

the Bible and Agriculture



PROPHETS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT taught and recorded basic agricultural principles. Christ used agriculture as a basis for many of His parables. His disciples and other writers of the New Testament also exhibited a keen interest in agriculture. In fact, the Bible is filled with references, laws and advice concerning agriculture.

Today, farmers talk and practice many of the same principles found in the Bible.

The laws of nature are the laws of God. Success in agriculture may well depend on how thoroughly we understand and apply these laws.

A few Biblical references to agriculture follow.

AGRICULTURE AT THE BEGINNING

Genesis 1:1—"In the beginning God created the heaven and earth."

Genesis 1:11—"And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit 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."

MAN WILL BE THE CUSTODIAN

Genesis 2:5—"And there was not a man to till the ground."

The Creator provided vegetation before beast and man were created. Good livestock and fine crops, are important, but the well being of mankind was God's purpose. Man was given dominion over the crops and stock for the benefit of humanity. He also was charged with using them wisely, according to God's plan.

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KNOWLEDGE AND SUCCESS

Perhaps no other occupation responds more readily and profitably to knowledge than does agriculture. The competent farmer should at all times know the condition of his crops, flock and land, and exercise judgment and diligence in his work.

Isaiah 28:26—“. . . God doth instruct him to discretion and doth teach him.”

Proverbs 27:23—“The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.”

Proverbs 28:19—“He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread.”

Leviticus 25:18-19—“Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments and do them, and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit and ye shall eat your fill and dwell therein in safety.”

THE PROPER TOOLS

Tractors, combines, hay balers and other farm machinery have made farming a mechanized operation. A farmer today should have the proper tools to do the job. Moses realized that pride in what a person does is important. Moses knew a man was less likely to be proud if he plowed with a cow and a donkey hitched together. He knew that this combination was not efficient power. The “matched team” command of this ancient sage is applicable today. A man with adequate power and equipment on the farm is more likely to take pride in his work, produce good crops and be more interested in community and civic developments.

Deuteronomy 22:10—“Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.”

Isaiah 41:15—“. . . I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth. . .”

I Samuel 6:7—“. . . make a new cart. . .”

LANDOWNERS ARE STEWARDS

Leviticus 25:23—"The land shall not be sold forever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."

Many people agree that we are entitled to use the land for our benefit, but that it really belongs to God. We should pass our land on to the next generation in a better condition than we found it.

Jeremiah 12:11—"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, and 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 instruct us to care for our land?

PURE TYPES OF LIVESTOCK AND CROPS

Breeding or raising pure types of livestock and crops often creates a pride in the individual that results in better citizenship. The production of purebred livestock leads to a reputation that tends to insure a ready and satisfactory market. The same is true of pure adapted varieties of crops.

We can cite many instances in which strains have been improved by selecting and cross-breeding; however, in all efforts the objective has been to establish and maintain a pure and stable strain.

Leviticus 19:19—" . . .thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: . . ."

The Ten Commandments of Agriculture

I. *Produce Good Products*

Ezekiel 34:20—“. . . behold, I, even, I will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle.”

II. *Prepare Your Land*

Jeremiah 4:3—“For thus saith the Lord to the men of Juda and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns (weeds).”

III. *Grow Legumes*

Isaiah 28:25—“When he hath made plain (smooth) the face (of the ground) thereof doth he not cast abroad the fitches (vetch) . . . and cast in the principal wheat. . .”

IV. *Terrace Your Land*

Jeremiah 12:11-12—“The whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart. The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness. . .”

V. *Cultivate Your Crops*

Proverbs 28:19—“He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread. . .”

VI. *Manage Livestock*

Proverbs 27:23—“Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.”

VII. *Market Your Products in an Orderly Manner*

Genesis 41:56-57—“. . . and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians. . . and all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; . . .”

VIII. *Preserve Fruits and Vegetables*

Leviticus 25:20-22—“And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? . . . eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store.”

IX. *Get Clear Title to Land*

Jeremiah 32:9-11—“And I bought the field. . . and I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses

. . .I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open.”

X. *Leave Your Children a Sound Inheritance*

Numbers 32:18—“. . .the children of Israel. . .every man his inheritance.”

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