

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." – **Psalm 119:105**

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"The Lord Looks at the Heart"

Frank Himmel

Samuel went to Jesse's house to anoint Israel's next king. Eliab, Jesse's oldest son, surely looked the part. But God said, *"Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"* (**1 Sam. 16:7**).

"The Lord looks at the heart." What a refreshing thought. Our society puts such a premium on looks. How many millions do we spend on makeup, hairdos, tints, lotions, diet plans, clothes, jewelry, and the like – all trying to look better? And with all that, most of us achieve mediocrity at best. There is only so much one can do! Aren't you glad to know that God is much more interested in character, something over which you have far greater control?

"The Lord looks at the heart." What a reassuring thought. Men at times misinterpret our actions. You intervene, trying only to reconcile quarreling brethren, and are told to quit being nosy and mind your own business. You lovingly attempt to warn one overtaken in a trespass, but you are casti-gated as mean and self-righteous. Like Mary anointing Jesus' feet, you try to do your best for the Lord yet meet criticism from thoughtless brethren (**Mt. 26:6-13**). Take comfort: Cod knows you heart.

"The Lord looks at the heart." What a sobering thought. Our excuses for failure to act may satisfy men, but the Lord knows the real story. He sees right through the noble-sounding "spin" we put on our side of a dispute. When worship is a sham, He is aware of it. When selfishness or lust or pride or envy drives us, He recognizes it. *"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"* (**Heb 4:13**).



"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (**Matthew 5:8**).

That Little Fishy Thing

Lance Bailles

You've seen it on bumper stickers, business cards, and baseball hats. It's that little fishy thing; that's right, the one that sometimes has those funny looking letters on it. To many people, it has become as much a symbol of Christianity as the cross itself. But what does it mean? What are those funny letters? And, what difference does it make?

There's a name for the little fishy thing: Ichthus (pronounced "ick-thoose"), which is a Greek word for "fish," and is the one and same word spelled by those five funny looking letters that often appear on that symbol: IXOTE. Those five letters, in turn, each stand for five words that confess our Lord: "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior."

We don't know when all this got started, but it was already well established both in the East and the West by the latter half of the second century. By that time, the fish was appearing on sarcophagi, rings, seals, and catacombs used by Christians; and the earliest direct evidence for "the fish" with its accompanying letters is from slightly before the year A.D. 180 in the eighth Sibylline Oracle (SibOr 8.217).

That explains the when, but not the why. This does: Somewhere around the year A.D. 200 an influential writer named Quintus Tertullian wrote a short treatise on baptism for the benefit of those who were studying in preparation for it at his local church. In this, he makes the remarkable observation that "we as little fishes, in accordance with our IXOTE (ick-thoose: fish) Jesus Christ, are born in water" (On Bapt. 1). So, the little fishy thing is a confession of Christ, but it confesses Christ as a symbol of new birth in the water of baptism. In fact, the baptistery itself used to be called a Piscina (fish pond) by the Latin writers in those early days.

Here's why this is worth knowing. Most of the people who decorate their T-shirts with that little fishy thing don't believe that baptism in water is necessary for the remission of sins. Yet, they proudly display the very symbol that confesses the necessity of water in being born again. So, the next time you see a guy sporting that little fishy thing, walk up to him and ask him if he knows what it means. From there you can discuss baptism and start a Bible study with him if he is open to it.

Being a soul winner for Jesus takes a lot of nerve, and it pays to have a few tricks up your sleeve and a few good lead-ins. The little fishy thing is everywhere. If you use it as a tool to reach lost souls, it will help you get started with many folks whom you would otherwise not know how to approach.