



HARVEST — the period at the end of the growing season, when crops were gathered. Harvest was one of the happiest times of the year in Palestine (PSA 126:5–6; ISA 9:3), marked with celebrations and religious festivals (EXO 23:16). There were two grain harvests. Barley was gathered from mid-April onwards, and wheat from mid-May. The harvest of fruit from trees and vines took place in the fall. Cutting with a sickle began the process of harvesting grain (DEU 16:9; MAR 4:29). Then it was gathered into sheaves (DEU 24:5). Next the grain was taken to the threshing floor, an important local site with a hard surface and often situated on higher ground. Various tools, such as metal-toothed sledges drawn by oxen, were used for threshing (ISA 28:28; 41:15). Then the grain was winnowed, or tossed into the air, with a pitchfork. The wind carried off the chaff, but the heavier kernels and straw fell to the ground (MAT 3:12). Finally, the kernels were shaken in a sieve, made of a wooden hoop with leather thongs (ISA 30:28; AMO 9:9). Then the grain was stored. Harvest became a picture of God’s judgment (JER 51:33; JOE 3:13), and Jesus compared the Last Judgment with the harvest (MAT 13:30, 39; REV 14:14–20). However, Jesus used the same metaphor for the gathering together of those who believed in Him (MAT 9:37–38; LUK 10:2), indicating that the final harvest has already begun with His first coming (JOH 4:35).

Agriculture. This was little cared for by the patriarchs. The pastoral life, however, was the means of keeping the sacred race, whilst yet a family, distinct from mixture and locally unattached, especially whilst in Egypt. When grown into a nation it supplied a similar check on the foreign intercourse, and became the basis of the Mosaic commonwealth. “The land is mine,” LEV 25:23, was a dictum which made agriculture likewise the basis of the theocratic relation. Thus every family felt its own life with intense keenness, and had its divine tenure which it was to guard from alienation. The prohibition of culture in the sabbatical year formed a kind of rent reserved by the divine Owner. Landmarks were deemed sacred, DEU 19:14, and the inalienability of the heritage was insured by its reversion to the owner in the year of jubilee; so that only so many years of occupancy could be sold. LEV 25:8-16, 23-35.

Rain.—Water was abundant in Palestine from natural sources. DEU 8:7; 11:8-12. Rain was commonly expected soon after the autumnal equinox. The period denoted by the common scriptural expressions of the “early” and the “latter rain,” DEU 11:14; JER 5:24; HOS 6:3; ZEC 10:1; JAM 5:7, generally reaching from November to April, constituted the “rainy season,” and the remainder of the year the “dry season.”

Crops.—The cereal crops of constant mention are wheat and barley, and more rarely rye and millet(?). Of the two former, together with the vine, olive, and fig, the use of irrigation, the plough, and the harrow, mention is made in the book of JOB 31:40; 15:33; 24:6; 29:19; 39:10. Two kinds of cumin (the black variety called “fitches,” ISA 28:27), and such podded plants as beans and lentiles, may be named among the staple produce.

Ploughing and Sowing.—The plough was probably very light, one yoke of oxen usually sufficing to draw it. Mountains and steep places were hoed. ISA 7:25. New ground and fallows, JER 4:3; HOS 10:12, were cleared of stones and of thorns, ISA 5:2, early in the year, sowing or gathering from “among thorns” being a proverb for slovenly husbandry. JOB 5:5; PRO 24:30, 31. Sowing also took place without previous ploughing, the seed being scattered broadcast and ploughed in afterwards. The soil was then brushed over with a light harrow, often of thorn bushes. In high-irrigated spots the seed was trampled in by cattle. ISA 32:20. Seventy days before the passover was the time prescribed for sowing. The oxen were urged on by a goad like a spear. JDG 3:31. The proportion of harvest gathered to seed sown was often vast; a hundred fold is mentioned, but in such a way as to signify that it was a limit rarely attained. GEN 26:12; MAT 13:8. Sowing a field with divers seed was forbidden. DEU 22:9.

Reaping and Threshing.—The wheat, etc., was reaped by the sickle or pulled up by the roots. It was bound in sheaves. The sheaves or heaps were carted, , to the floor—a circular spot of hard ground, probably, as now, from 50 to 80 or 100 feet in diameter. GEN 1:10, 11; 2SA 24:16, 18. On these the oxen, etc., forbidden to be muzzled, DEU 25:4, trampled out the grain. At a later time the Jews used a threshing sledge called  ISA 41:15; 2SA 24:22; 1CH 21:23, probably resembling the  still employed in Egypt—a stage with three rollers ridged with iron, which, aided by the driver’s weight, crushed out, often injuring, the grain, as well as cut or tore the straw, which thus became fit for fodder. Lighter grains were beaten out with a stick. ISA 28:27. The use of animal manure was frequent. PSA 83:10; 2KI 9:37; JER 8:2, etc.

Winnowing.—The shovel and fan, ISA 30:24, indicate the process of winnowing—a conspicuous part of ancient husbandry. PSA 35:5; JOB 21:18; ISA 17:13. Evening was the favorite time, RUT 3:2, when there was mostly a breeze. The fan, MAT 3:12, was perhaps a broad shovel which threw the grain up against the wind. The last process was the shaking in a sieve to separate dirt and refuse. AMO 9:9. Fields and floors were not commonly enclosed; vineyards mostly were, with a tower and other buildings. NUM 22:24; PSA 80:13; ISA 5:5; MAT 21:33; comp. JDG 6:11. The gardens also and orchards were enclosed, frequently by banks of mud from ditches. With regard to occupancy, a tenant might pay a fixed money rent, SON 8:11, or a stipulated share of the fruits, 2SA 9:10; MAT 21:34. A passerby might eat any quantity of corn or grapes, but not reap or carry off fruit. DEU 23:24, 25; MAT 12:1. The rights of the corner to be left, and of gleaning

<p>Harvest—the time when the crops are ripe</p> <p>A. Occasion of: Great joy ISA 9:3 Bringing the first fruits LEV 23:10 Remembering the poor LEV 19:9, 10</p> <p>B. Figuratively of: Seasons of grace JER 8:20 Judgment JER 51:33</p>	<p>God’s wrath REV 14:15 Gospel opportunities MAT 9:37, 38 World’s end MAT 13:30, 39 Measure of fruitfulness 2CO 9:6</p> <p>C. Promises concerning: To continue GEN 8:22 Rain JER 5:24 Patience JAM 5:7</p>	<p>D. Failure caused by: Drought AMO 4:7 Locusts JOE 1:4 Sin ISA 17:4–12</p>
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