

~AGRICULTURE (500)

- Farming
- Israelite Agriculture
- Farming

- The cultivating of the soil and producing of crops, also the raising of livestock. **Agriculture** had its beginning in Eden, since Adam, after his creation by God, was placed in the garden to cultivate it and to take care of it.

- Now there was as yet no bush of the field found in the earth and no vegetation of the field was as yet sprouting, because Yehowah God had not made it rain upon the earth and there was no man to **cultivate** the ground. (**Genesis 2:5**)

- And Yehowah God proceeded to take the man and settle him in the garden of Eden to **cultivate** it and to take care of it. (**Genesis 2:15**)

- However, due to the unfaithfulness of the first human pair, extension of the Edenic Paradise did not result, on the contrary, the ground came under God's curse. Sweat and toil were required for one to eke out a living from the soil.

- And to Adam he said; Because you listened to your wife's voice and took to eating from the tree concerning which I gave you this command, You must not eat from it, **cursed** is the ground on your account. In pain you will eat its produce all the days of your life. (**Genesis 3:17**)

- And thorns and thistles it will grow for you, and you must eat the vegetation of the field. (**Genesis 3:18**)

- In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return. (**Genesis 3:19**)

- Adam and Eves first son, Cain, became a **cultivator** of the ground, Abel, a herder of sheep.

- Later she again gave birth, to his brother Abel. And Abel came to be a herder of sheep, but Cain became a **cultivator** of the ground.

(Genesis 4:2)

- And it came about at the expiration of some time that Cain proceeded to bring some **fruits of the ground** as an offering to Yehowah. (**Genesis 4:3**)
- But as for Abel, he too brought some **firstlings of his flock**, even their fatty pieces. Now while Yehowah was looking with favor upon Abel and his offering. (**Genesis 4:4**)
- Following the Flood, Noah started off as a **farmer and planted a vineyard.**
- Now Noah started off as a farmer and proceeded to plant a vineyard. (**Genesis 9:20**)
- At a later period Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob led essentially a nomadic and pastoral life with their flocks, somewhat like pre-Flood Jabal
- In time Adah gave birth to Jabal. He proved to be the founder of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. (**Genesis 4:20**)
- Though in the case of Isaac and Jacob there is also evidence of their **raising crops**, wheat being specifically mentioned.
- Afterward Isaac began to sow seed in that land, and in that year he was getting up to a hundred measures to one, as Yehowah was blessing him. (**Genesis 26:12**)
- But in answer to Esau Isaac continued; Here I have appointed him master over you, and all his brothers I have given to him as servants, and grain and new wine I have bestowed for his support, and where is there anything I can do for you, my son? (**Genesis 27:37**)
- Now Reuben went walking in the days of the wheat harvest and got to find mandrakes in the field. So he brought them to Leah his mother. Then Rachel said to Leah; Give me, please, some of your sons mandrakes. (**Genesis 30:14**)
- Well, here we were binding sheaves in the middle of the field when here my sheaf got up and also stood erect and here your sheaves proceeded to encircle and bow down to my sheaf.

(Genesis 37:7)

.. Israelite Agriculture

- **Excavations by archaeologists show the Palestine area to have been one of the earliest centers of **agriculture**. The Land of Promise was a very fertile land. In Lot's day the district of the Jordan was like the garden of Yehowah, like the land of Egypt as far as Zoar.**
- **So Lot raised his eyes and saw the whole District of the Jordan, that all of it was a wellwatered region before Yehowah brought Sodom and Gomorrah to ruin, like the garden of Yehowah, like the land of Egypt as far as Zoar. (Genesis 13:10)**
- **Prior to the Exodus, the nation of Israel had been well acquainted with **agriculture** down in Egypt, where wheat, flax, barley, cucumbers, watermelons, leeks, onions, garlic, and other products were grown.**
- **And the hail went striking at all the land of Egypt. The hail struck everything that was in the field, from man to beast, and all sorts of vegetation of the field, and it shattered all sorts of trees of the field. (Exodus 9:25)**
- **Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, there occurred no hail. (Exodus 9:26)**
- **As it was, the flax and the barley had been struck, because the barley was in the ear and the flax had flower buds. (Exodus 9:31)**
- **But the wheat and the spelt had not been struck, because they were seasonally late. (Exodus 9:32)**
- **How we remember the fish that we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers and the watermelons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic! (Numbers 11:5)**
- **For the land to which you are going to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt out of which you came, where you used to sow your seed and you had to do irrigating with your foot, like a garden of vegetables. (Deuteronomy 11:10)**

- Then for 40 years the nation led an unsettled way of life in the wilderness, though relatively free from the corrupting association of pagan peoples.
- Upon their entry into the Land of Promise, the nation settled down to a life of cultivation of crops and of herding. There was definite advantage to their possessing a land already under cultivation. The great majority of the Hebrews familiar with **agriculture** in Egypt had by now perished in the wilderness, and hence, few if any qualified, proficient farmers with practical experience were available to begin farming in a land that was new and strange to them.
- For who were they that heard and yet provoked to bitter anger? Did not, in fact, all do so who went out of Egypt under Moses? (**Hebrews 3:16**)
- Moreover, with whom did God become disgusted for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? (**Hebrews 3:17**)
- So, it was greatly to their advantage now to inherit houses full of all good things, cisterns hewn out, vineyards and olive trees already planted and producing.
- And it must occur that when Yehowah your God will bring you into the land that he swore to your forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give you, great and good-looking cities that you did not build. (**Deuteronomy 6:10**)
- And houses full of all good things and that you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out that you did not hew out, vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant, and you shall have eaten and become satisfied. (**Deuteronomy 6:11**)
- And you must keep the commandments of Yehowah your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. (**Deuteronomy 8:6**)
- For Yehowah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of torrent valleys of water, springs and watery deeps issuing forth in the valley plain and in the mountainous region. (**Deuteronomy 8:7**)
- A land of wheat and barley and vines and figs and pomegranates, a land of oil olives and honey. (**Deuteronomy 8:8**)

- **A land in which you will not eat bread with scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land the stones of which are iron and out of the mountains of which you will mine copper. ([Deuteronomy 8:9](#))**
- **Following the division of the land into tribal territories, plots of ground were apportioned out, evidently by use of a measuring rope.**
- **And because of them he gradually drove out the nations, and by the measuring line he went allotting them an inheritance, so that he caused the tribes of Israel to reside in their own homes. ([Psalms 78:55](#))**
- **And he proceeded to bring me there, and, look! There was a man. His appearance was like the appearance of copper, and there was a flax cord in his hand, and a measuring reed, and he was standing in the gate. ([Ezekiel 40:3](#))**
- **Therefore this is what Yehowah has said; As regards your wife, in the city she will become a prostitute. And as regards your sons and your daughters, by the sword they will fall. And as regards your ground, by the measuring rope it will be apportioned out. And as regards you yourself, on unclean ground you will die, and as regards Israel, it will without fail go into exile from its own ground. ([Amos 7:17](#))**
- **In that day one will raise up concerning you people a proverbial saying and will certainly lament a lamentation, even a lamentation. One will have to say; We have positively been despoiled! The very portion of my people he alters. How he removes it from me! To the unfaithful one he apportions out our own fields. ([Micah 2:4](#))**
- **Therefore you will come to have no one casting out the cord, by lot, in the congregation of Yehowah. ([Micah 2:5](#))**
- **Once established, such boundaries were to be honored and respected.**
- **You must not move back the boundary marks of your fellowman, when the ancestors will have set the boundaries in your inheritance that you will inherit in the land that Yehowah your God is giving you to take possession of it. ([Deuteronomy 19:14](#))**

- Cursed is the one who moves back the boundary mark of his fellowman. And all the people must say; Amen! (**Deuteronomy 27:17**)
- Do not move back a boundary of long ago, which your forefathers have made. (**Proverbs 22:28**)
- The princes of Judah have become just like those moving back a boundary. Upon them I shall pour out my fury just like water. (**Hosea 5:10**)
- There are those who move back boundary marks, a drove they have snatched away, that they may shepherd it. (**Job 24:2**)
- **Agriculture** occupied an important place in the legislation given Israel. The land belonged to Yehowah and so was not to be abused.
- So the land should not be sold in perpetuity, because the land is mine. For you are alien residents and settlers from my standpoint. (**Leviticus 25:23**)
- The land could not be sold in perpetuity, and with the exception of properties within walled cities, land sold due to misfortunes and economic reverses was to be returned to the original possessor in the Jubilee year.
- And you must sanctify the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for you, and you must return each one to his possession and you should return each one to his family. (**Leviticus 25:10**)
- So the land should not be sold in perpetuity, because the land is mine. For you are alien residents and settlers from my standpoint. (**Leviticus 25:23**)
- And in all the land of your possession you should grant to the land the right of buying back. (**Leviticus 25:24**)
- In case your brother grows poor and has to sell some of his possession, a repurchaser closely related to him must also come and buy back what his brother sold. (**Leviticus 25:25**)
- And in case anyone proves to have no repurchaser and his own hand does make gain and he does find enough for its repurchase.

(Leviticus 25:26)

- He must also calculate the years from when he sold it and he must return what money remains over to the man to whom he made the sale, and he must return to his possession. (**Leviticus 25:27**)
- But if his hand does not find enough to give back to him, what he sold must also continue in the hand of its purchaser until the Jubilee year, and it must go out in the Jubilee, and he must return to his possession. (**Leviticus 25:28**)
- Now in case a man should sell a dwelling house in a walled city, his right of repurchase must also continue till the year from the time of his sale finishes out, his right of repurchase should continue a whole year. (**Leviticus 25:29**)
- But if it should not be bought back before the complete year has come to the full for him, the house that is in the city that has a wall must also stand in perpetuity as the property of its purchaser during his generations. It should not go out in the Jubilee. (**Leviticus 25:30**)
- However, the houses of settlements that have no wall about them should be accounted as part of the field of the country. Right of repurchase should continue for it, and in the Jubilee it should go out. (**Leviticus 25:31**)
- A Sabbath rest was required every seventh year, during which the land lay fallow and its fertility was restored, thus accomplishing what is today done by rotation of crops.
- And for six years you are to sow your land with seed and you must gather its produce. (**Exodus 23:10**)
- But the seventh year you are to leave it uncultivated and you must let it lie fallow, and the poor one's of your people must eat of it, and what is left over by them the wild beasts of the field are to eat. That is the way you are to do with your vineyard and your olive grove. (**Exodus 23:11**)
- Six years you should sow your field with seed, and six years you should prune your vineyard, and you must gather the lands produce. (**Leviticus 25:3**)

- But in the seventh year there should occur a Sabbath of complete rest for the land, a Sabbath to Yehowah. Your field you must not sow with seed, and your vineyard you must not prune. (**Leviticus 25:4**)
- The growth from spilled kernels of your harvest you must not reap, and the grapes of your unpruned vine you must not gather. There should occur a year of complete rest for the land. (**Leviticus 25:5**)
- And the Sabbath of the land must serve you people for food, for you and your slave man and your slave girl and your hired laborer and the settler with you, those who are residing as aliens with you. (**Leviticus 25:6**)
- And for your domestic animal and for the wild beast that is in your land. All its produce should serve for eating. (**Leviticus 25:7**)
- Such a requirement might have appeared hazardous and was certainly a test of the nations faith in God's promise to provide in sufficient abundance to carry them through till the harvest of the succeeding year. At the same time, it encouraged prudence and foresight. The Jubilee year, every 50th year, was also a year of rest for the land.
- A Jubilee is what that fiftieth year will become for you. You must not sow seed nor reap the lands growth from spilled kernels nor gather the grapes of its unpruned vines. (**Leviticus 25:11**)
- For it is a Jubilee. It should become something holy to you. From the field you may eat what the land produces. (**Leviticus 25:12**)
- The three annual festivals that Israel was commanded to celebrate were timed to coincide with agricultural seasons, the **Festival of Unfermented Cakes** at the time of the barley harvest, **Pentecost** at the time of the wheat harvest, and the **Festival of Booths** at the time of the completion of the harvesting of crops of the outgoing year.
- Three times in the year you are to celebrate a festival to me. (**Exodus 23:14**)

- You will keep the festival of unfermented cakes. You will eat unfermented cakes seven days, just as I have commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, because in it you came out of Egypt. And they must not appear before me empty-handed. ([Exodus 23:15](#))
- Also, the festival of harvest of the first ripe fruits of your labors, of what you sow in the field, and the festival of ingathering at the outgoing of the year, when you gather in your labors from the field. ([Exodus 23:16](#))
- For the Israelites the seasons and harvest were date factors and time indicators and were used more commonly as such than the names of the calendar months. Such agricultural life also protected the Israelites in a spiritual way, since it made them largely independent of other peoples for their needs and maintained at a minimum the need for commercial intercourse with the surrounding nations.
- Though it was to be a land flowing with milk and honey for them under God's blessing, nevertheless, there were **agricultural** problems to be worked out. On condition of their obedience, there would be no need for large-scale irrigation.
- For Yehowah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of torrent valleys of water, springs and watery deeps issuing forth in the valley plain and in the mountainous region. ([Deuteronomy 8:7](#))
- And in order, that you may lengthen your days on the soil that Yehowah swore to your forefathers to give to them and their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey. ([Deuteronomy 11:9](#))
- For the land to which you are going to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt out of which you came, where you used to sow your seed and you had to do irrigating with your foot, like a garden of vegetables. ([Deuteronomy 11:10](#))
- But the land to which you are crossing to take possession of it is a land of mountains and valley plains. Of the rain of the heavens it drinks water. ([Deuteronomy 11:11](#))
- A land that Yehowah your God is caring for. The eyes of Yehowah your God are constantly upon it, from the beginning of the year to the close of the year. ([Deuteronomy 11:12](#))

- **And it must occur that if you will without fail obey my commandments that I am commanding you today so as to love Yehowah your God and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul. ([Deuteronomy 11:13](#))**
- **I also shall certainly give rain for your land at its appointed time, autumn rain and spring rain, and you will indeed gather your grain and your sweet wine and your oil. ([Deuteronomy 11:14](#))**
- **And I shall certainly give vegetation in your field for your domestic animals, and you will indeed eat and be satisfied. ([Deuteronomy 11:15](#))**
- **Watch out for yourselves for fear your heart may be enticed, and you do turn aside and worship other gods and bow down to them. ([Deuteronomy 11:16](#))**
- **And Yehowah's anger does blaze against you, and he does shut up the heavens so that no rain will occur and the ground will not give its produce and you have to perish speedily from off the good land that Yehowah is giving you. ([Deuteronomy 11:17](#))**
- **The rainy season began with the early rains about the middle of October and continued until the time of the later rains, which ended about the middle of April.**
- **I also shall certainly give rain for your land at its appointed time, autumn rain and spring rain, and you will indeed gather your grain and your sweet wine and your oil. ([Deuteronomy 11:14](#))**
- **Then followed five generally rainless months, the heat and dryness of which were alleviated by heavy dews that settled at night and refreshed the soil and plants.**
- **And may the true God give you the dews of the heavens and the fertile soils of the earth and an abundance of grain and new wine. ([Genesis 27:28](#))**
- **And Israel will reside in security, the fountain of Jacob by itself, upon a land of grain and new wine. Yes, his heavens will let the dew drip down. ([Deuteronomy 33:28](#))**

See Also DEW

- For soil conservation on slopes, terraces were apparently employed with stone walls to contain them and prevent the washing away of the vital topsoil. Archaeological excavations show as many as 60 or more of such terraces rising one above another on some hillsides. To ensure the safety of the crops, booths or huts or even permanent towers were built in the vineyards and fields so that a watchman could be stationed to survey the surrounding areas.

- And the daughter of Zion has been left remaining like a booth in a vineyard, like a lookout hut in a field of cucumbers, like a blockaded city. ([Isaiah 1:8](#))

- And he proceeded to dig it up and to rid it of stones and to plant it with a choice red vine, and to build a tower in the middle of it. And there was also a winepress that he hewed out in it. And he kept hoping for it to produce grapes, but it gradually produced wild grapes. ([Isaiah 5:2](#))

- Hear another illustration; There was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and erected a tower, and let it out to cultivators, and traveled abroad. ([Matthew 21:33](#))

- King Uzziah is particularly mentioned as a lover of **agriculture**, literally, the ground.

- Further, he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns, for there was a great deal of livestock that became his, and also in the Shephelah and on the tableland. There were farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for a lover of **agriculture** he proved to be. ([2 Chronicles 26:10](#))

- Though subsequent disobedience led to a withdrawal of God's blessing and brought as a consequence **agricultural** disasters through crop failures, droughts, locust plagues, mildew, and other problems, and though the destruction of much of the woodlands and the failure to maintain systems of terracing over a period of many centuries have led to a washing away of vast amounts of topsoil in much of Palestine, the remaining soil generally continues to be of great fertility to the present time.

See Also HARVEST

See Also SOWER

See Also SOWING
See Also THRESHING