the gospel as the fisherman. The apostles cast the net of the gospel over the world available to them in less than 40 years.

For another lesson, we can look to the psalmist who spoke of "*Sea monsters and all deeps*" (Psalms 148:7). Until recent times, the things hidden in the greatest depths of the oceans were unknown. The invention of deep submersible vessels allowed people to view unbelievable things. Shrimp, crabs, and worms that live in waters around superheated fumaroles, surviving in a sulfur-rich environment. From the top of the seas to thousands of feet below the surface, God's creatures live and thrive. Each creature, perfectly suited for the environment they are placed in, living to fulfill God's plan for them. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, Paul writes of the difference between our earthly bodies and the heavenly bodies that await us. The body we have now is suited for the environment of this earth. It must be transformed. "*Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed*" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). As the fish and other creatures from the deep parts of the oceans die when brought to the surface, we would die, be totally consumed, if raised to heaven without being changed to live in that environment. Instead, God has prepared new dwelling places for our spirits to live eternally with Him.