



## [General Background to Fishing]

Fishing is frequently mentioned in the Bible, first of all in Genesis, Chapter 1, verses 26 and 28 where God gave mankind dominion over the fish of the sea etc. Fishing is therefore an ancient and honorable occupation and along with hunting, it has been one of the chief methods used by mankind to obtain food from a very early date.

We can safely assume that the early methods used to catch fish were primitive by comparison to present day standards. In Isaiah, Chapter 19, verses 8, 9, and 10 reference is made to catching fish by angling, or nets as well as those who made sluices and ponds for fish. It seems therefore that nets for catching fish were invented in Old Testament times, but it is not clear if there were drift or gill-nets among them. When the Lord said to the Disciples in John 21 verse 6 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find', it is thought that it was a form of seine net trawl that the Disciples were using on the sea of Tiberius.

Some people maintain that herring fishing goes back thousands of years to Old Testament times, but it is not known what methods were used to catch the herring in these early times. The original invention of drift gill-nets is therefore lost in the myths of time.

Apart from shell fish, edible fish are, broadly speaking, divided into two main groups, pelagic and demersal. Each requires an entirely different method of fishing. Pelagic fish are those fish which swim near the surface of the sea, such as herring, mackerel etc., and traditional methods of fishing for herring was drift-nets which was to submerge a wall of nets a few fathoms below the surface of the sea.

The second group of fish usually referred to as demersal and they are found in the lower depths, and on the sea bed. The traditional methods of catching demersal fish are on baited hooks or by means of a trawl net dragged along the bottom. In more recent years, improved methods of trawling enable fishermen to trawl for pelagic fish, with such efficiency that in the absence of suitable controls to conserve the fish stocks, there is a real danger that the whole fish stocks may be destroyed.

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