

~PLOWING (469)

.. Illustrative Use

- Conclusions as to the type of plow used by Hebrew farmers in Biblical times are dependent on ancient pictures of plows used in neighboring lands and on plows used in recent times by some Arab farmers.
- Some plows consisted of a simple pointed piece of wood, perhaps metal-tipped, attached to a beam and pulled by an animal or animals. Using such a type, plowing likely only cut the surface of the soil without turning it over.
- Of course, lack of direct evidence precludes ruling out the possibility that more substantial plows were used in Israel.
- With soil baked hard by the hot summer sun, the practice was to hold up plowing until the autumn or winter rains softened the soil. The soil was then plowed and the seed sown.
- Colder days or times of uncertain weather or threatening clouds would not deter a manly person from work in the plowing season, but a lazy farmer would seize upon such as excuse to avoid work.
- His neighbors would have no reason to sympathize with him when he had no harvest because of his laziness at plowing time.
- Because of winter the lazy one will not **plow**, he will be begging in reaping time, but there will be nothing. (**Proverbs 20:4**)
- He that is watching the wind will not sow seed, and he that is looking at the clouds will not reap. (**Ecclesiastes 11:4**)
- Even in **plowing** time, though, Israelite farmers were to keep the Sabbath.
- Six days you are to labor, but on the seventh day you will keep Sabbath. In **plowing** time and in harvest you will keep Sabbath. (**Exodus 34:21**)
- A bull and an ass were not to be yoked to the same plow, doubtless because of the inequality of their strength and pace.

- You must not **plow** with a bull and an ass together. (Deuteronomy 22:10)
- Often a pair of cattle pulled the **plow**.
- And another said; I bought five yoke of cattle and am going to examine them; I ask you, Have me excused. (Luke 14:19)
- And there came a messenger to Job, and he proceeded to say; The cattle themselves happened to be **plowing** and the she-asses were grazing at the side of them (Job 1:14)
- A number of men, each with a pair, or span, of cattle, might work together, **plowing** parallel rows one behind the other. In Elisha's case, as related at;
- Accordingly he went from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat while he was **plowing** with twelve spans before him, and he with the twelfth. So Elijah crossed over to him and threw his official garment upon him. (1 Kings 19:19)
- He was the 12th and last so he could stop without disrupting others following him. He left the field and used his wood **plowing** instruments as firewood in offering the bulls as a sacrifice.
- So he returned from following him and then took a span of the bulls and sacrificed them, and with the implements of the bulls he boiled their flesh and then gave it to the people, and they proceeded to eat. After that he rose up and went following Elijah and began to minister to him. (1 Kings 19:21)
- In *The Land and the Book* [revised by J. Grande, 1910, p. 121], W. M. Thomson reports that one man could easily sow the area **plowed** by a group of men.

.. Illustrative Use

- The familiar work of **plowing** often was used as the basis for an illustration. When Philistines convinced Samson's wife to obtain from him the answer to his riddle, Samson said they had **plowed** with his young cow, that is, **used for their service** one who should have been serving him.

- So he returned from following him and then took a span of the bulls and sacrificed them, and with the implements of the bulls he boiled their flesh and then gave it to the people, and they proceeded to eat. After that he rose up and went following Elijah and began to minister to him. (**1 Kings 19:21**)
- As for Ben-hadad the king of Syria, he collected all his military forces together and also thirty-two kings with him and horses and chariots, and he proceeded to go up and lay siege to Samaria and fight against it. (**1 Kings 20:1**)
- Then he sent messengers to Ahab the king of Israel at the city. And he went on to say to him; This is what Ben-hadad has said; (**1 Kings 20:2**)
- A rocky crag is no place for **plowing**, and as Amos shows, it was equally irrational for Israel's leaders to corrupt justice and practice unrighteousness and yet expect to derive benefit from such a course.
- On a crag will horses run, or will one plow there with cattle? For into a poisonous plant you people have turned justice, and the fruitage of righteousness into wormwood. (**Amos 6:12**)
- You who are rejoicing in a thing that is not, who are saying; Have we not in our strength taken horns to ourselves? (**Amos 6:13**)
- And Ephraim was a trained heifer loving to thresh, and I, for my part, passed over her good-looking neck. I make someone ride Ephraim. Judah **plows**. Jacob harrows for him. (**Hosea 10:11**)
- Evidently uses **plowing**, a much harder work for a heifer than threshing was, to represent laborious or slavish labor, likely imposed by foreign oppressors, that was due to come on apostate Judah. What Judah and Israel needed, according to
- For this is what Yehowah has said to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem; **Plow** for yourselves arable land, and do not keep sowing among thorns. (**Jeremiah 4:3**)
- Get yourselves circumcised to Yehowah, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, that my rage may not go forth just like a fire, and it certainly burn with no one to do the extinguishing, on account of

the badness of your dealings. (Jeremiah 4:4)

- **Sow seed for yourselves in righteousness, reap in accord with loving-kindness. Till for yourselves arable land, when there is time for searching for Yehowah until he comes and gives instruction in righteousness to you. (Hosea 10:12)**
- **You people have plowed wickedness. Unrighteousness is what you have reaped. You have eaten the fruitage of deception, for you have trusted in your way, in the multitude of your mighty ones. (Hosea 10:13)**
- **Was a change in their way of life, preparing, softening, and cleansing their hearts**
- **A sower went out to sow his seed. Well, as he was sowing, some of it fell alongside the road and was trampled down, and the birds of heaven ate it up. (Luke 8:5)**
- **Some other landed upon the rock-mass, and, after sprouting, it dried up because of not having moisture. (Luke 8:6)**
- **Some other fell among the thorns, and the thorns that grew up with it choked it off. (Luke 8:7)**
- **Some other fell upon the good soil, and, after sprouting, it produced fruit a hundredfold. As he told these things, he proceeded to call out; Let him that has ears to listen, listen. (Luke 8:8)**
- **But his disciples began to ask him what this illustration might mean. (Luke 8:9)**
- **He said; To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of the kingdom of God, but for the rest it is in illustrations, in order, that, though looking, they may look in vain and, though hearing, they may not get the meaning. (Luke 8:10)**
- **Now the illustration means this. The seed is the word of God. (Luke 8:11)**
- **Those alongside the road are the ones that have heard, then the Devil comes and takes the word away from their hearts in order, that they may not believe and be saved. (Luke 8:12)**

- Those upon the rock-mass are the ones who, when they hear it, receive the word with joy, but these have no root, they believe for a season, but in a season of testing they fall away. (Luke 8:13)
- As for that which fell among the thorns, these are the ones that have heard, but, by being carried away by anxieties and riches and pleasures of this life, they are completely choked and bring nothing to perfection. (Luke 8:14)
- As for that on the fine soil, these are the ones that, after hearing the word with a fine and good heart, retain it and bear fruit with endurance. (Luke 8:15)
- As by **plowing** and removing thorns, so that, instead of wasting their efforts and labor in wrong practices that bring only a bad harvest, they might instead reap divine blessings.
- The description of the orderly, purposeful, and judicious methods of the farmer in **plowing**, harrowing, sowing, and threshing are used at;
- Give ear, you men, and listen to my voice, pay attention and listen to my saying; (Isaiah 28:23)
- Is it all day long that the plower plows in order to sow seed, that he loosens and harrows his ground? (Isaiah 28:24)
- Does he not, when he has smoothed out its surface, then scatter black cumin and sprinkle the cumin, and must he not put in wheat, millet, and barley in the appointed place, and spelt as his boundary? (Isaiah 28:25)
- And one corrects him according to what is right. His own God instructs him. (Isaiah 28:26)
- For it is not with a threshing instrument that black cumin is given a treading, and upon cumin no wheel of a wagon is turned. For it is with a rod that black cumin is generally beaten out, and cumin with a staff. (Isaiah 28:27)
- Is breadstuff itself generally crushed? For never does one incessantly keep treading it out. And he must set the roller of his wagon in motion, and his own steeds, but he will not crush it.

(Isaiah 28:28)

- This also is what has come forth from Yehowah of armies himself, who has been wonderful in counsel, who has done greatly in effectual working. **(Isaiah 28:29)**
- To illustrate the ways of Yehowah, who is wonderful in counsel, who has done greatly in effectual working. Even as **plowing** and harrowing are limited, being merely preparatory to sowing, so, too, Yehowah does not forever discipline or punish his people, but he disciplines primarily to soften them and make them amenable to receiving his counsel and guidance, which produce blessings.
- In carrying on your contest against that sin you have never yet resisted as far as blood. **(Hebrews 12:4)**
- But you have entirely forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons; My son, do not belittle the discipline from Yehowah, neither give out when you are corrected by him. **(Hebrews 12:5)**
- For whom Yehowah loves he disciplines, in fact, he scourges every one whom he receives as a son. **(Hebrews 12:6)**
- It is for discipline you are enduring. God is dealing with you as with sons. For what son is he that a father does not discipline? **(Hebrews 12:7)**
- But if you are without the discipline of which all have become partakers, you are really illegitimate children, and not sons. **(Hebrews 12:8)**
- Furthermore, we used to have fathers who were of our flesh to discipline us, and we used to give them respect. Shall we not much more subject ourselves to the Father of our spiritual life and live? **(Hebrews 12:9)**
- For they for a few days used to discipline us according to what seemed good to them, but he does so for our profit that we may partake of his holiness. **(Hebrews 12:10)**
- True, no discipline seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous, yet afterward to those who have been trained by it, it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness. **(Hebrews 12:11)**

- Even as the hardness of the soil governs the extent or intensity of the **plowing**, so the type of grain determines the force and weight of the instruments used for threshing to eliminate the chaff, all of this illustrating God's wisdom in cleansing his people and getting rid of whatever is undesirable, varying his treatment according to existing needs and circumstances.
- O my threshed ones and the son of my threshing floor, what I have heard from Yehowah of armies, the God of Israel, I have reported to you people. (**Isaiah 21:10**)
- And I will turn back my hand upon you, and I shall smelt away your scummy dross as with lye, and I will remove all your waste products. (**Isaiah 1:25**)
- A city **plowed** up as a mere field meant a city completely overturned and laid waste.
- Micah of Moresheth himself happened to be prophesying in the days of Hezekiah the king of Judah and went on to say to all the people of Judah, This is what Yehowah of armies has said; Zion herself will be plowed up as a mere field, and Jerusalem herself will become mere heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the House will be for high places of a forest. (**Jeremiah 26:18**)
- Therefore on account of you men Zion will be plowed up as a mere field, and Jerusalem herself will become mere heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the house will be as the high places of a forest. (**Micah 3:12**)
- Israel's speaking of those who had **plowed** upon my very back, lengthening their furrows, evidently describes the nations sufferings under its many enemies who relentlessly and cruelly overran and mistreated them, as Israel made its back just like the earth for those crossing over.
- Long enough they have shown hostility to me from my youth, Let Israel now say; (**Psalms 129:1**)
- Long enough they have shown hostility to me from my youth; Yet they have not prevailed over me. (**Psalms 129:2**)
- Plowmen have **plowed** upon my very back, they have lengthened their furrows. (**Psalms 129:3**)

- **And I will put it in the hand of the ones irritating you, who have said to your soul, Bow down that we may cross over, so that you used to make your back just like the earth, and like the street for those crossing over. (Isaiah 51:23)**
- **You have made mortal man to ride over our head, we have come through fire and through water, and you proceeded to bring us forth to relief. (Psalms 66:12)**
- **In the restoration prophecy at;**
- **Look! There are days coming, is the utterance of Yehowah, and the plowman will actually overtake the harvester, and the treader of grapes, the carrier of the seed, and the mountains must drip with sweet wine, and the very hills will all find themselves melting. (Amos 9:13)**
- **And I will gather back the captive ones of my people Israel, and they will actually build the desolated cities and inhabit them, and plant vineyards and drink the wine of them, and make gardens and eat the fruit of them. (Amos 9:14)**
- **And I shall certainly plant them upon their ground, and they will no more be uprooted from their ground that I have given them, Yehowah your God has said. (Amos 9:15)**
- **Yehowah's blessing is shown to make the soil so productive that the harvest is still going on when the time comes to **plow** for the next season.**
- **And your threshing will certainly reach to your grape gathering, and the grape gathering will reach to the sowing of seed, and you will indeed eat your bread to satisfaction and dwell in security in your land. (Leviticus 26:5)**
- **Even as Jesus had said that his disciples should accept food, drink, and lodging from those they served, since the worker is worthy of his wages, so the apostle Paul upheld the right of those laboring in Christian ministry to receive material support from others, just as the man who plows does so with the legitimate hope of being a partaker of the harvest to which his labor contributed.**

- **Yet Paul personally and willingly preferred not to avail himself of the right to refrain from secular work, so as to furnish the Good News without cost to those to whom he ministered.**
- **So stay in that house, eating and drinking the things they provide, for the worker is worthy of his wages. Do not be transferring from house to house. (Luke 10:7)**
- **My defense to those who examine me is as follows. (1 Corinthians 9:3)**
- **We have authority to eat and drink, do we not? (1 Corinthians 9:4)**
- **We have authority to lead about a sister as a wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the Lords brothers and Cephas, do we not? (1 Corinthians 9:5)**
- **Or is it only Barnabas and I that do not have authority to refrain from secular work? (1 Corinthians 9:6)**
- **Who is it that ever serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who shepherds a flock and does not eat some of the milk of the flock? (1 Corinthians 9:7)**
- **Am I speaking these things by human standards? Or does not the Law also say these things? (1 Corinthians 9:8)**
- **For in the Law of Moses it is written: You must not muzzle a bull when it is threshing out the grain. Is it bulls God is caring for? (1 Corinthians 9:9)**
- **Or is it altogether for our sakes he says it? Really for our sakes it was written, because the man who **plows** ought to **plow** in hope and the man who threshes ought to do so in hope of being a partaker. (1 Corinthians 9:10)**
- **But I have not made use of a single one of these provisions. Indeed, I have not written these things that it should become so in my case, for it would be finer for me to die than, no man is going to make my reason for boasting void! (1 Corinthians 9:15)**
- **If I perform this willingly, I have a reward. But if I do it against**

my will, all the same I have a stewardship entrusted to me. (**1 Corinthians 9:17**)

- What, then, is my reward? That while declaring the Good News I may furnish the Good News without cost, to the end that I may not abuse my authority in the Good News. (**1 Corinthians 9:18**)
- Jesus Christ referred to the work of **plowing** to emphasize the importance of wholehearted discipleship. When a man expressed his desire to be a disciple but stipulated the condition of being permitted first to say good-bye to his household, Jesus replied; No man that has put his hand to a **plow** and looks at the things behind is well fitted for the kingdom of God.
- And still another said; I will follow you, Lord, but first permit me to say good-bye to those in my household. (**Luke 9:61**)
- Jesus said to him; No man that has put his hand to a **plow** and looks at the things behind is well fitted for the kingdom of God. (**Luke 9:62**)
- If a **plowman** allowed himself to be distracted from the work at hand, he would make crooked furrows. Similarly, the person who is invited to Christian discipleship but permits himself to be turned aside from carrying out the attendant responsibilities would become unfit for God's Kingdom.
- As the Son of God exemplified in his own case, even the most intimate family ties are subordinate to faithfulness in the accomplishment of the divine will.
- Now his mother and his brothers came, and, as they were standing on the outside, they sent in to him to call him. (**Mark 3:31**)
- As it was, a crowd was sitting around him, so they said to him; Look! Your mother and your brothers outside are seeking you. (**Mark 3:32**)
- But in reply he said to them; Who are my mother and my brothers? (**Mark 3:33**)
- And having looked about upon those sitting around him in a circle, he said; See, my mother and my brothers! (**Mark 3:34**)

- **Whoever does the will of God, this one is my brother and sister and mother. (Mark 3:35)**
- **Jesus said; Truly I say to you men, no one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the Good News (Mark 10:29)**
- **Who will not get a hundredfold now in this period of time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in the coming system of things everlasting life. (Mark 10:30)**