CHAPTER - V

SUMMARY
The prime objective of this thesis is to reveal the agricultural, techniques and their products in the Bible.

A. Background and Development of Agriculture

1. Agriculture was the economic backbone of biblical Israel, where it was practised by city dwellers as well as villagers.
2. Domestication of food plants and animals was an important factor in the establishment of permanent villages.
3. The country was divided into several regions, highlands and valleys, each dominated by different geomorphological and climatic condition, which determined soil bypass and water availability, the most important factors in agriculture.
4. Agriculture became the mainstay of the country’s economy throughout history.
5. Land could be owned by individuals, royalty and the priesthood, all of whom, according to Israelite ideology, served as safe keepers because the land ultimately belonged to Yahweh.

B. Conditions of Agriculture

1. Conditions for agriculture in the Near East (West Asia), and especially in Israel, were not favourable.
2. Many hardships were encountered by farmers, and these included lack of sufficient amount of water and soil.
3. 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 and on the ability of the farmer to clear and prepare the land.

4. Conditions which caused crop failure included diseases, locust attacks and pests such as mice, worms, fruit bats and weeds.

5. Fertilisers included the use of dung, compost and ash.

6. The crop rotation was also used as a method for increasing crop yield and reducing plant diseases.

7. 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. Influence on Culture

1. Agriculture dominated not only the country but the whole of Israelite daily life.

2. The Bible is saturated with agricultural symbolism, similes, and metaphors in parables, proverbs, prophecies, admonitions, hymns, and other literary forms.

3. Many laws related to agriculture were formulated.

4. Religion and culture were strongly dominated by agricultural themes.

5. The three main festivals associated with pilgrimage to Jerusalem all celebrated the beginning or ending of agricultural seasons.
6. Sacrifices and contributions to the temple and its personnel were agricultural in nature.

7. Finally and significantly, the rewards for observing the covenant with Yahweh were spelled out in agricultural terms.

**Hardships faced by the Israelite Farmer**

**A. Nature of the Land**

1. Not only is the land stormy, but it is also very hilly and was so in ancient times.

2. The number of fertile valleys is limited indeed, and a high percentage of the farming has to be done on hillsides.

3. On the other hand, the soil in many parts of both hills and the plains is very suitable for agricultural purposes.

**B. Climatic**

1. Israel is a land of climatic contrasts.

2. One of the most striking aspects of the climate is the five month summer season without a drop of rain.

3. If there were abundant rains, then the crops would be good, but if not, then there would be famine.

**C. The Problem of Water**

1. The only safeguard for the farmer was to furnish himself with adequate storage places for water.
2. Hence there were a large number of cisterns that were hewed out at every major site in Israel.

3. In the Nabatean, Roman, and Byzantine periods a strong, central government was able to draft men to build dams and reservoirs which helped materially in raising the total productivity of the land.

4. In addition to the cisterns, the farmer made use of springs and perennial streams for purposes of irrigation.

E. Other factors

1. In addition to the question of rainfall, other factors also materially affected the farmer and his crops.

2. Numerous references to dew attest to the value it had for the production of good crops.

3. The lack of dew was taken as a sign of catastrophe or of God's disfavour.

4. The hot winds could play havoc with any growing thing.

5. Finally, insects and plant diseases greatly increased the probability of crop failure. Of these, probably the locust was the most dreaded.

6. The Israelite farmer was also bothered by fungus growth, especially mildew. It attacks the leaves of plants, finally destroying the plant altogether.
F. Agricultural Production Techniques

1. The primitive implements which the Israelite farmers had at their disposal were plow, sickle, threshing instruments, winnowing instruments, sieve and seeder.

G. Storage

1. When the process of harvesting was completed, the farmer had either to store or to dispose of his produce.
2. At certain periods apparently enough was produced for export, but for the most part it was necessary to store it for their use.

H. Workers

1. Many Israelites spent their time in the fields month in and month out.
2. No one in a farmer’s family was exempt from the work.
3. Owners and slaves, young men, women and children, can all be seen doing their part.
4. It was axiomatic that one who tilled his soil would not be in want.

G. Agricultural Products

1. Four branches of agriculture were more important than others:
   a) the care of vineyards,
   b) the orcharding of olives,
   c) the growing of grains, and
   d) the raising of flocks.
2. Most households owned fields and vineyards, and the richer added to these a wealth of flocks.

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

4. The grape vine was no doubt very widely grown throughout the whole Mediterranean world. 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.

5. The olive tree, a plant perfectly suited to the climate of Palestine provided the chief source of cooking oil. It was widely used for cooking, illumination, and anointing. As with the grapes, some olives were always kept for eating, after treatment.

6. The third crop is grain. Of the grains wheat was undoubtedly the most important. It probably grew best in Galilee. Barley was widely grown but might have been at times considered a second class food. A third grain was spelt. It is also translated as rye. It was an inferior kind of wheat.

7. 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.

8. Another important crop was flax from which cloth and rope were made.
9. 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. It flourished especially in the Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea.

10. Other agricultural products included figs and pomegranates; lentils, coarse beans, chick-peas, cucumbers, onions, reeks and garlic for flavouring. Of these the fig was especially important.

The second objective of this thesis is to reveal the various foodstuffs used in Israel in biblical times, specifically to those kinds of food that are explicitly mentioned in the Bible.

A. Mineral food

1. 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.

2. The first was obtained from rivers, lakes, springs, wells and cisterns; the second was produced from the Mediterranean, but especially from the Dead Sea.

3. The Book of Joshua mentions ‘the City of Salt’ which is possibly to be identified with Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were found.
B. Vegetable Food

1. It is more probable that mankind from the beginning made use of both animal and vegetable food.
2. The dominion given to humans over animals included the eating of them.
3. Prehistoric findings point to primitive man as an omnivore.
4. It is only after settling down as an agriculturist that humans became chiefly eaters of vegetable food.
5. 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.
6. In the desert, the Israelites longed for the cucumber, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic of Egypt.
7. The ‘bitter herbs’ of the passover ritual were probably wild lettuce or wild endive. A ‘dinner of herbs’ was considered a poor dish. But these herbs are described as well-known food for humans.
8. The parable of Jotham enumerated the most important fruits: olive, fig and vine.

c. Animal food

1. 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.
2. With the common people animal food was reserved to festival times, mostly in connection with sacrifices.
3. Among the animals sheep and goats were reared in large numbers.
4. The sheep of Palestine were mainly of the fat-tailed species. In honour of a guest or at a festive occasion lambs were slaughtered.
5. Although some birds were forbidden, fowls were an important source of food. Fish was especially very important for the people.
6. The only insects whose use as food was allowed were locusts.
7. One product of insects allowed to the Israelite was honey, produced by bees. As sugar was unknown, honey was the best sweetening agency used in many dishes and dainties.

d. Food preparation
1. In general, cooking or broiling took place in the open air, either outside the house or inside.
2. Food was prepared by the housewife by herself or with servants, both male and female, but it was not considered undignified for a young man to prepare a special dish. In the temple food was prepared by men.
3. Lentils, beans, all kinds of vegetables and herbs found in the fields were boiled in a cooking pot.
4. Fish was broiled. The fish, brought by Tyrian merchants to Jerusalem was probably dried and salted. Salt and all kinds of herbal condiments were added to both vegetables and meat, and especially to broth or sauce.

**f. Food Regulations**

1. The rules to distinguish between clean and unclean food were very strict.
2. The rules about the ‘cleanness’ and ‘uncleanness’ of birds, fish, and insects were given.
3. In the New Testament, the food rules were reduced, at least for gentile Christians.

**f. Food supply**

1. 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 semi-nomadic life of the Patriarchs.
2. Every tiller of the soil had also some sheep and goats. Most of them had a few oxen.
3. In New Testament times wandering persons had to buy bread. There was a meat market in Corinth and sparrows were sold in Palestine markets.
4. Even in New Testament times most households were self-supporting.
5. Irregularities in nature could cause scarcity of food. In such times people tried to buy grain and sometimes wandered far to get supplies.

The third objective of the thesis is to reveal the Agrarian Laws. 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 agrarian laws in the Old Testament form a very important part of biblical institutions.

A. Origin

1. There is difference of opinion among scholars as to how earliest agriculture developed.
2. One opinion is that agriculture was started in open fields.
3. According to Braidwood and others, agriculture was a natural development where the need was felt.
4. Others see it as a revolution.
5. Another group of scholars takes the more probable view that agricultural settlements were started near river valleys where irrigation was possible.
6. Thus a need was felt to protect cultivated land against negligence, such as the careless use of fire.
7. Again, after a few years of use the ground became unfertile; to counteract this, the fallow came into being.
8. 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.

9. In Egypt all of life was concentrated around the Nile. In Mesopotamia certain legal codices were preserved that give us a clear understanding of the legal position in a developed community.

10. In the Code of Hammurbi there are agrarian laws concerning negligence by the owner or tenant and laws of irrigation.

11. In the Old Testament legal material is closely linked with religion and with Yahweh.

12. 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.

**B. Laws Concerning Damage to Immovable Property**

1. In the earliest laws of the Old Testament punishments were prescribed for damage done to cultivated land. The Book of Exodus Ch.22, 5 ff, considers examples of damage to a field or vineyard, with the penalty in each case being full restitution.

2. In the Old Testament these laws were placed under the sanction of Yahweh.

3. From a religious standpoint they were used to create a feeling of responsibility toward a neighbour’s possessions.
4. They thus confirm the law of love for one's neighbour.

C. Sabbath Year and Jubilee

1. Every seventh year, according to the book of Exodus Ch.23, 10 ff, the land was to lie fallow.
2. The Sabbath year was primarily intended for the relief of the poor. The poor refers to the propertyless or able-bodied poor.
3. 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.

D. The Meaning of these Laws

1. Various views of the meaning of these laws have been suggested.
2. Some commentators emphasize the humanitarian vein of this legislation.
3. The Jubilee was intended to meet the economic evils that befell the poor in ancient societies.
4. With the laws of the Jubilee concerning restoration of land and the fallow, the danger of an overall slavery was averted.
5. The fallow was prescribed because the land was weary, and the owner let it rest like a beast of burden or a slave.
E. The Execution of Agrarian Laws

1. Regarding the execution of Agrarian Laws, certain scholars maintain that the execution of the fallow as prescribed was impossible from the economic standpoint.

2. Some have tried to connect it with a rotating fallow.

3. Others seek to interpret it by appealing to another meaning of the Hebrew ‘to gather to oneself’.

4. In spite of these problems the biblical tradition leaves no doubt that the fallow was universally prescribed.

5. The only reference to the execution of the fallow is made in 2 Ch. 36: 21, but this is rather vague.

6. In the Old Testament there is a reference to the fallow in I Mac. 6: 49, 53.

The fourth objectives of this thesis is to reveal the distribution system. Christ made his apostles witnesses. The early Church in the New Testament times was a witnessing community. It was a sharing community 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 needed. Thus the witness of the early community was the typical example for the sharing and distribution system of the foods and commodities.

A. Greek Influence in Early Christianity

1. 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.

2. This is the case, for example, with the account which Luke gives of the so-called communism of the first community in Jerusalem.

3. 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'.

4. "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteous and all these things shall be yours as well."

5. The imminence of the Kingdom of God demands freedom from possessions, the renunciation of all care, complete trust in the goodness and providence of the heavenly Father.

6. Jesus' urgent warning against the danger of riches is in accordance with the fundamental demand of the kingdom.

7. The parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus is similar to this contrast of beatitudes on the poor and woes on the rich.

8. The story of the rich landlord is no less critical. "Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" says Luke in his Gospel Ch.12: 16-21.
9. The deceit of riches is one of the thorns which choke the growing seed of the word and prevent it from bringing forth fruit (Mark 4: 19).

10. 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” (Mark 10: 24).

11. Only God’s miracle can save him, ‘for all things are possible with God’ (Mark 10: 27).

12. Jesus’ polemic against concern for everyday needs and his demand to renounce the use of force and legal proceedings and his requirement of unconditional generosity, go in the same direction: “Give to everyone who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods, do not ask them again” (Luke 6: 30).

B. Jesus’ Free Attitude to Property

1. 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.

2. Like his father, he was an artisan, a tekton, a Greek word which means mason, carpenter, cartwright and joiner all rolled into one.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. In the same way, possessions are to be used to help those in need.

6. Jesus did not avoid contact with the rich and the privileged by any means: he was invited to banquets by them.

7. 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.

8. In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard those who had worked hard all day complain that they have been paid too little in comparison with those who came later and received the same wage.

9. 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? (Matthew 20: 15).

10. In his parables Jesus evidently liked to single out unusual, vivid situations and typical situations of injustice.
C. The ‘Love Communism’ of the Primitive Community

1. The beginnings of the early community in Jerusalem after the appearances of the risen Jesus show that his message continued to have an effect.

2. St. Luke has stylized his picture of the early community along the lines of popular philosophical terminology.

3. 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.

4. At one point St. Luke talks about a complete sharing of goods, but on the other hand it is reported that individuals like Ananias and Sapphira sold their land and kept back part of the proceeds and were punished promptly as a result.

5. It is striking that the atheistic philosopher Ernst Block had more confidence in communism of early community in Jerusalem, than in modern times.

6. 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’.

7. Here Ernst Blach 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:

i) 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.

ii) Bloch stresses the spontaneous and voluntary character of this ‘Love Communism’. It was not organized nor was it subjected to external compulsion. The decisive thing was koinonia, not organization.

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

8. Here the early Church in Jerusalem was simply continuing Jesus’ carefree attitude to the goods of this world.

9. A charismatic enthusiastic community was formed which assembled for daily worship; common meals were held served.

10. Concern over possessions and the future retreated completely into the background; people lived from hand to mouth.

11. The Lord was very near, and he had told people not to worry.

12. The only real concern was missionary preaching among the Jews.

13. The expenditure on daily meals of the community was met by selling the possessions of those who had resources.

14. Social distinctions were virtually abolished, and there were no longer any poor in the community.
15. Yet others put their houses at the disposal of the community as meeting places, like Mary, the mother of John Mark.

16. No one bothered with the legal questions connected with property.

The fifth objective of this thesis is to throw light on some major features of trade and transportation in the biblical world.

1. Trade and communication is the movement and exchange of goods and services that make up commerce.

2. The term 'trade' is used to designate one's occupation in general (Acts 18:3, refers to the trade of tentmakers), i.e., shipmasters, sailors and seafaring men.

3. It is viewed as a normal part of domestic activity by citizens in pursuit of property.

4. Trade was regarded as an international matter and bound up with a variety of the trade pictures of the biblical world.

5. In the biblical period, the word of travellers was a major link in communication. International travel was commonplace but was judiciously watched for danger (Job 6: 19).

A. Transportation and Trade

1. It is true 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.
2. Throughout the Biblical period there were various sources such as amber, or seashells.

3. Developments in all the areas made cities possible.

**B. Rivers**

1. Undoubtedly, the waterway played a prominent role in the career. The water way served the entire population of Egypt throughout antiquity.

2. Similarly the river was evident in the earliest settlement patterns of Sumer in lower Mesopotamia.

3. The waterway served both for moving people and goods and for the water available for agricultural development.

4. The main purpose of travelling required some sort of stable vehicles to move goods.

5. Waterway indicated developments from crude crafts to sailing vessels with sufficient large quantities such as timber, copper and other heavy freight.

**C. Seas**

1. Crafts called bybilites were introduced by the Phoenicians for maritime trade.

2. 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.
3. The Romans were supreme in sail power by developed human powered rovers.

4. 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.

5. Paul and his guards transferred to ship from Alexandria and landed where their journey proceeded overland.

6. The sea connections had brought expensive spices, precious stones, metal in the golden period.

D. Land Transport

1. 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.

E. Foot travel

1. In the biblical period people found walking on foot as convenient; for hilly regions animals were used.

2. Especially the ass or donkey was used, still as a major vehicle for local rural travel.

3. Oxens were used for pulling carts.

4. Horses were traded extensively by Solomon and chariots became more efficient for both civilian and military transport.

5. Later on camels were used but they were fit for local delivery to remote regions unblessed by highway.
6. In the third millennium B.C. the use of wheeled vehicles is attested in Mesopotamia. In Egypt, such chariots were used with teams of four horses for sport or military purposes.

7. Besides, certain basic routes were developed when roads were built.

8. The routes were initially used for both commercial and military traffic over the centuries.

9. 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.

10. 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 also in tight controls.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. Some of the facilities were extensive in order to accommodate both animals and drivers to handle groups of caravans.
F. Trade
1. Trade occurred first whenever a person had an object desired by another person and was willing to exchange it for either some goods or services.
2. Evidences of such commerce rooted in Paleolithic times, are from the patterns of raw materials, of luxury goods from their sources in various locations.
3. The materials contributed much to the cities as well as religious institutions.

G. Goods and Services Exchanged
1. But just as each man’s personal character must be directed to the public welfare so too must each man’s property must be employed to the public use.
2. Happiness is the result of virtue.
3. Therefore it is true that any virtuous society becomes prosperous.
4. It looks on certain goods as desirable, even though they are not necessary.
5. The next term is ‘Tyre’. Tyre is described as, “the most excellent merchant of the peoples on many coastlands”, with good reason.
6. Tyre has got its own superiority in making profitable accessories.
H. Marketing

1. From the earliest individual bartering the market days or market areas are not clear.
2. It seems the temple served as a major gathering point for goods if not services in Mesopotamia.
3. The temple, the walls, palaces and other constructions, required much materials and man power.
4. The earliest Sumerian society suggested certain arrangements, and required elaborate negotiations and records.
5. To utilise the marketing, the various special products were available from the producer or processor.
6. 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 of the potter.
7. The further point is shrines became places of exchange for those unable to supply their own sacrifice materials if not appropriate accommodation.

I. Records

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

J. Means of Exchange

1. The use of weights and measures fluctuated from country to country and from time to time.
2. The introduction of coinage was traditionally regarded as a sixth century B.C. invention of the Lydians.
3. It was made official government practice by the Persians and continues to this day.
4. Coins were usually government monopoly mints sometimes scattered throughout political holdings.
5. 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.
6. Moreover debt was a common social fact.
7. 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.

8. 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).