CHAPTER - IV

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY
In this chapter, a descriptive and an analytical examination have been made on the basis of various documents and biblical texts. The analysis has been made on the following sections of the Bible such as agricultural productions and techniques, various foodstuffs, agrarian laws, distribution system and exchange system.

4.1 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS AND TECHNIQUES

A. Background and Development of Agriculture

Agriculture was the economic backbone of biblical Israel, where it was practised by city dwellers as well as villagers. Its influence was very strong on many facets of daily life, including religion, law, and social behaviour. The biblical farmer was the heir to a long agricultural tradition which originated in the Near East (West Asia) sometime before the Neolithic period (ca 7000 B.C.E.) with the domestication of plants and animals.

However, while the biblical farmer did not introduce any new species, he improved farming methods and techniques for utilizing the produce. Domestication of food plants and animals was an important factor in the establishment of permanent villages. The earliest domesticated plants were cereals and legumes. Fruit trees were domesticated much later ca 4000 B.C.E. and included olives, vine, dates, pomegranates, and figs. Among the earliest
domesticated animals were sheep and goats which continue to dominate animal husbandry up to the present. Documentary and archaeological evidence show that the last animal to be domesticated was the camel during the transition period from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age. The appearance of the camel in the Bible as a household animal of the Midianites in the Gideon Stories agrees with archaeological findings.¹

Canaan’s agricultural richness was recognized already in the early historical times as evidenced by Egyptian records from the old, middle and new kingdom. Her agricultural wealth made her a target for invading armies coming to boot.

The repertoire of plants cultivated by biblical farmers included several types of cereals, legumes, vegetables and spices, and a variety of fruit trees, each of which was grown in the area most suitable for it. The country is divided into several regions, highlands and valleys, each dominated by different geomorphological and climatic conditions, which determine soil bypass and water availability, the most important factors in agriculture. The short rainy season, the fluctuation in precipitation, and the rocky and hilly nature of most of the terrain made agriculture hard to practise; yet by careful selection of the proper species it became the mainstay of the country’s economy throughout history. Some solutions to these problems were

¹ Judg. 6: 5; 7: 12; 8: 26.
provided by the development and wide use of terracing and run-off farming in the highlands and in the Negeb, and the improvement of water collection and storage in underground reservoirs. Some scholars suggest that these factors enabled the Israelites to settle down in the Galilean, Samarian, and Judean highlands and overtake the land either by force or slow encroachment. Later, during the monarchical period, these methods allowed settlement in newly acquired lands and along trade routes for defence and economic reasons.

Land could be owned by individuals\(^2\), royalty\(^3\), and the priesthood\(^4\), all of whom, according to Israelite ideology, served as safekeepers because the land ultimately belonged to Yahweh.

**B. Conditions of Agriculture**

Conditions for agriculture in the Near East (West Asia), and especially in Israel, were not favourable. Many hardships were encountered by farmers, and these included lack of sufficient amount of water and soil. The terrain in most cases was uneven and rocky, and very few natural water sources were available; thus, farming in biblical times depended heavily on rain\(^5\) and on the

\(^2\) Num. 27: 1-8; Deut. 21: 15-17, 1 Kgs 21: 1-3.
\(^3\) 1 Chr. 21: 26-28.
\(^4\) Num. 35: 1-8.
\(^5\) Deut. 12: 11.
ability of the farmer to clear and prepare the land.  

Since the rainy season is short and droughts were common, agriculture was always considered dependent upon the grace of the supernatural, be it the Canaanite fertility and nature gods or Yahweh. For the Israelite farmer, the dependence on Yahweh meant the observance of the covenant, which was rewarded by "rain... in its season." Other conditions which caused crop failure included diseases, locust attacks and pests such as mice, worms, fruit bats and weeds. Several of the plant diseases were mentioned either by name or by symptom.

On the other hand, the farmer could restore soil fertility and increase his yield by several methods, which were not specifically mentioned in texts but could be surmised from written descriptions of certain practices or through analysis of the technology available to the farmer. Fallowing, using the Sabbatical year or another programme, and organic fertilizing were probably used to a certain degree. The last one included the use of dung, compost and ash. There is a very strong possibility that crop rotation, suggested by Isaiah was also used as a method for increasing crop yield and

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6 Josh. 17: 17-18; Isa. 5: 2.
7 Deut. 11: 13-17.
8 Amas 7: 1; Joel 1: 4; 2: 25.
9 Isa. 5: 2, 4.
10 Exod. 23: 10-11.
11 Isaiah 28: 24-29.
reducing plant diseases. One of the elements available to the biblical farmer for crop rotation and increased yield was ‘green manuring’, the cultivation of legume plants to increase nitrogen presence and its availability to other plants.

C. Hardships faced by the Palestinian Farmer

Nothing grows easily in Palestine. The entire year was one of unending failure and it was literally in the sweat of his face that the farmer ate bread and was also able to provide himself with most, if not all, of the basic necessities of life.

i) Nature of the Land

Although the land was better in ancient times than it is now, with thicker layers of fertile soil overlaying the rock beneath, still there were abundant references to stones which made the work of the farmer very difficult. “He digged it and cleared it of stones”\(^{12}\) is a sentence that tell of the first and constant activity of every farmer.

Not only is the land stony, but it is also very hilly and was so in ancient times. The number of fertile valleys is limited indeed, and a high percentage of the farming has to be done on hillsides. As early as the Middle Bronze Age terracing was used in order to give the farmer a larger cultivable area. On the other hand, the soil in many parts of both the hills and the plains is very suitable for

\(^{12}\) Isa. 5: 2.
agricultural purposes, and it was possible in some areas to grow latter crops of grain in one year. Even today, after a great amount of erosion in the intervening centuries, the land in many parts of Palestine can yield richly if sufficient water is available.

ii. Climate

The Palestinian farmer not only faced the problem of tilling a land difficult at best, but likewise found himself at the mercy of a varied climate. Palestine is a land of climatic contrasts. One of the most striking aspects of the climate is the five-month summer season without a drop of rain. The Israelite farmer could look forward to a hot, dry season from the middle of May to the middle of October, for which he would have to prepare during the rainy winter months. But though the summer drought was certain, the rainy season was unpredictable. If there were abundant rains, then the crops would be good; but if not, then there would be famine.

iii. The Problem of Water

The only safeguard for the farmer was to furnish himself with adequate storage places for water. Hence there were a large number of cisterns that were hewed out at every major site in Palestine. Even then there might be too little rain to fill the cisterns. In the Nabatean, Roman, and Byzantine periods a strong, central

13 Amos 7: 1.
14 II Chr. 26: 10; Neh. 9: 25.
Irrigation System
government was able to draft men to build dams and reservoirs which helped materially in raising the total productivity of the land.

In the earlier periods in addition to the cisterns the farmer made use of springs and perennial streams for purposes of artificial irrigation. Such water would have to be carried or, when possible, run into the fields by means of water canals. That the term 'bucket'\(^{15}\) refers to something used for irrigation purposes is not certain; but no doubt the Israelite farmer discovered that when he was able to get additional water into his land, his crops were that much more abundant.

iv. Other factors

In addition to the question of rainfall, other factors also materially affected the farmer and his crops. Numerous references to dew attest to the value it had for the production of good crops.\(^{16}\) The lack of dew was taken as a sign of catastrophe or of God's disfavour.\(^{17}\) The heavy dew comes in late August and September, and the Arab farmer today eagerly awaits it. So valuable is the dew that he goes out in the light of the moon or in the early morning to till his tomato plants or to turn the earth around his vines so as to preserve as much of the precious moisture as possible. Even in the dry summer a cool night may produce a heavy fall of dew and thus

\(^{15}\) Num. 24: 7; Isa. 40: 15.

\(^{16}\) Gen. 27: 28; Deut. 33: 28; Pra. 19: 12; Hos. 14: 5; Zech. 8: 12.

\(^{17}\) II Sam. 1: 21; 1 Kings 17: 1; Hag. 1: 10.
help to prevent the plants from being scorched by the next day’s sun.

The hot winds could play havoc with any growing thing.\textsuperscript{18} The siroccos occur from the middle of September to the end of October. They last from three days to a week, during which time the temperature rises as much as twenty degrees Fahrenheit above the average and the air is filled with a yellowish haze. The humidity drops sharply, and almost every drop of moisture seemed to be wrung out of the air. A prolonged sirocco was one of the farmer’s most dreaded experiences.

Finally, insects and plant diseases greatly increased the probability of crop failure. Of these, probably the locust was the most dreaded.\textsuperscript{19} In a few days a plague of locusts could devour a whole countryside, leaving nothing but a few dry stalks. Against this disaster the ancient farmer had no protection; his only hope lay in the sudden rise of a strong, steady wind.\textsuperscript{20} The Israelite farmer was also bothered by fungus growth, especially mildew.\textsuperscript{21} It attacks the leaves of plants, finally destroying the plant altogether. Mildew is always mentioned along with ‘blasting’, ‘scorching’, or ‘blight’.

\textsuperscript{18} Isa. 27: 8; 40: 6-8; Ezek. 17: 10; Hos. 13: 15; Luke 12: 55.
\textsuperscript{19} Deut. 28: 42; 1 Kings 8: 37; Joel 1: 4.
\textsuperscript{20} Exod. 10: 19.
\textsuperscript{21} Dent. 28: 22; 1 Kings 8: 37; Amos 4: 9; Hag. 2: 17.
D. Agricultural Production Techniques and their Use

Compared to the farmer today in most parts of the world, including modern Palestine, the work of the Israelite farmer was made doubly difficult by the primitive implements which he had at his disposal.

i) Plow

His plough was hardly more than a wooden stick with a small metal point, drawn by oxen. Until ca the tenth century B.C., the points were made of copper or bronze, but after that they were made of iron. These were larger and harder but even then they hardly scratched more the surface perhaps to a maximum depth of five inches. A few references to other operations such as levelling and harrowing suggest other processes which may have involved the use of a hoe.

ii) Sickle

Reaping was done with a small hand sickle. The reaper held the stalks in his hand and cut them off close to the ground with the sickle. This method was still commonly in use in Palestine until ca. the tenth century B.C. Sickles were made of flints set in a haft;

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\begin{align*}
\text{22} & \quad 1 \text{ Kings 19: 19.} \\
\text{23} & \quad \text{Isa. 28: 24-25; Hos. 10: 11.} \\
\text{24} & \quad \text{Isa. 7: 25.} \\
\text{25} & \quad \text{Deut. 16: 9; 23: 25; Jor. 50: 16; Joel 3: 13.}
\end{align*}
\]
Agricultural Instruments
after the tenth century they were made of iron. In both cases they more or less resembled the modern sickle.

iii) Threshing Instruments

After the grain was cut, it was taken to the threshing place, where the kernels were separated from the stalks. This might be done in any one of several ways: by breaking it out with a stick; by driving the cattle around on the filed-up stalks until their hoofs gradually trampled out the grain; or by dragging some kind of instrument over the grain.

iv) Winnowing Instruments

When the grain was threshed, the next operation was winnowing. Two instruments were used. The former was probably a long-handled fork with several prongs. The latter might have been a shovel-like instrument. In the afternoon the wind started to blow; at this time the winnowing process began. The grain was thrown up into the air, the wind blowing the lighter materials away while the heavier kernels fell to the ground. This was continued until there was little left but a pile of kernels.

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26 Judg. 6: 11; Ruth 2: 17.
27 Deut. 25: 4.
28 Amos. 2: 13; 2 Sam. 24: 22.
29 Isa. 41: 16.
30 Jer. 15: 7; Isa. 30: 24.
31 Ps. 1: 4.
Storage
v) Sieve

Even then, however, one process remained that of shifting, since in the winnowing process not all the foreign material would be carried away. The implement used for this purpose was the sieve.\(^{32}\)

vi) Seeder

It is doubtful whether the Israelite farmer had an instrument for planting seed, although such a seeder, consisting of a tube attached to the plow, did exist in Mesopotamia. Probably the seed was scattered over the land by hand, as in Egypt.

E. Storage

With the processes of harvesting were completed, the farmer had either to store or to dispose of his produce. At certain periods apparently enough was produced for export,\(^{33}\) but for the most part it was necessary to store it for their own use. The ubiquitous storage jar found in nearly every archaeological excavation attests to the manner in which grain, oil, and wine were kept, especially in homes and shops. Larger quantities of grain might be kept in dry cisterns or silos built for this purpose. Luke\(^{34}\) pictures a wealthy landowner who discovered that the barns he already had were not

\(^{32}\) Amos. 9: 9; Isa. 30: 28.

\(^{33}\) 1 Kings 5: 11, Ezek. 27: 17.

Ploughing

Syrian Traders in Egypt
large enough for the great produce he was in the process of accumulating.

F. Workers

The Gezer calendar serves to remind us that, month in and month out, many Israelites spent their time in the fields:

His two months are (olive) harvest,
    His two months are planting (grain),
    His two months are late planting;
His month is hoeing up of flax,
    His month is harvest of barley,
    His month is harvest and feasting;
His two months are vine-tending,
    His month is summer fruit.

One will quickly notice that all twelve months of the year are accounted for! We see clearly that the times and the seasons were marked by the harvest: No one in a farmer’s family was exempt from the work. Owners and slaves, young men, women and children, can all be seen doing their part.\(^{35}\) It was axiomatic that one who tilled his soil would not be in want.\(^{36}\)

During the day the villages would be empty, as nearly every able-bodied person went out into the fields. Even at night many

\(^{35}\) Ruth 2; II Kings 4: 18; Isa. 61: 5.
\(^{36}\) Prov. 12: 11.
Harvesting Activities
would be absent from their homes guarding the ripening crop or the threshed grain. Also in the fields, vineyards, and olive groves were the gleaners following behind the workers to gather up anything that had been left behind. This was their right according to the law and constituted a means whereby the widow and orphan who had no means of support of their own could get their food. But it was not all drudgery. At the close of the day's work there was a freedom of spirit, and the harvest time was marked by unrestrained gaiety.

G. Agricultural Products

What knowledge we have of the subject is drawn from biblical references to methods bearing a close similarity to those of the present day, from artifacts uncovered in Palestine and surrounding countries and from the few drawings of farming, scenes on Egyptian and Mesopotamian movements. We cannot expect exploration to furnish us with a complete view of ancient Palestinian agriculture, but such glimpses as it does afford us are most illuminating.

Four branches of agriculture were more important than others:

1. the care of vineyards,

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37 Deut. 24: 19-21.
38 Ruth 3: 7.
2. the orcharding of olives,
3. the growing of grains, and
4. the raising of flocks.

Most households owned fields and vineyards, and the richer added to these a wealth of flocks. The description of Job’s wealth shows that he was engaged in all these pursuits. Hezekiah’s riches as enumerated in 2 Ch. 32: 27 ff also suggest activity in each of these branches.

The Crops

Three crops dominated the agricultural life of the country: the vine, the olive and grain:

Wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man’s heart.\(^{40}\)

Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil.\(^{41}\)

These three products appear together in innumerable passages attesting both to their importance and to their widespread cultivation.\(^{42}\)

\(^{40}\) Ps. 104: 15.
\(^{41}\) Joel 2: 109.
\(^{42}\) Gen. 27: 28; Deut. 7: 13; II Kings 18: 32; Neh. 5: 11; Hos. 2: 8; Joel 1: 10; Hag. 1: 11.
The Vine

The grape vine was no doubt very widely grown throughout the whole Mediterranean world.\textsuperscript{43} It grew well and, once planted, required a minimum amount of care: mainly loosening the ground occasionally and pruning in the spring when the first blossoms appeared. Just as today, so in ancient times there might have been a variety of kinds. The fruit of the vine was no doubt eaten fresh, as well as dried into raisins. For the most part, however, the grapes were turned into wine by being trampled in the vineyard located either in the vineyard or nearby.

Olive Trees

The olive tree, a plant perfectly suited to the climate of Palestine with its shallow soil, sunny summer months, and heavy dew, provided the chief source of cooking oil. Although the olive required much care in the growing and pruning stage, the harvest period was long and could be made to fit the farmer’s schedule. From September to December the fruit could be picked or gathered from the ground. It was then taken to the ubiquitous oil press and connected into the oil so widely used for cooking, illumination, and anointing. As with the grapes, some olives were always kept for eating, after treatment either with salt or brine.

\textsuperscript{43} Num. 6: 4; Jud 13: 14.
Similarly, olive presses were very numerous in Palestine. Presses were found in the stratum of the cave-dwellers of Gezer. The olive industry was, accordingly, very old. Olive presses comprised, in addition to the vat, an upright stone with a large hole in it. In this hole a beam was inserted. This beam rested on the olives which were to be pressed, extending for beyond the receptacle containing the olives, and weights were hung on the end farthest from the stone. Palestine in ancient times, as now, was covered with olive orchards, many of which had oil presses. Such an orchard was called a garden. The garden of Gethsemane, the scene of one of the most sacred incidents of the life of Christ,\(^4^4\) was an olive orchard and took its name from the oil press. Gethsemane means ‘Oil Press’. Wine vats and oil presses were of various types.

**Grains**

The third crop is grain. Of the grains wheat was undoubtedly the most important. It probably grew best in Galilee. It was planted in the fall when the winter rains had started, sometimes in late October or early November and harvested in May–June. Barley was widely grown but might have been at times considered a second class food. Barley was planted at about the same time as the wheat but harvested about a month earlier.\(^4^5\) A third grain was spelt. It is

\(^4^4\) Matt. 26: 36; Mark 14: 32.

\(^4^5\) Ruth. 2: 23.
Harvesting Activities

Grinding instruments
also translated as 'rye'.\textsuperscript{46} It was an inferior kind of wheat and was planted around the borders of the wheat and barley fields.

**Flocks and Herds**

The leaders of ancient Israel reckoned their flocks as a necessary part of their wealth. When a man’s flocks were his sole possession, he often lived with them and led them in search of pasturage,\textsuperscript{47} but a man with other interests delegated this task to his sons\textsuperscript{48} or to hired help.\textsuperscript{49} The flocks furnished both food and raiment. The milk of camels, sheep, and goats was used fresh or made into curdled milk, butter, or cheese. More rarely the flesh of these animals was eaten. The peasant’s outer coat was still made of a tawed sheepskin or woven of goats’ hair or wool.

**Flax**

Another important crop was flax from which cloth and rope were made.\textsuperscript{50} Flax was harvested a month before the barley, by being hoed off at the ground so as not to lose any of the stalk. After it was cut, it was laid out in the sun to dry.\textsuperscript{51}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[46] Exod. 9: 32.
\item[47] Ps. 23; Mt. 18: 12.
\item[48] Is. 16: 11.
\item[49] Jn 10: 12.
\item[50] Judg. 15: 14; Hos. 2: 5.
\item[51] Josh. 2: 6.
\end{footnotes}
Dates

Although there is no explicit mention in the Bible of dates as food, numerous references to the palm tree strongly suggest that its cultivation also played an important part in the life of the farmer. The date palm was known over a large part of the ancient Near East (West Asia) in the south latitudes and in Palestine. It flourished especially in the Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea.\footnote{Deut. 34: 3; Judg. 1: 16.}

Other Crops

Other agricultural products included figs and pomegranates; lentils, coarse beans, chick-peas, and cucumbers, onions, leeks and garlic for flavouring. Of these the fig was especially important, since it along with the date, was the main source of sugar in the diet. Of special interest was the sycamore fig; it was specially treated to make it grow larger and more edible.\footnote{Amos 7: 14.} Such passages\footnote{Num. 11: 5; 1 Sam. 25: 18.} suggest the general nature of the diet of ancient Israel and hence of the crops most commonly grown.

H. Influence on Culture

Agriculture dominated not only the economy but the whole of Israelite daily life. The Bible is saturated with agricultural symbolism, similes, and metaphors in parables, proverbs,
prophecies, admonitions, hymns, and other literary forms.\textsuperscript{55} Many laws related to agriculture were formulated, such as those protecting the family inheritance,\textsuperscript{56} concerning the protection and support of the poor, taxation, etc.\textsuperscript{57} Israelite laws also regulated many aspects of agriculture such as the age at which fruit trees could be harvested, types of plants and where they could be planted,\textsuperscript{58} and fallowing (Sabbatical year). Religion and cult were strongly dominated by agricultural themes. The three main festivals associated with pilgrimages to Jerusalem all celebrated the beginning or ending of agricultural seasons. Passover celebrated the beginning of cereal (barley) harvesting; Weeks (or Pentecost) celebrated the end of the wheat harvest and with it the end of cereal harvesting; Booths marked the end of fruit in gathering and the beginning of the sowing season. Sacrifices and contributions to the temple and its personnel were agricultural in nature.\textsuperscript{59} Finally, and significantly, the rewards for observing the Covenant with Yahweh were spelled out in agricultural terms; ample rain in its appropriate season and resistance to plant diseases which led to abundance were the direct benefits of adherence to the Covenant.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{55} Judg. 8: 2; 9: 8-15; Isa. 5: 1-8; Ezek. 17: 6-10.
\textsuperscript{56} Num. 27: 1-8.
\textsuperscript{57} Exod. 23: 11; Lev. 23: 22; Deut. 24: 21.
\textsuperscript{58} Lev. 19: 19; Deut. 22: 9.
\textsuperscript{59} Num. 18: 8-32; Deut. 18: 1-9.
\textsuperscript{60} Deut. 28: 22.
4.2 VARIOUS FOODSTUFFS

This article is limited to the foodstuffs used in Israel in biblical times, specifically to those kinds of food that are explicitly mentioned in the Bible, though it may be assumed confidently that there were many more.

1. MINERAL FOOD

In biblical times, as in other times, there were only two kinds of food that were not products of the animal or vegetable kingdom: water and salt. The first was obtained from rivers, lakes, springs, wells and cisterns; the second was produced from the Mediterranean, but especially from the Dead Sea. The Book of Joshua mentions, 'the city of salt'\(^{61}\) which is possibly to be identified with Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were found.

2. VEGETABLE FOOD

It is more probable that mankind from the beginning made use of both animal and vegetable food. The dominion given to humans over animals\(^{62}\) included the eating of them. Prehistoric findings point to primitive man as an omnivore. It is only after settling down as an agriculturist that humans became chiefly eaters of vegetable food. Seminomads like the patriarchs combined both

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\(^{61}\) Josh. 15: 62.

\(^{62}\) Gen. 1: 26.
categories.\textsuperscript{63} They were prepared to go on lengthy travels,\textsuperscript{64} or even to leave their accustomed abodes\textsuperscript{65} in order to get their supply of grain.

After the conquest of Canaan, Israel gradually became an agricultural nation with bread as its stable food. This was made of cereals, which therefore are to be mentioned first among the foodstuffs of the bible. The most important grains of the Bible were wheat and barley; the latter, though mainly used as a fodder, was often eaten in expectation of the wheat harvest, frequently by the poor, and in general when wheat was scarce. Other grains were millet and spelt.\textsuperscript{66} The most primitive way to eat grain was to pluck fresh ears, remove the husks by rubbing in the hands, and eat the grains raw.\textsuperscript{67} A slightly more advanced method was to roast fresh ears and eat the grain unground as a sacrificial gift.\textsuperscript{68} In Ruth 2: 14, however, one could think of roasted ears, harvested and parched on the fields. After being crushed in a mortar,\textsuperscript{69} wheat groats could be cooked.\textsuperscript{70} Probably these groats played a larger role in the Israelite diet than is apparent from their mention only in Lev. 2. The most

\begin{itemize}
\item 63 Gen. 18: 5-8.
\item 64 Gen. 42: 1-3.
\item 65 Gen. 12: 10.
\item 66 Ezek. 4: 9; Ex. 9: 32; Isa. 28: 25.
\item 67 Lev. 23: 14; Dt. 23: 25; 2 King 4: 42; Mt 12: 1
\item 68 Lev. 2: 14.
\item 69 Prov. 27: 22.
\item 70 Num. 11: 8.
\end{itemize}
frequent way of dealing with cereal, however, was to grind it into flour or groats by rubbing the grains between two stones; turning mills were introduced into Palestine in Hellenistic times.

Vegetables of different kinds are mentioned in the Bible but more often in post-biblical Jewish literature. Vegetables in general are mentioned in the Book of Daniel. Lentils, white and red, the red (brown) thought to be the better variety, were considered very tasty and nutritious.

In the desert, the Israelites longed for the cucumber, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic of Egypt. Cucumbers, leeks and onions could be eaten raw with bread, but they could also be cooked. The bitter herbs of the Passover ritual were probably wild lettuce or wild endive. A dinner of herbs was considered a poor dish. The Book of Genesis considers grains and fruits proper human food and assigns 'evergreen plant' to the animals. But these herbs are described as a well-known food for humans. Vegetable gardens are mentioned, in the latter passage as supplying the royal kitchen.

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71 Dnl. 1: 12, 16; Isa. 61: 11.
72 Num. 11: 5.
73 Ex. 12: 8; Num. 9: 11.
74 Prov. 15: 17.
75 Gen. 1: 29.
76 Gen. 9: 3.
77 Dt. 11: 10; 1 King 21: 2.
Egyptian sources show that fruit abounded the Palestine many centuries before it was occupied by the Israelites. So important were they for the economy of the land that to destroy fruit trees in war was forbidden.\textsuperscript{78} The parable of Jotham enumerated the most important fruit trees:\textsuperscript{79} olive, fig and vine.

It is not significance that Jgs. 9: 8-13 mentions the olive tree first: it is the most important tree around the Mediterranean. Its fruits were eaten, though this is nowhere expressly stated in Scripture; more important was the oil pressed from the fruits. It was used for baking and was an ingredient for nearly every dish; it was used also as fuel for oil lamps both home and in the sanctuary; and it was used as an unguent for wounds.\textsuperscript{80} Finally, it formed the basis of ointments, which made the human skin fresh and supple.

Next in importance is the fig, whose sweetness was praised in Jotham’s parable whose, ‘first-ripe fig’, i.e., the early fig which grew on the previous year’s wood, was esteemed a delicacy and was often eaten while it was still green.\textsuperscript{81} Large quantities of figs were dried in the sun and stored for use out of season. Pressed in a mould, they formed the ‘cakes of figs’ mentioned as provisions for

\textsuperscript{78} Dt. 20: 19f.
\textsuperscript{79} Jgs. 9: 8-13.
\textsuperscript{80} Lk. 10: 34.
\textsuperscript{81} Isa. 28: 4; Jer. 24: 2; Mic. 7: 1; Mk 11: 13.
soldiers. These cakes also could be used as a plaster upon a boil.

The vine and its products have always been much prized in oriental literature. Palestine, and especially the mountainous region of Judah, yielded excellent grapes. Grapes were enjoyed both before their full ripeness and when ripe; they were often dried in the sun and made into raisin cakes for 'military provisions'. The juice of grapes, drunk before the fermentation process set in, is mentioned only in Num. 6: 3. The same is perhaps meant in Isa. 16: 7.

**ANIMAL FOOD**

Like most Semitic nations, the Hebrews passed through a nomadic stage, during which animal food (meat and milk products) was the mainstay of their diet. Even the Patriarchs, from Abraham on, were not nomads but transhumants or 'seminomads', i.e. though they had their flocks and often went far away in search of good pasture, they also sowed and reaped their own grains. A mixed

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82 1 S. 25: 18; 30: 12.
83 2 Kings 20: 7; Is. 38: 21.
84 Num. 13: 23.
85 Isa. 18: 5; Jer. 31: 29.
86 Num. 6: 3.
87 1 S. 25: 18; 30: 12; 2 S 6: 19; Hos. 3: 1.
89 Gen. 26: 12.
diet therefore was the rule with them. Abraham offered both animal and vegetable food to his guests.\textsuperscript{90} After the settlement in Canaan, Israel became gradually an agricultural nation and vegetable food prevailed. With the common people animal food was reserved to festival times, mostly in connection with sacrifices.

Among the animals sheep and goats were reared in large numbers. As a meat the goat was less appreciated than the sheep. Goat’s flesh, mostly of the kids, was the cheapest form of meat.\textsuperscript{91} Most of the Israelites’ milk came from goats.\textsuperscript{92} Milk was consumed both fresh and after it had soured. The sheep of Palestine were mainly of the fat-tailed species. In honour of a guest or at a festive occasion lambs were slaughtered.\textsuperscript{93} Less is said about the slaughtering of adult sheep. Calves supplied a highly appreciated meat, the ‘fatted calf’ of Lucan Gospel.\textsuperscript{94}

Although some birds were forbidden,\textsuperscript{95} fowls were an important source of food. Fish were especially important for the people in the vicinity of the Sea of Tiberias, but there was also a large import of dried and salted fish from the Tyrian coast to

\textsuperscript{90} Gen. 18: 6-8. 
\textsuperscript{91} Luke 15: 29. 
\textsuperscript{92} Prov. 27: 27. 
\textsuperscript{93} 2 S. 12: 4. 
\textsuperscript{94} Lk. 15: 23. 
\textsuperscript{95} Dt. 14: 12-18.
Jerusalem. Water animals without fins and scales were forbidden. No special kinds of fishes used as food are mentioned in the Bible.

The only insects whose use as food was allowed were locusts. The Assyrians relished them, as is known from scenes from their reliefs; to this day one finds them sold in the Arab markets. The most common way of preparing them is to remove the head, legs and wings, the drop the bodies in meal, and then the fry them in oil or butter.

One product of insects allowed to the Israelite was honey, produced by bees. The honeycomb is mentioned in Can. 5: 1 and I S. 14: 27; perhaps Isa. 55: 1 alludes to a custom of beekeepers. As sugar was unknown, honey was the best sweetening agency used in many dishes and dainties.

**FOOD PREPARATION**

In general cooking or broiling took place in the open air, either outside the house or inside. The Book of Ezekiel describes the four kitchens in the four corners of the outer temple court.

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96 Neh. 13: 16.
97 Dt. 14: 9f.
98 Lev. 11: 20-23.
99 1 King  19: 6; Jn. 21: 9.
Food was prepared by the lady of the house\textsuperscript{101} by herself or with servants, both male\textsuperscript{102} and female\textsuperscript{103}, but it was not considered undignified for a young man to prepare a special dish\textsuperscript{104} either for himself or for an honoured guest.\textsuperscript{105} In the temple food was prepared by men.

Lentils, beans, all kinds of vegetables\textsuperscript{106} and herbs found in the fields\textsuperscript{107} were boiled in a cooking pot. I S. 2: 14 mentions four different types of cooking pots, all made of clay. An iron griddle is mentioned in Ezk. 4: 3, a copper pot in Ezk. 24: 11. These utensils were also used for boiling meat. Boiling was the usual way of preparing fish.

Fish was broiled.\textsuperscript{108} The fish, brought by Tyrian merchants to Jerusalem\textsuperscript{109} was probably dried and salted.\textsuperscript{110} Salt and all kinds of

\textsuperscript{101} Gen. 18: 16.
\textsuperscript{102} Gen. 18: 7.
\textsuperscript{103} I S 8: 13.
\textsuperscript{104} Gen 25: 29-34.
\textsuperscript{105} Igs 6: 19.
\textsuperscript{106} Num. 11: 5.
\textsuperscript{107} 2 King 4: 39.
\textsuperscript{108} Jn 21: 9; Lk 24: 42.
\textsuperscript{109} Nwh. 13: 16.
\textsuperscript{110} Joh. 6: 5.
herbal condiments were added to both vegetables and meat, and especially to broth or sauce.\textsuperscript{111}

**FOOD REGULATIONS**

The rules to distinguish between clean and unclean food were very strict. Since food goes into the body and becomes part of the person, much caution was needed in order to prevent harmful influences from spreading through the body. As a rule, mineral and vegetables foods were considered clean, but if water or food prepared with water was defiled by the carcass of an unclean animal, that water or food was considered unclean.\textsuperscript{112} The rules about the ‘cleanliness’ and ‘uncleanness’ of birds, fish, and insects were given.\textsuperscript{113}

In the New Testament, the food rules were reduced, at least for gentile Christians.\textsuperscript{114} If meat was known to have been sacrificed to idols, it was not to be eaten. In principle the teaching of Our Lord that, “there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him”\textsuperscript{115} meant the end of all Old Testament food rules.

**FOOD SUPPLY**

\textsuperscript{111} Jgs. 6: 19f; Isa. 65: 4; cf. Ezk. 24: 10.
\textsuperscript{112} Lev. 11: 32-38.
\textsuperscript{113} Lev. 11 and Dt. 14.
\textsuperscript{114} Acts 15: 20.
\textsuperscript{115} Mk. 7: 14-23.
The impression is that in Old Testament times as a rule every household provided food for its own wants. This is certainly true of nomadic life and generally also of the seminomadic life of the Patriarchs. But even after Israel had settled and become an agricultural people food was produced by every household for its own wants. Every tiller of the soil had also some sheep and goats. Most of them had a few oxen.

In New Testament times, wandering persons had to buy bread. There was a meat market in Corinth and sparrows were sold in Palestine markets. Even in New Testament times most households were self supporting although a product like oil was then procured from professional shopkeepers.

Irregularities in nature could cause scarcity of food. In such times people tried to buy grain and sometimes wandered far to get supplies. They even changed their abodes in such cases not only seminomads like Abraham and Isaac, but also farmers and town dwellers like Elimeech.

4.3. AGRARIAN LAWS

116 Jn. 4: 8.
117 1 Cor. 10: 25.
118 Mt. 10: 29.
119 Mt. 25: 9.
120 Gen. 42: 1f.
121 Gen. 12: 10; 2f: 1.
122 Ruth. 1: 1.
Agricultural laws related to landed property and cultivated land and included all laws concerning the preservation of soil, regulation of irrigation and protection of rights concerning landed property. The only laws in the Old Testament that can be assigned to this class are those relating to the fallow in the Sabbath year and the Jubilee and certain laws of negligence.

The agrarian laws in the Old Testament form a very important part of biblical institutions. In spite of the opinion that those institutions and the agrarian laws are of a late date, their antiquity must be held. They are linked in biblical sources to the oldest parts of legal jurisprudence.

1. ORIGIN

There is difference of opinion among scholars as to how earliest agriculture developed. One opinion is that agriculture was started in open fields. According to Braidwood and others, agriculture was a natural development where the need was felt. Others see it as a revolution. Another group of scholars takes the more probable view that agricultural settlements were started near river valleys where irrigation was possible. This standpoint, advocated by Albright, has as evidence in its favour the fact that the main cultures of the ancient Near East (West Asia) developed in river valleys. The oldest culture in Palestine, for example, grew up around tell es-Sultan (Jericho).
If one accepts Albright’s explanation, the origin of agrarian laws is to be sought in the regulation of water. The need for various other stipulations developed as agriculture progressed. Thus a need was felt to protect cultivated land against negligence, such as the careless use of fire. Again, after a few years of use the ground became unfertile; to counteract this the fallow came into being. It must be granted that the idea of rest or leisure has a cultic value; but in the case of cultivated land, the idea of the fallow originated from practical reasons. In the Old Testament it is, however, closely linked with religion, as will be seen below.

To grasp the background of the agrarian laws one must turn to the Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures because almost all evidence from early times comes from the monuments and tablets of these two cultures. No literary material is preserved of the old culture of Jericho or of any other cultures of ancient Palestine. In Egypt all of life was concentrated around the Nile and irrigation; even the calendar of the so-called Sothic year was worked out according to the annual inundation.

In Mesopotamia certain legal codices are preserved that give us a clear understanding of the legal position in a developed community. In the Code of Hammurabi there are agrarian laws concerning negligence by the owner or tenant and laws of irrigation. These laws, and certain other groups of laws such as those of the Hittites, form part of the background of some Old Testament laws.
Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that much of the legal material in the Old Testament originated in the Israelite community, and thus is to be regarded as native to the Hebrews. In the Old Testament legal material is closely linked with religion and with Yahweh. The idea of rest, which is not alien to the ancient Near East (West Asia), forms a very important part of the religion of the Old Testament.

2. LAWS CONCERNING DAMAGE TO IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

In the earliest laws of the Old Testament punishments were prescribed for damage done to cultivated land. The Book of Exodus\(^{123}\) considers examples of damage to a field or vineyard, with the penalty in each case being full restitution. This kind of problem was probably encountered often in the ancient Near East, since reference to it is present in various ancient codices. The law was made to restore the financial balance. Laws concerning damage and restitution have a broad background and can be applied to various situations. The agrarian laws of damage are thus one aspect of a general legal principle. In the Old Testament these laws are placed under the sanction of Yahweh. From a religious standpoint they are used to create a feeling of responsibility toward a neighbour’s possessions. They thus confirm the law of love for one’s neighbour.

\(^{123}\) Exodus 22: 5f.
3. Sabbath Year and Jubilee

Every seventh year, according to the book of Exodus,\(^{124}\) the land was to lie fallow.\(^{125}\) The Sabbath of the land does not mean that its natural uncultivated increase was to be eaten by the Israelite poor; rather, the probable principle underlying this institution was that the poor must benefit from the blessed harvest of the sixth year. In spite of its close connection with religion, there was a humanitarian undertone observable in this law.

The Sabbath year was primarily intended for the relief of the poor.\(^{126}\) The poor refer to the propertyless able-bodied poor.

After seven Sabbath years had passed, a trumpet was to be blown throughout the land on the tenth day of the seventh month, and the fiftieth year was to be hallowed and celebrated as a Jubilee.

4. The Meaning of These Laws

Various views of the meaning of these laws have been suggested. Some commentators emphasize the humanitarian vein of this legislation. The Jubilee was intended to meet the economic evils that befell the poor in ancient societies. The economic climate, with frequent times of war and unfavourable seasons, was not ideal for farming, and a farmer was compelled to borrow. With

\(^{124}\) Exodus 23: 10ff.

\(^{125}\) Lev. 25: 2-7.

\(^{126}\) Ex. 23: 11; Lev. 25: 6.
the laws of the Jubilee concerning restoration of land and the fallow, the danger of an overall slavery was averted. Other scholars regard the fallow in the light of the primitive Semitic conception of land. The fallow is prescribed because the land is weary, and the owner lets it rest like a beast of burden or a slave.

5. THE EXECUTION OF AGRARIAN LAWS

Were these laws executed? Certain scholars maintain that the execution of the fallow as prescribed was impossible from the economic standpoint. Some have tried to connect it with a rotating fallow. Others seek to interpret it by appealing to another meaning of the Hebrew 'to gather to oneself'. They say, it was not harvesting that was forbidden, but only storing up in bins.\textsuperscript{127}

In spite of these problems the biblical tradition leaves no doubt that the fallow was universally prescribed. The only reference to the execution of the fallow is made in 2 Ch. 36: 21, but this is rather vague. In the Old Testament there is a reference to the fallow in I Mac. 6: 49, 53.

4.4 DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Christ made his apostles witnesses. The early Church in the New Testament times was a witnessing community. It was a sharing community

\textsuperscript{127} Lev. 25: 20.
and all who believed were together and had all things in common and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all as any had need.\textsuperscript{128}

So the early Church was

- a sharing community\textsuperscript{129}
- a spirit-filled community\textsuperscript{130}
- a united community\textsuperscript{131}
- built in the name of Jesus\textsuperscript{132}
- praying and believing community\textsuperscript{133}
- proclaiming community\textsuperscript{134}
- community nourished by Eucharist.\textsuperscript{135}

Thus the witness of the early community was the typical example for the sharing and distribution system of the foods and commodities.

**Greek Influence in Early Christianity**

Early Christianity and the New Testament, the “documentation of the preaching on which the Church was

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{128} Acts 2: 40-45.
  \item \textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 2: 44-45.
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 2: 1-13.
  \item \textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 4: 32.
  \item \textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 3: 1-10.
  \item \textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 1: 15; 2: 1; 2: 42-47.
  \item \textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 5: 41.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 20: 7-11.
\end{itemize}
founded" were the earliest sources. A conjunction of the primitive Christian ethos and the universal ideal of antiquity was most likely to come about, where a New Testament author - like Luke - introduced his Greek rhetorical training as a writer and stylized certain phenomena of early Christianity in accordance with the tradition in which he had been educated. This is the case, for example, with the account which Luke gives of the so-called communism of the first community in Jerusalem.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common.  

The preaching of Jesus has a quite marked prophetic and religious character. Jesus emerges, "as the one who proclaims ushers in the kingdom of God'. Its dawn is imminent, just about to break, indeed it is already present in a hidden way in the work of Jesus. Thus the demand in the Sermon on the Mount is fundamental to any understanding of his attitude to all earthly goods.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well. The imminence of the

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136 Acts 2: 44.
137 Ibid., 4: 32.
138 Matt. 6: 33.
Kingdom of god demands freedom from possessions, the renunciation of all care, complete trust in the goodness and providence of the heavenly Father. Service of God and service of mammon are mutually exclusive. No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and mammon.

Jesus' urgent warning against the danger of riches is in accordance with the fundamental demand of the kingdom. It should be understood against the background of his messianic announcement of the imminence of God, developed in connection with the prophetic pronouncement.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to these who are bound; to proclaim the day of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to delight those who mourn in Zion.

Luke puts these words in the mouth of Jesus in his first preaching in his home town of Nazareth; they recur in Jesus'

139 Matt. 6: 25-34; Lk 12: 22-32.
140 Lk 16-13; Mat. 6: 24.
141 Isa. 61. 1f.
142 Lk 4. 16ff.
reply to the disciples of John the Baptist,\textsuperscript{143} “The poor have the
good news preached to them” and above all in the Beatitudes:
Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of
God. Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall
be satisfied. Blessed are you that weep now, for you
shall laugh.\textsuperscript{144}

Corresponding to the Beatitudes on the poor, we find ‘woes’ on the
rich and those who have plenty:

But woe to you that are rich, for you have received
your consolation,
Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger,
Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and
weep.\textsuperscript{145}

The parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus is similar to this
contrast of Beatitudes on the poor and woes on the rich.\textsuperscript{146} The
story of the rich landlord is no less critical.

Fool! That night your soul is required of you; and the
things you have prepared, whose will they be?\textsuperscript{147}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{143} Lk 7: 22 Maff 11.5
\item \textsuperscript{144} Lk 6. 20 ff.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Lk 8. 24.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Lk 16: 19-31.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Lk 12: 16-21.
\end{itemize}
The deceit of riches is one of the thorns which choke the growing seed of the word and prevent it from bringing forth fruit.\(^{148}\)

The simile of the needle’s eye is even more biting: “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.”\(^{149}\)

Only God’s miracle can save him, ‘for all things are possible with God’.\(^{150}\) It is significant that this uncompromising saying was not modified in manuscripts. Also this context belongs the fact that Jesus himself had no possessions: ‘The Son of man has nowhere to lay his head’\(^{151}\) that he required those who were called to follow him not only to break with their families\(^{152}\) but also to give up their possessions.\(^{153}\) When he sends the disciples out he requires extreme poverty of them;\(^{154}\) he also promises them that their renunciation of possessions will find recognition with God.\(^{155}\) Jesus’ polemic against concern for everyday needs\(^{156}\) and his demand to renounce the use of force and legal proceedings and his requirement of unconditional generosity, go in the same direction:

\(^{148}\) Mk 4: 19.  
\(^{149}\) Mk 10: 24 Par.  
\(^{150}\) Mk 10: 27.  
\(^{151}\) Mt 8: 20; Lk 9: 58.  
\(^{152}\) Lk 9: 59 ff; 14: 26.  
\(^{153}\) Mk 1.16 ff. Par.; 10.17 ff; 28ff, Par.  
\(^{154}\) Lk 9: 3; 10: 4; cf Mk 6: 8f.  
\(^{155}\) Mk 10: 28 ff.  
\(^{156}\) Mt 6: 25-34.
Give to everyone who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods, do not ask them again.\footnote{Lk 6: 30.}

We can understand how at a later date the Church father and ascetic Jerome who was himself very critical of riches could allow the objection to Jesus’ demand in Mt 19:29, that ‘it is difficult, harsh, and contrary to nature’. He answers it by the Lord’s saying in Mt 19:12: ‘He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.’

**Jesus’ Free Attitude to Property**

However, this radical criticism of property and especially of riches is only one side of Jesus’ ministry and preaching. We should note first that Jesus himself did not come from the proletariat of day labourers and landless tenants, but from the middle class of Galilee, the skilled workers. Like his father, he was an artisan, a tekton, a Greek word which means mason, carpenter, cartwright and joiner all rolled into one.\footnote{Mk 6: 3.} Two generations later, in the times of Domitian, two of his great nephews are said to have worked on a small piece of land. As far as we can tell, the disciples whom Jesus called to follow him came from a similar social milieu. Zebedee, the father of James and John, employed day labourers in his family business as well as his sons;\footnote{Mk 1: 20.} another disciple, Levi, was

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{Lk 6: 30.}
\item \footnote{Mk 6: 3.}
\item \footnote{Mk 1: 20.}
\end{itemize}
summoned from the customs house\textsuperscript{160} the first evangelist identifies him with Matthew.\textsuperscript{161} Even Jesus’ conduct – unlike that of John the Baptist\textsuperscript{162} was not that of a rigorous ascetic.

Thus Jesus himself took for granted the owning of property in his immediate surroundings. He and his disciples were supported by the means of well-to-do women who followed him.\textsuperscript{163} In Capernaum he visits the house of his disciple Simon Peter and heals Peter’s mother-in-law.\textsuperscript{164} It is possible that this house served as a base for him during his preaching journeys. Excavations suggest that it perhaps became a Church at a later date; A Byzantine Church was then erected on the site.

Arguing against Pharisaic casuistry over sacrifice, Jesus enjoins that parents must be supported from their children’s possessions and refers back to the fourth commandment.\textsuperscript{165} In the same way, possessions are to be used to help those in need.\textsuperscript{166} In requiring money to be lent without hope of return,\textsuperscript{167} Jesus presupposes property that can be lent. The chief publican Zacchaeus is ready to give half his possessions to the poor and to make amends

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{160} Mk 2: 14f.
\textsuperscript{161} Mt 9. 9f; 10: 3.
\textsuperscript{162} Mt 11: 18; Mk 1.6f.
\textsuperscript{163} Lk 8: 2f; cf 10: 38f.
\textsuperscript{164} Mk 1: 29 ff.
\textsuperscript{165} Mk 7. 9f. Par.
\textsuperscript{166} Mk 12: 41 ff; Mt 6: 2; 25: 40; Lk 10: 30-37.
\textsuperscript{167} Mt 5: 42; Lk 6: 30; 6: 34.
\end{flushright}
fourfold to those who have been cheated: but he is not required to
give up all his possessions, Jesus did not avoid contact with the
rich and the privileged by any means: he was invited to banquets by
them, and particularly by those with the worst reputation, the tax
and excise farmers, who collaborated with the foreign occupying
power. He was not an ascetic and was glad to join in festivals; this
made him incur the mockery of the pious:

Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax
collectors and sinners.

He had fellowship meals with his disciples, and for these, as
the Last Supper shows, they relied on the support of well-to-do
house owners. Finally, it is striking that in his parables he often
depicts the social milieu of Galilee with its great landowners,
landlords, administrators and slaves without engaging in any
specifically social polemic. Even servitude for debt and the use of
slaves as entrepreneurs and bankers to increase the cash left with
them merely serve as a simile to portray God’s demand. In the
parable of the labourers in the vineyard those who had worked hard

168 Lk 10: 8f.
169 Lk 7: 36 ff; 11: 37; 14: 1-12; Mk 14: 3ff.
170 Mk 2: 13-17.
171 Jn 2: 1ff.
172 Mt 11: 19; Lk 7: 34.
173 Mk 14: 14 f.
174 Mt 25: 14ff; Lk 19: 12 ff.
all day complain that they have been paid too little in comparison with those who came later and received the same wage. The employer answers with a classic definition of property which remains valid down to the present day.

Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?\(^{175}\)

In his parables Jesus evidently liked to single out unusual, vivid situations and typical situations of injustice. However, he did not use them for the ‘social protest’ which is so beloved today, but for a positive demonstration of God’s will in respect of his coming kingdom.

The ‘Love Communism’ of the Primitive Community

The beginnings of the early community in Jerusalem after the appearances of the risen Jesus show that his message continued to have an effect. St. Luke has stylized his picture of the early community along the lines of popular philosophical terminology. For example, the repetition of the formula ‘they had all things in common’ is reminiscent of the proverb coined by Aristotle, ‘the possession of friends is something held in common’. Aristotle also introduces the term ‘one soul’, used by Luke in this context.\(^{176}\) At one point St. Luke talks about a complete sharing of goods,\(^{177}\) but

\(^{175}\) Mt 20: 15.
\(^{176}\) Acts 4: 32.
\(^{177}\) Acts 2: 44; 4: 32.
on the other hand it is reported that individuals like Ananias and Sapphira sold their land and kept back half the proceeds and were punished promptly as a result.\(^{178}\)

It is striking that the atheistic philosopher Ernst Block had more confidence in communism of early community in Jerusalem.

This community, built up on a communism of love, wants neither rich men nor poor men in a forced or ascetic sense. 'No one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common'.\(^{179}\) His saying about the lilies of the field and the birds of the air is by no means economically naive, but is deliberately enthusiastic.

Here Ernst Bloch has a clearer view of the historical conditions of the 'Love Communism' of the early community in Jerusalem and had more confidence in it. This is the case at three points:

1. He bases the sharing of goods in the early community on the strong influence which the eschaton had on them: after the appearances of the risen Christ they expected him soon to come again as the Lord.
2. Bloch stresses the spontaneous and voluntary character of this 'Love Communism'. It was not organized nor was it subjected

\(^{178}\) Acts 5: 1-11.
\(^{179}\) Acts 4: 32.
to external compulsion. The decisive thing was koinonia, not organization.

3. Bloch rightly refers back to the preaching of Jesus. Jesus’ message and his way of life were still remembered.

Here the early Church in Jerusalem was simply continuing Jesus’ carefree attitude to the goods of this world. A charismatic enthusiastic community was formed which assembled for daily worship; common meals were held. Concern over possessions and the future retreated completely into the background; people lived from hand to mouth. The Lord was very near, and he had told people not to worry. The only real concern was missionary preaching among the Jews, including the Greek speaking diasporas-Jews who had also settled in Jerusalem. The expenditure on daily meals of the community was met by selling the possessions of those who had resources; social distinctions were virtually abolished, and there were no longer any poor in the community. Yet others put their houses at the disposal of the community as meeting places, like Mary, the mother of John Mark. No one bothered with the legal questions connected with property, with entries in land registers or the like.

The things of this age became inessential. Organisation was kept to a minimum, and in view of the intensive expectation of the

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180 Acts 2: 42.
181 Acts 4: 34.
182 Acts 12: 12.
return of Jesus, further forward planning was completely absent. As a result, difficulties in distribution arose, especially as the community grew quickly. Acts 6.1ff reports how the widows in the Greek-speaking part of the community were neglected at the daily distribution and how disputes arose as a result. In view of the community’s growing expectation of an imminent end and the enthusiasm brought about by the experience of the Spirit, people had no interest in economic production organized on community laws. The pressure from the Jewish environment and the famine under Claudius during the forties\footnote{Acts 11: 28.} also contributed to the considerable economic distress suffered by the community in Jerusalem. As a result the community in Antioch and probably other mission Churches too – had to leap to the rescue. The collections enjoined on Paul and Barnabas at the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem about AD 48, which the apostle was particularly concerned to make among his mission communities must also be understood against this background. Twice he calls the original community in Jerusalem ‘the poor’.\footnote{Gal. 2: 10; Rom 15: 26.} On the other hand this is a religious title of honour, but at the same time it indicates the economic distress in this community.
Road and Transport system
4.5 TRADE AND COMMUNICATION

Trade and communication is the movement and exchange of goods and services that make up commerce. This article throws light on some major features of trade and transportation in the biblical world.

Biblical references

The term 'trade' is used to designate one’s occupation in general (Acts 18:3, referring to the trade of tentmakers), i.e., shipmasters, sailors and seafaring men. The major use of the term is for people in commercial trading. It is viewed as a normal part of domestic activity by citizens in pursuit of property. Trade could be a means of survival for desperate prisoners but ironically a successful trade could be planned in advance. But the merchant could use dishonest devices for excessive profit and it could be done without satisfaction. No doubt, this was considered to be inappropriate by Jesus.

Trade was regarded as an international matter and bound up with a variety of the trade pictures of the biblical world. In this remark trading was a royal enterprise for official purposes of diplomacy. Solomon was considered as a kind of special traditional successful model.\(^\text{185}\)

\(^{185}\) Chron 1:16; 9:14
As a matter of fact reference to travellers and travel which are the simple index to biblical views of transportation other than the specific terms for devices used to move people or goods. Besides they delighted in travelling to each one’s advantage although there were contradictions found in the day time and night time travel. The fact of the day time travel over land reduced the dangers of being waylaid by bandits yet subjected to the worst heat in summer. But night travel over land needed noonlight for safest progress, eliminated the heat problem both for the humans and the animals involved. On the other hand, sea travel was limited to day time voyaging until use of celestial navigation allowed direct crossings. In the biblical period, the word of travellers was a major link in communication.\textsuperscript{186} International travel was commonplace but was judiciously watched for danger (Job 6:19). In this respect, its nature could be trade,\textsuperscript{187} legal business,\textsuperscript{188} casual encounter,\textsuperscript{189} a deliberate group activity planned (Acts 19: 29; 2 Cor 8:19). As it is said in a prophet’s oracle for a person or a place to be forgotten by travellers was a distinctive oblivion and it symbolizes an extreme state of future desolation. (Job 28: 4).

\textsuperscript{186} Job. 21: 29
\textsuperscript{187} Ezeh 27: 25.
\textsuperscript{188} Acts 9: 1-7.
\textsuperscript{189} 2 Sam 12: 4
Transportation and Trade

It is likely to say that transportation and trade was analysed as a human achievement. In this process people probably moved to follow food supplies as hunters and gather before they begin the trade. It was noted that Paleolithic and Mesolithic human life (Ca 250,000-8000 B.C.) transportation was overland by foot, though the earliest possibility in Egypt and elsewhere allowed the rivers being used for transport in some locations. The makers knew variations in raw materials and travelled or traded to get them. This is illustrated the Pleistocene stone tools. Throughout the Biblical period there were various sources such as amber, or seashells. Developments in the domestication of plants and animals, the beginnings of true agriculture, the economic foundations, making cities possible. Trade and transportation executed the technological developments that continues to this day.

Rivers

Undoubtedly, the water way has played a prominent role in the career. The water way served the entire population of Egypt throughout antiquity. Aswan gave an untrammeled water way to the Mediterranean sea to save the city. Similarly the river is evident in the earliest settlement patterns of Sumer in lower Mesopotamia. Most often the city states of Lagash, Kish, Eridu and Uruk grew in proximity to river sources both for moving people and goods and for the water available for agricultural development. The main
purpose of travelling on rivers required some sort of stable vehicles to move goods, and the history of water transport devices indicated developments from crude crafts to sailing vessels with sufficient large quantities such as timber, copper and other heavy freight.

**Seas**

When transportation and trade were carried out with Byblos on the coast of modern Lebanon the use of open salt water is documented by old kingdom times in Egypt. Crafts called bybilites were introduced by the Phoenicians for maritime trade. Throughout the coast of Africa beyond the straight of Gibraltar the subsequent seapowers first absorbed and followed and expanded the trading routes by Phoenician’s maritime transportation.

It was also to the experts of Tyre, Solomon turned not only for his construction project but also for his maritime development for both ship building and ship handling, being new skills to the Israelites of the monarchy. The seaworthy craft allowed travel far and wide from Gulf of Aqaba into the Red Sea and from there to the coast of Arabia to touch points east along the Persian Gulf.

The Romans were supreme in sail power by developed human powered rovers that reached their maximum development in triremes and they were able to defeat an unsuccessful attempt used by Persia and dominated the Mediterranean by NT times.

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190 Kings 9: 26-28
It is in such a maritime network the report of Paul’s journey by ship from Caesarea on the Palestine Coast to Italy gives some idea of both the normal routing and transportation. The route was taken by the ship at Adramyttium. On account of travelling in the sea they had to face indomitable stormy troubles in the windy seas. Due to this they managed to stay for a temporary relief in an island called Cauda\(^1\) and managed to drift to shore at Malta until the duration of the winter. Throughout the biblical period Paul and his guards transferred to ship from Alexandria and landed where their journey proceeded overland. The 276 people aboard that ship with a staff of soldiers as well as in-charge of the prisoners were served wheat as breakfast for Rome. The sea connections had brought expensive spices, precious stones, metal in the golden period.

**Land Transport**

The Sahara and Arabian deserts are remarked as an empty land, where limited water supplies first determined that land travel was strictly prohibited especially in the major stretches of desert in the biblical period. It funneled land travel around the quarter-moon-shaped arc of land from the Mesopotamian valley, across northern Syria and down the Syro Palestine Corridor from where one could go by land or river craft to the upper reaches of southern Egypt.

\(^1\) Acts 27: 16-17
Foot travel

In the biblical period people found walking on foot as convenient; for hilly regions animal were used. Especially the ass or donkey was used, still as a major vehicle for local rural travel. Oxens were used for pulling carts. Horses were traded extensively by Solomon\textsuperscript{192} and chariots became more efficient for both civilian and military transport. Later on camels were used but they were fit for local delivery to remote regions unblessed by high way.

In the third millennium B.C. the use of wheeled vehicles is attested in Mesopotamia. It was made with solid wheels and rigid in their axles. Such were noisy but the invention at a lighter wheel attested major improvement in load capacity, ability and consequent range. In Egypt, such chariots were used with teams of four horses for sport or military purposes.

Besides, certain basic routes were developed when roads were built. There were three major north-south roads used within Palestine. Because of Palestine’s location in relation, the routes were initially used for both commercial and military traffic over the centuries. The most important factor is ‘way of the sea’\textsuperscript{193} was fortified by the Egyptians but discouraged Israelite migrants from using it after the Exodus. The sea route went along the west side of

\textsuperscript{192} 1 Kings 10: 28-29
\textsuperscript{193} Is 9:1
the sea of Galilee for transverse connections. This connection led them across the Jordan and southward to Jerico.

The other major north-south route ran from the port on the Gulf of Aqaba. It was one of the greater overland routes from Damascus to Arabia. Nevertheless were allowed land sea connections. The route was linked through Jerusalem to Bethlehem allowing both north and transverse connections at Beth-shan.

Additional crossings from east to west were possible; yet this was especially prominent during Edomite domination of southern Judah and during the Nabataean ascendance. In Hellenistic and Roman times the eastern Syrian desert used Palmyra as a major centre on the way to the Euphrates.

As mentioned above the Persians constructed a major new facility for travelling with their development of the route from Qusa to Ephesus. Furthermore the travel time was cut as the message was moved on day and night on a road which included ferries and bridges for hazardous terrain and river crossings. Rome built its roads straight and to last. Having seen the legacy one cannot help but admire the engineering consistency not only in road plotting and constructions but in tight controls. Indeed, Romans gave immense help to archaeologists despite numerous reuses of the stones for other construction. On this basis, stone was the primary construction material in Roman road preparation as well as its paving. The same was used for bridge construction. Thus the
parable of the good Samaritan indicated both that travel on roads could be dangerous from thieves but that normal facilities were found worthwhile. Some of the facilities were extensive in order to accommodate both animals and drivers to handle groups of caravans.

Trade

Trade occurred first whenever a person had an object desired by another person and was willing to exchange it for either some goods or service. An evidences of such commerce rooted in Paleolithic times, are from the patterns of raw materials, of luxury goods from their sources in various locations. The materials contribute much to the cities as well as religious institutions.

Goods and Services Exchanged

But just as each man's personal character must be directed to the public welfare so, too must each man's property be employed to the public use. Happiness is the result of virtue. Therefore it is true that any society becomes prosperous. It looks on certain goods as desirable, even though they are not necessary. This is vividly given in the story of Solomon's dealings for construction goods, services, luxury materials. The next term is 'Tyre'. Tyre is described as, "the most excellent merchant of the peoples on many coastlands",

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195 1 Kings 5: 10.
with good reason. The term Tyre has got its own superiority in making profitable accessories.

**Marketing**

From the earliest individual bartering the market days or market areas are not clear. It seems the temple served as a major gathering point for goods if not services in Mesopotamia. The temple, the walls, palaces and other constructions, required much materials and man power. The earliest Sumerian society suggested certain arrangements, and required elaborate negotiations and records.

To utilise the marketing, the various special products were available from the produce or processor. Even in NT this style of marketing is reflected in the streets. Biblical references insisted on cottage industry as a mode of marketing in such cases as Jeremiah's visit to the house at the potter.\(^{196}\) The further point is shrines became places of exchange for those unable to supply their own sacrifice materials if not appropriate accommodation.\(^{197}\) Not only that certain products were the result of religious practices but also economically threatened by beliefs rendering them obsolete.\(^{198}\)

\(^{196}\) Jer 18:3.

\(^{197}\) John 2:14-16.

\(^{198}\) Acts 19: 23-41.
Records

The next least process is records of trade. Thus economic texts predominated in the finds at Ugarit and various finds of Sumerian materials. The Dead Sea scrolls, i.e., ritual theological and other religious interest supersede attention to economic records. In the vast spectrum of economic texts one finds payment of levies and taxes, records of goods required, materials received. The societies took considerable care for secure network and the storage of things. They ensued money changing and lending but not major banking institutions outside the temple. Trade agreements were major portions of diplomatic negotiations, in rational life. Thus record concerning trade in human resources included bills and receipts of slave purchases, as well as manifests of freedom of slaves.

Means of Exchange

The use of weights and measures fluctuated from country to country and from time to time. In many respects the movement from simple trading of goods to the use of some indirect means of exchange is obscure. Even some sort of ceramic disks has led the archaeologists to suggest their probable use as local tokens of exchange, a sort of voucher system. The introduction of coinage was traditionally regarded as a sixth century B.C. invention of the Lydians. It was made official government practice by the Persians and continues to this day. Coins were usually government
monopoly mints sometimes scattered throughout political holdings. There were many varieties of coins used, i.e., metal value, coin size, design and decoration, were thus means of both economic and political control. Thus it is understood that coins are among the most helpful archaeological articles when they are recovered in legible condition.

Moreover debt was a common social fact. It appeared in Biblical stories as an undesirable condition in both OT and NT (See 1 Sam 22:2; Neh 10: 31; Isa 24: 2; Prov 22: 7-26; Matt 18: 23-34) and delivery from debt became a metaphor for genuine salvation.\(^ {199} \) The value system of exchange left no mark by which the grace of God could be assessed but that grace was more valuable than the most precious pearl a jewel merchant could own (Matt 14: 45-46). Above all the expectation of the completion of the fulfillment is as necessary for the attainment of happiness as Jerusalem a city whose streets were paved with gold and whose gates were made of a single pearl.\(^ {200} \) For such there could be no adequate rate of exchange.

\(^ {199} \) Rom 8: 12-17.
\(^ {200} \) Rev 21: 21.