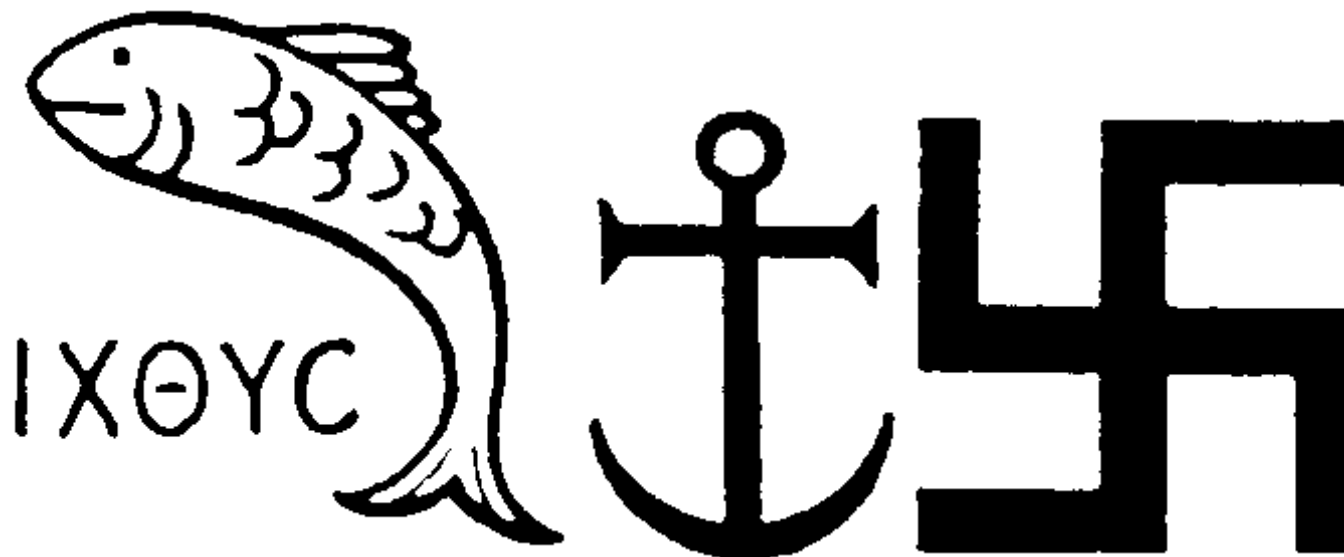


Three of the earliest Christian secret symbols which are still in use today – although only two of them by Christians!



The Greek word for Fish is ICTHUS (most of the earliest Christians would have spoken Greek as this was the official language in the eastern half of the Roman Empire). The letters were said to symbolise the Greek words Iesus Christus, Theou Uios, Soter which means “**Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Saviour**”. The sign tells us that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah (Christ), that he is God’s Son and that he is the Saviour of mankind from their sin. It is still a very popular symbol because it has so many meanings. It also links with Jesus’ promise to his first disciples that he would make them “fishers of men” (Matthew chapter 4 verse 19). The more common form of the ictus – a simple looped line, is incorporated into the cover design of this booklet!

The anchor was first used in Egypt as a Christian symbol. Christians liked it because it looked like a disguised cross and you could use it to talk about how a Christian could “anchor their life on Christ” i.e. that in the storms of life Jesus was someone you could rely on – just as a ship would rely on its anchor to keep it safe.

It may be a surprise to see a swastika here, but early Christians used it because it was a pagan good luck symbol which, of course, is another disguised cross! You can even see swastikas in the decoration of St Paul’s Cathedral! Now its meaning has changed significantly.