

## Definitions

### **The Philistines**

The Philistines were a notorious presence in the Old Testament, and above all probably Israel's worst enemy. To the Israelites they were an enormous power and a serious threat to them, especially to the southernmost Israelite tribes in particular. They lasted for a prominent time; in the days of the last judges and the first kings. However, they suffered a great deal during the rule of King David, and the Philistines saw their powerful position weaken considerably.

#### 1 Chronicles 14:10:

*And David consulted the Lord, saying: Shall I go up against the Philistines, and wilt thou deliver them into my hand? And the Lord said to him: Go up, and I will deliver them into thy hand.*

In the Old Testament the Philistines figured prominently during the period between judge Jephthah and the reign of King David. The main reason for their expansion was the superior quality of their weapons. The Philistines constituted a threat to southern Israel and oppressed the Israelites notably during the days of judges Samson and Samuel.

#### Judges 16:30

*He (Samson) said: Let me die with the Philistines. And when he had strongly shook the pillars, the house fell upon all the princes, and the rest of the multitude that was there: and he killed many more at his death, than he had killed before in his life.*

#### 1 Samuel 7:10

*And it came to pass, when Samuel was offering the holocaust, the Philistines began the battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and terrified them, and they were overthrown before the face of Israel.*

They are also mentioned in the book of Genesis: first in the table of nations (Gen.10:14), as descendants of the Casluhites, and next, in Gen.21 and 26, as being ruled by king Abimelech of Gerar, with whom Abraham and Isaac came into contact.

### **Biblical Animals**

The animals that are mentioned in the Bible are many. In fact In Genesis Noah took two of every creature, male and female into his ark. But some of the animals mentioned in the Bible hold a certain symbolic meaning to represent something that prefigures in the Old Testament and as an icon for the New Testament.

The Four Gospel Creatures: (Each of these creatures are mentioned in the Old Testament and represent the co-author of each Gospel in the New Testament and this is the most common version according to St. Jerome.)

In the Old Testament book of Ezekiel, the prophet has a vision of four living creatures with a human form.

*“Within it were figures resembling four living creatures that looked like this: their form was human, but each had four faces and four wings, and their legs went straight down; the soles of their feet were round. They sparkled with a gleam like burnished bronze. Their faces were like this: each of the four had the face of a man, but on the right side was the face of a lion, and on the left side the face of an ox, and finally each had the face of an eagle.” (Ezekiel 1:5-10)*

In Revelations John has a vision where John is standing before the throne in heaven and what does he see but four living creatures resembling a lion, a calf, a human, and an eagle:

*“From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder. Seven flaming torches burned in front of the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. In front of the throne was something that resembled a sea of glass like crystal. In the center and around the throne, there were four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back. The first creature resembled a lion, the second was like a calf, the third had a face like that of a human being, and the fourth looked like an eagle in flight. The four living creatures, each of them with six wings, were covered with eyes inside and out. Day and night they do not stop exclaiming: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.’” (Rev 4:5-8)*

It is plain to see that Tradition has seen these four strange beasts, filled with thunder and fire, shining forth light to all the four corner of the earth, as representations of the four Gospels sharing the same characteristics of having its message light up all parts of the world.

**Man** (Matthew)-Not an animal.

**Lion** (Mark)-(Judges 14:8; 1 Kings 13:24; Isaiah 30:6; 65:25; Daniel 6:7; Ezekiel 1:10; 1 Peter; Revelation 4:7; 13:2)

**Ox** (Luke)-(1 Samuel 11:7; 2 Samuel 6:6; 1 Kings 19:20-21; Job 40:15; Isaiah 1:3; Ezekiel 1:10)

**Eagle** (John)-(Exodus 19:4; Isaiah 40:31; Ezekiel 1:10; Daniel 7:4; Revelation 4:7; 12:14)

Others:

**Donkey**-(Isaiah 1:3; 30:6 John 12:14)

The donkey prefigures in the Old Testament when used by King David in the prophecy of Zechariah:

Zechariah 9:9

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: BEHOLD THY KING will come to thee, the just and saviour: he is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

Matthew 21:5 & 7

*Tell ye the daughter of Sion: Behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke.*

Matthew 21:7

*And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon.*

Jesus made arrangements to ride a donkey opposed to riding a horse. The horse, despite the powerful message it conveys, would be a sign of a king coming to make war, but that is not Jesus' message. He was riding a donkey, the animal used by the poor. Jesus Christ the King was coming in peace, even as his father David had done before him. Furthermore, Jesus chose to exploit Himself in public now at this time opposed to any other time beforehand because Jesus knew that the hour of his death was at hand.

**Leviathan**-(Could be an earthly creature, such as a crocodile. However, some sources say it's a mythical sea monster of ancient literature; a possible reference to dinosaurs. But in many instances the leviathan is made equivalent to the Devil.) Isaiah 27:1; Psalm 74:14; Job 41:1

**Serpent**-Genesis 3:1; Exodus 4:3; Numbers 21:9; Proverbs 23:32; Isaiah 11:8; 30:6; 59:5; Revelation 12:9

**Dog**-(Judges 7:5; 1 Kings 21:23-24; Ecclesiastes 9:4; Matthew 15:26-27; Luke 16:21; 2 Peter 2:22; Revelation 22:15)

**Cock**-Matthew 26:34

**Locust**-Exodus 10:4; Leviticus 11:22; Joel 1:4; Matthew 3:4; Revelation 9:3

**Frog**-Exodus 8:2; Revelation 16:13

**Pig**-Leviticus 11:7; Deuteronomy 14:8; Proverbs 11:22; Isaiah 65:4; 66:3, 17; Matthew 7:6; 8:31; 2 Peter 2:22

**Quail**-Exodus 16:13; Numbers 11:31