

PLEASE NOTE - The references below are taken from the 86-21 Index. Many verses have additional references that have not been included due to time & space. We are encouraged to do additional personal research.

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NATIONS OCCUPYING THE LAND THAT GOD GAVE TO ISRAEL

WHEN Jehovah gave Israel the land that he had promised to Abraham, morally debased nations were occupying it. The Bible candidly reports that God decreed the destruction of those wicked nations, and he appointed the Israelites to be the executioners. (De 7:2) Many persons have criticized that action. Others humbly acknowledge that it is hardly appropriate for imperfect humans to set themselves up as judges of God. (Compare Eze 18:29.) Their desire is to understand God's ways. What do they learn?

This record clearly demonstrates that all people are accountable to mankind's Creator, Jehovah God, whether they profess to believe in him or not. It shows that God is patient but does not shut his eyes to wrongdoing. (Ge 15:16) It makes clear that Jehovah leaves the responsibility for young children on the shoulders of their parents; he does not relieve the parents of this and thus allow them to feel that their actions affect only themselves. (De 30:19; Jos 10:40) It also shows that all who will turn from their bad way and worship Jehovah can be spared from destruction.—Jos 6:25; 9:3–10:11.

The Bible clearly identifies the wicked practices in which the inhabitants of Canaan indulged. Halley's Bible Handbook (1964, p. 161) concludes: "Archaeologists who dig in the ruins of Canaanite cities wonder that God did not destroy them sooner than he did." The lesson is clear: Jehovah does not forever tolerate wickedness.

(Deuteronomy 8:4) 4 The clothing you wore did not wear out, nor did your feet become swollen these 40 years.

*** w04 9/15 p. 26 par. 1 Highlights From the Book of Deuteronomy ***
8:3, 4—In what way did the Israelites' clothing not wear out and their feet not become swollen during the wilderness trek? This was a miraculous provision, as was the regular supply of manna. The Israelites used the same garments and footwear they started out with, likely passing them on to others as children grew up and adults died. Since the two censuses taken at the beginning and at the end of the wilderness trek revealed that the number of Israelites did not increase, the original supply of these items would have been sufficient.—Numbers 2:32; 26:51.

(Deuteronomy 8:8) 8 a land of wheat and barley, of grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey,

*** w11 9/1 pp. 11-13 "The Seven Species" of the Good Land ***

"The Seven Species" of the Good Land

IN THE Bible, the land of Israel is described as a land of hills and valleys, coastal plains and plateaus, rivers and springs. With such variety of soil types and climate zones, including parched desert in the south and snow-clad mountains in the north, this land yielded a remarkable variety of crops. When Moses heightened the Israelites' expectations regarding the "good land" that awaited them, he spoke of it as "a land of wheat and barley and vines and figs and pomegranates, a land of oil olives and honey," specifically mentioning seven agricultural products.—Deuteronomy 8:7, 8.

To this day, the expression "the seven species" is still used to describe the products of the land. At various times, these crops have appeared on lo-

cal coins and postage stamps as a symbol of the land's fertility. How were they cultivated in Bible times? How did they affect the people's way of life? Let us see.

"Wheat and Barley" Although wheat and barley were both sown in the fall, barley ripened a month sooner. A sheaf of the firstfruits from the barley harvest was presented at the temple as an offering to Jehovah during the Festival of Unleavened Bread, in March or April. An offering of wheat loaves, on the other hand, was presented during the Festival of Weeks, or Pentecost, in May.—Leviticus 23:10, 11, 15-17.

For centuries and up until fairly recently, farmers in Israel sowed cereal seeds by hand, broadcasting the grain, which they held in a fold of their garment. Barley grains were simply scattered on the ground. Wheat seeds, however, needed covering. They were worked into the soil either by being trodden down by draft animals or by reploting the field.

The Bible often refers to sowing, reaping, threshing, winnowing, and grinding grain. Considerable physical effort was involved in each step. Every day, harvested grain was ground into flour at home and then baked into bread for the family. This gives meaning to Jesus' instruction that we pray for "our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11, King James Version) Bread made from whole-grain wheat or barley flour was the staple of people in Bible times.—Isaiah 55:10.

"Vines and Figs and Pomegranates" After leading his people in the wilderness for 40 years, Moses set an enticing prospect before them—that of eating the fruitage of the Promised Land. Forty years earlier, what did the ten spies bring back to the Israelites encamped in the wilderness as evidence of the Promised Land's fruitfulness? "A shoot with one cluster of grapes" so heavy that they had to carry it "with a bar on two of the men." They also brought back figs and pomegranates. What a mouthwatering experience for the desert wanderers! That was a taste of good things to come!—Numbers 13:20, 23.

Grapevines needed constant care—pruning, irrigating, and harvesting—to maintain their fruitfulness. A protective wall, carefully fashioned terraces, and a watchman's booth marked a well-kept hillside vineyard. The Israelites came to be well-acquainted with the work that needed to be done in a vineyard and understood what would happen if it was neglected.—Isaiah 5:1-7.

At the grape harvest, wine making began. Clusters of grapes were trampled in a vat or squeezed in a winepress. The juice was either boiled to extract its natural sugar or allowed to ferment to become wine. The land of Israel was blessed with just the right conditions for grape growing and wine making.

People who live far from lands where figs grow may have seen only the dried and pressed variety. A fig straight from the tree seems to be a totally different fruit—sweet and juicy. To preserve them beyond the short harvesting period, figs have to be sun-dried and packaged. "Cakes of pressed figs" are mentioned often in the Bible.—1 Samuel 25:18.

Breaking open the leathery skin of a ripe pomegranate exposes hundreds of closely packed "minifruits," ready for eating or juicing—a refreshing, healthful, and nourishing treat. Esteem for the pomegranate is seen in that representations of it once adorned the hem of one of the garments of the high priest as well as the pillars of Solomon's temple.—Exodus 39:24; 1 Kings 7:20.

"Olives and Honey" The Bible contains close to 60 references to the olive, a valuable source of food and oil. Olive groves still dot most parts of Israel. (Deuteronomy 28:40) To this day, the October harvest is a family affair in many communities. Harvesters beat the tree branches to shake the olives free and then gather the fallen crop. The olives are preserved and used as food for the family year-round or are taken to a communal oil press. In fact, hundreds of ancient presses of various types have been unearthed at archaeological sites. Today, it is fascinating to see the pale green oil flow into containers for the family's

annual supply or for marketing as a source of income. Besides being used as a food item, olive oil also served as a cosmetic and as fuel for lamps.

The honey that Moses mentioned could have been either honey produced by bees or a syrup extracted from dates and grapes. Honey extracted from these fruits is still commonly used as a sweetener. But the honey mentioned in the Bible accounts of Samson and Jonathan was clearly wild honey from the comb. (Judges 14:8, 9; 1 Samuel 14:27) A recent discovery of an apiary of more than 30 beehives at Tel Rehov in northern Israel shows that beekeeping was practiced in the land as far back as the days of Solomon.

Today, anyone who takes a stroll through a colorful market in Israel—with its bakeries and well-stocked fruit and vegetable stalls—will find an abundant supply of “the seven species” in one form or another. These seven, of course, are just a few of the seemingly endless variety of food-stuffs produced locally. Modern agricultural methods have made it possible to cultivate plants native to other lands. All this abundance shows that this little strip of land does indeed live up to its reputation as the “good land.”—Numbers 14:7.

would delight in ‘doing them good in their after-days’ by granting them peace, prosperity, and happiness in the Promised Land.

(Deuteronomy 8:16) 16 and fed you with manna in the wilderness, which your fathers had not known, in order to humble you and to put you to the test so as to benefit you in the future.

*** w99 8/15 p. 25 Benefiting From “the Grain of Heaven” ***

A Lesson for Israel Benefits Christians

When Jehovah provided the manna, he had more in mind than simply satisfying the physical needs of some three million Israelites. He wanted ‘to humble them and put them to the test’ so as to refine and discipline them for their own benefit. (Deuteronomy 8:16; Isaiah 48:17) If they responded to that refining and discipline, Jehovah