

AGRICULTURE and the Bible



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AGRICULTURE and the Bible

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More references are made in the Bible to laws and advice concerning agriculture than any other occupation of man. Christ gave many parables that were based on agricultural truths. Since the degree of advancement or maintenance of civilization has always been in direct ratio to the agricultural status of the people, it is no wonder that such teachings exist. Success in agriculture, be it research or production, is dependent on how well people recognize and apply the laws of nature. The laws of nature are the laws of God. Is not agricultural research an attempt to understand nature? Extension teaching relates these laws of nature to human activities. Agricultural extension teaching has and always will be flexible because nature is dynamic and not static. Certainly as we learn to understand the laws of nature, we "take advantage" of them. We, as agricultural students today, are talking and writing the same basic principles found in the Bible. (The next time you get a "new" idea, look it up in the Bible and see who said it first.)

The references given below are but a small part of the total number in the Bible. We hope they will be useful to you.

CREATING ELEMENTS OF AGRICULTURE

Genesis 1:1 *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* Genesis 1:11-12 *" . . . And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind . . . And the earth (soil) brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the*

tree yielding fruit, . . .” Genesis 1:24 “*And God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*” Genesis 2:5 “*. . . and there was not a man to till the ground.*” Genesis 3:23 “*. . . to till the ground from whence he was taken.*”

We see by the above that soil came first, (the earth) plants next, then the animals. All these in the order mentioned were created before creating man to have dominion over them. From the soil comes plants that provide food, clothing and shelter for civilization. “Dust thou art . . . !”

ALL PEOPLE SERVED BY AGRICULTURE

Mining towns, oil boom towns, and in this modern day atom bomb towns exist, but even they depend solely on agriculture for food, shelter and clothing. Many historians have told that the fall of Greece and the Roman Empire were results of agricultural decay.

Ecclesiastes 5:9 “*. . . profit of the earth is for all . . .*”

LOVE THE LAND, CULTIVATE IT, THEN LET IT REST

Jeremiah 12:11-12 “*They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.*” Proverbs 28:19 “*He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread . . .*” Leviticus 25:3-4 “*Six years thou shalt sow thy field, then six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field nor prune thy vineyard.*”

Does this not tell us to care for our land, to practice crop rotation? Agronomists agree that a good sound crop rotation system will include perennial grasses and legumes (pastures or meadows). Use them two or three years on *part* of a farm, let

them grow up and plow under. The cropping system will include cultivated crops to control weeds (thorns) "*... and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.*" Matthew 13:7. Surely it was intended that a crop mature on the land and not be removed "*... a year ... of rest unto the land.*" Thus over a period of years every acre of cultivated land will have been in sod to improve and rest from the toil of cultivation.

FOR LANDS SAKE ROTATE CROPS!

Leviticus 25:3-4 quoted above, instructed that we let land rest. Read the rest of that Bible paragraph (Lev. 25:5-7): "*That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee ...*"

Grow legumes and add organic matter. It is not indicated that all of the cultivated land should be rested (improved) at one time—improve a part of your farm each year (crop rotation).

Isaiah 28:25 "*... doth he not cast abroad the fitches (vetch), ... and cast in the principal wheat ...*"

Luke 13:8 "*... Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it.*"

THE RESULT OF LAND MISUSE

Numbers 14:18 "*The Lord is long suffering, and of great mercy, ... and by no means clearing the guilty visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*"

Thus it appears from this that misuse of the land will not end with us. Yet we have a challenge to control water and grow good crops in the Psalms.

Psalms 23:2 "*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*" No indication of desolate barren unproductive eroded soil or muddy waters!

Such things as weeds, insects, diseases, buildings, community meeting places, flowers, shrubs, trees and the like are included in the Bible. Farm labor and power, livestock and livestock feeding, including the mixing of concentrates and hay are thoroughly covered. Fairs or trade days are discussed in the 27th Chapter of Ezekiel; and on and on. Only part of those dealing with soils and crops are cited above.

In the October, 1946 Acco Press is printed an address by Dr. Ide P. Trotter, then Director of the Texas Extension Service, entitled "Soils and Souls."

The late A. K. (Dad) Short, formerly with the Texas Extension Service, wrote a book entitled "Ancient and Modern Agriculture" which is filled with biblical references to agriculture.

The Texas Forest Service has published Bulletin No. 37, entitled, "Trees and the Bible" and there is a 14-minute, colored, 16 mm film with sound, movie entitled "Which He Hath Planted" which is a story about "Trees and the Bible." The U. S. Forest Service has a very good bulletin entitled "Forest and Flame in the Bible."

There are many other sources of information but foremost is the Bible itself—find leads in the concordance.

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