

Deuteronomy 14:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat:

Analysis

These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat. The aquatic creatures follow different criteria than land animals. Clean fish must have both fins and scales - again, both features required, not one or the other.

Fins enable directed movement through water; scales provide protective covering. Spiritually, these might represent ability to navigate life's currents while maintaining protective boundaries. The dual requirement reinforces the principle that external protection and internal navigation must work together.

This simple classification made field identification straightforward. Israelite fishermen could quickly determine which catch was permissible without requiring detailed species knowledge. God's practical wisdom shines through - laws designed for actual implementation in daily life.

The marine dietary laws, like land animal laws, distinguished Israel from coastal and riverside peoples who ate shellfish, eels, and other non-scaled creatures. Every meal reinforced covenant identity.

Historical Context

The Mediterranean Sea, Sea of Galilee, and Jordan River provided abundant fish for Israel. The fin-and-scale requirement permitted most common fish while

excluding shellfish, crustaceans, eels, and other creatures.

Fishing formed important industry in first-century Galilee. Jesus called fishermen as disciples, and fish became symbolic in early Christianity, though dietary restrictions had been removed.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What might fins and scales symbolize spiritually about navigating life while maintaining boundaries?
2. How did marine dietary laws practically affect Israel's fishing economy?
3. Why is it significant that God's laws were designed for practical daily implementation?
4. What does the inclusion of fish in the clean category reveal about God's generous provision?
5. How did removal of these restrictions in the New Covenant affect gospel expansion?

Interlinear Text

כֹּל בְּמִזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכְלֹת יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר מִכְלָא אֲשֶׁר בְּמִזְבֵּחַ כָּל
H853 H2088 These ye shall eat H3605 H834 of all that are in the waters H3605
H398 H4325

תֹּאכְלֹת לְאֲשֶׁר אֲשֶׁר שְׂנָפִיר וְאֲשֶׁר תֹּאכְלֹת
H834 H0 all that have fins and scales H5579 H7193 H398 These ye shall eat

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