



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: FOX

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW NAME FOR THE FOX?

- It's *shual*, from the root שׁעל.
- We think it may refer to a narrow road or possibly something that is a “handful.”
- When you think of foxes, what comes to mind?
 1. We know that foxes like holes and narrow paths; and
 2. They're often a handful to handle.

THE JACKAL AND THE FOX LOOK SIMILAR, SO SOMETIMES WERE NOT SURE WHICH ANIMAL A BIBLE STORY IS ABOUT.

- Part of the confusion comes because the Hebrew word for “fox,” *shual*, may come from the Persian word *shagal*, which is the root of the English word “jackal.”
- Incidentally, some experts believe that the jackal is an ancestor of the dog.
- In fact, the fox is the smallest member of the “dog family.”

IN THE BIBLE THERE'S A STORY ABOUT SAMPSON AND FOXES.

- Does anyone remember what was special about Sampson?
- At the time of this story the Philistines were ruling in Israel, and Sampson wanted to get revenge against them. (Judges 14:4)
- Sampson took 300 foxes, tied their tails together, tied a torch between each of them, and set them loose in the grain fields of the Philistines. (15:4)
- In this way he was able to burn down all their grain and olive groves.
- Do you think he should have used the foxes to wage war against his enemies? (Have we used dogs to wage war?)
- His own people turned him over to the Philistines, so they would not be attacked by them for what Sampson did.
- But the “spirit of God” came over Sampson, he broke his bonds, picked up the jawbone of a donkey, and with it struck down a thousand Philistines. (Judges 15:14-16)

IT'S TIME FOR THE FOX QUIZ!

- Can someone teach us one of the most valuable traits of the fox? (They kill rodents and keep the rabbit population under control.)
- What family of animals does the fox belong to? (Dog.)

- What does a fox and a cat have in common? (They pounce on their prey from above in much the same way.)
- What do most foxes eat? (They feed on mice, voles [rodents resembling mice and rats], rabbits, birds' eggs, fruit, large insects, and carrion.)
- How much does the average red fox weigh? (15 pounds)
- How fast can the fastest foxes run—12, 24, or 48 miles per hour? (48)

THERE IS A WELL-KNOWN PROVERB ABOUT FOXES.

- Can someone teach us what a proverb is? (A very old, wise saying.)
- This proverb says, “Be a tail to lions and not a head to foxes.”
- What do you think that might mean?
- The lion is considered intelligent and dignified; the fox is noted for its sly and cunning character, and also its foolishness.
- The proverb is teaching us that it's better to follow a leader who is intelligent and dignified than to become a leader ourselves by cunning and then to succumb to foolishness.



Gather the People

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