

## The Symbol of the Fish

We see the symbol of the fish all the time on the rear of cars, trucks, briefcases, lapel pins, entrances to houses, logos on businesses, etc. Sometimes we even see the symbol contains five Greek letters, IXOUS. This is actually pronounced “ichthus.” But, the question remains, what does the symbol of the fish represent? Does it really have a meaning that ties to Jesus Christ and Christianity?

We have to understand that there was a period during history that there was an intense persecution of believers in the early church. Because of this a tradition was created when two complete strangers met they would enter into a conversation, and after a few minutes one of them would take his foot and draw an arch on the ground. It would be the top or bottom half of the fish symbol. If the other person were a Christian, he would take his foot or finger and complete the other half of the symbol of the fish. Then the other person would put the first of five Greek letters inside the fish. After writing the letter “I,” the other person would write “X,” and then the other person “O” and vice versa until the two had written the word “IXOUS” inside the fish symbol. The Greek word “*IXOUS*” means “fish,” and is the translated word for fish in the Gospels ([Matt. 7:10; 14:17; Mark 6:38; Luke 5:6; 11:11; John 21:6, 8, 11](#)).

What is interesting is the fact that the early Christians gave the word for “fish” an even greater meaning. The symbol and those Greek letters became the acronym for four of the great truths of Christianity.

**I** stands for *Iesous*, which is the Greek word for “[Jesus](#).” An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and told him that Mary, “[will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins](#)” ([Matthew 1:21](#)). At another moment in time, Mary had the angel say to her, “[And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus](#)” ([Luke 1:31](#)). The Hebrew form His name was Jehovah, meaning “Yahweh saves,” “Jehovah saves.” He was named after His father in heaven. Jehovah, Jesus will save His people from their sins.

**X** stands for *Xristos*, meaning “[Christ](#).” The word means “anointed.” Jesus is God’s “Anointed One.” “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word for “Messiah.” “[He is Christ the Lord](#),” the angels said to the shepherds after Jesus was born ([Luke 2:11](#)). Peter declared, “[You are the Christ, the Son of the living God](#)” ([Matthew 16:16](#)).

**O** stands for *Theos* which is translated “[God](#).” Jesus the Messiah is God ([John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-20; 2:9](#)).

**U** represents *Uios* translated “[Son](#).” Jesus is “the Son of God.” “[God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high](#)” ([Hebrews 1:1-3](#)). The angel told Mary the only way to

account for her pregnancy is the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

**S** stands for *Soter*, meaning “Savior.” “Today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). He is the promised “Savior of the world” (John 4:42). The idea is deliverance, saving from disaster, rescue from a hopeless situation, breaking the chains of bondage. The Bible tells us, “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is for everyone who will “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).

The next time you see the sign of the fish and the letters IXOUS remember that Jesus is the Christ, the very Son of God, and our Savior. “Jesus” is the perfect man, incarnate of God among men, fully human and fully God. He is the “Christ,” the Anointed One of God, the Messiah.

He is the unique, only begotten, eternal “Son of God.” There are children by adoption into God’s kingdom, but no one like “the Son of God.” He is our “Savior” who voluntarily went to the cross and died in our place to save us from our sins. He gives us eternal life through the power of His shed blood.

*Have you put your trust in Him to save you for all eternity?*