

Manner And Customs of Bible Lands

by

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX -

Domestic Animals

THE CAMEL

VARIETY OF CAMELS IN BIBLE LANDS. The Arabian or dromedary camel, which has one hump on its back, is the one in use in Syria and Palestine to-day, and is the kind found among the desert Arabs of the East. The Bactrian camel, that has two humps, comes from another region altogether, and is rarely seen in Bible lands. It was the Arabian camel that was used in Bible times.

By whom the camel was used. The camel was used largely by the early Hebrew patriarchs.¹

These men measured their wealth by the number of domestic animals they possessed, and camels were included among them. "**Abram had sheep, oxen, she-asses, and camels**" (Genesis 12:16). Rebekah rode on a camel on her trip to become the bride of Isaac (Genesis 24:64).

"**Jacob had much cattle, asses, and camels**" (Genesis 30:43). It was a company of Ishmeelites with their caravan of camels that carried Joseph down into Egypt (Genesis 31:25, 28). The patriarch Job had three thousand camels before his testing experience, and this number was doubled afterwards (Job 1:3; 42:12).

The Hebrew people as a whole during most of the Old Testament times did not make large use of the camel. Living in hilly country, and being a pastoral and agricultural people, they did not have so much need for the camel. Their kings usually possessed camels which were used for travel and transport purposes. Thus Scripture says King David had many camels, some of which had been captured in war (I Samuel 21:9).

The camels use of water. Surely, this animal was divinely designated for desert country. Its remarkable characteristic is of course its ability to go for a long time without drinking water. This does not mean that it can get along with less water than other animals, but simply that it has the ability to store up water in a series of cells or sacks with which its interior region is furnished. The camel is able to consume as much as nine gallons at a single drink, and this water taken in a few minutes will last it for several days. A camel that is thirsty for water has been known to scent water at a great distance, and will go at great speed to the spot where the water is located. When camel caravans unexpectedly run out of water, the men will sometimes kill one of the camels and extract from its stomach water enough to save the life of the people in the caravan.²

The process of watering the camels. Genesis tells how Rebekah watered the camels of Abraham's servant: "**And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels**" (Genesis 24:20). The Bedouin Arab of the desert do not water their camels at all in winter if their grazing is good. When the weather begins to warm up, they water them every week or nine days. As the summer becomes hotter, the camels are watered oftener, until the very hot weather when they are watered under ordinary conditions every other day. Leather buckets are usually utilized to draw the water out of the well, and a leather receptacle serves as a trough, out of which the camels drink the water poured therein. This trough is supported by wooden stands, and is kept in the tent of the desert Arab ready for use when it comes time to water the camels.³

The camel's food. Under ordinary conditions, the camels are fed *teben*, which is the short straw that comes from the Oriental threshing floors. Each camel caravan will carry some of this packed closely in bags. But when on a journey and it becomes necessary, the camel often lives on what can be found by it along the way, even in desert country. It is able to make good use of the scanty herbage to be found in those regions. Under these circumstances its favorite food is a shrub that is called *ghada*, that has slender little green twigs. It also makes use of a thornbush which it is able to devour because it has a hard and horny palate. Camels have been known to travel for twenty days without receiving anything for food except what they discovered for themselves along the way.⁴

The camel's feet. These are indeed made for desert traveling. They consist of two toes that are long and that rest upon hard elastic cushions that have a horny and tough sole. The soft cushions of their feet cause their tread to be as noiseless as that of a cat. Thus the camels do not sink in the desert sands, and the toughness of their feet enables them to stand the burning soil, and the stones that are often mixed with the sand.⁵

The camel's hump. This serves important purposes. It makes it possible for the back of the animal to receive burdens that are to be transported. And the fatty matter that accumulates in the hump provides a supply of reserve energy which can be utilized by the animal as occasion demands. The condition of the hump is always examined when an Oriental buys a camel.⁶

Mounting a camel. This is not an easy art for a Westerner to learn. It would be impossible to do this while the animal is standing, and so it is trained to kneel and stay in this position until the rider has mounted it. It is natural for the camel to kneel because it is born with warts on the legs and breast which serve as cushions to rest its weight when kneeling. When it kneels it begins by dropping on its knees, and then on the joints of the hind legs, then it drops on its breast, and finally on its hind legs that are bent. In rising, the process is reversed: the hind quarters rise first, tending to throw the rider forward, after which the front quarters rise rapidly, tending to throw the rider backward, then the forward movement of the animal would tend to throw the rider forward again.

An experienced camel rider sways to and fro, yielding his body to the movements of the animal. This movement of the camel causes some inexperienced riders to have "seasickness." Most Westerners who attempt to ride the camel find the journey to be a very uncomfortable one.⁷

Abraham's servant "**made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water**" (Genesis 24:11).

The equipment used by desert Arabs for travel by camel. This includes a camel saddle which has two tall pommels in front and behind; large saddlebags that hang down on each side of the saddle; a leather apron that hangs down in front of the saddle, stretching down on the sides of the camel's neck almost to its knees the camel stick; a leather bag containing dates; and other bags with supplies.⁸

Camel furniture for women. Sometimes the women ride the camels in the same way that the men do but more often a special arrangement of saddle takes care of them. "Camel furniture" was a part of Jacob's traveling equipment for his womenfolk, and when such was placed in Rachel's tent, she hid the stolen teraphim therein (Genesis 31:34). They often sit in large basket-like appendages which have been slung on each side of the animal.⁹

Another common arrangement for the wives of sheiks was:

One made of two slabs, or planks of wood, about ten feet in length, which were fastened upon the frame of the saddle and at right angles to it. From the end of those, ropes were stretched over upright posts fixed above the middle of the saddle, to support an awning under which the women sat upon quilts and cushions.¹⁰

Such an arrangement served the same purpose as a western umbrella.

Camel ornaments. These have been widely used in the East. Owners of camels often put various ornaments on their favorite animals. Sometimes they cover the collars with cowrie shells which are sewn on them according to a pattern. Ornaments that are crescent-shaped are sewn on red cloth and make a jingling sound with each step of the animal. Often, ornaments of silver are displayed on the camel's neck. Concerning Gideon, Scripture says: "**And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the ornaments [crescents] that were on their camels' necks** (Judges 8:21). Thus the camel's ornaments of that day were the same as used by the Arabs of today.¹¹

The camel as a beast of burden. Through the centuries the camel has been used for carrying burdens. In the Bible, "**forty camels' burden,**" is referred to in one passage (II Kings 8:9); and in another, bread was carried on "**asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen**" (I Chronicles 12:40). In still another, treasures were to be carried on the humps of camels (Isaiah 30:6).

A special packsaddle is used when the animals carry:

A narrow bag about eight feet long is made, and rather loosely stuffed with straw or similar material. It is then doubled, and the ends firmly sewn together, so as to form a great ring, which is placed over the hump, and forms a tolerably flat surface. A wooden framework is tied on the packsaddle, and is kept in its place by a girth and a crupper. The packages which the camel is to carry are fastened together by cords, and slung over the saddle. They are only connected by those semiknots called "hitches," so that when the camel is to be unloaded, all that is needed is to pull

the lower end of the rope, and the packages fall on either side of the animal. So quickly is the operation of loading performed, that a couple of experienced men can load a camel in very little more than a minute.¹²

Camel caravans. It is camel caravans that have been largely used to transport goods from one country to another in Bible lands, or to go a great distance especially in desert territory.

Isaiah prophesied to the Dedanites, who were caravan merchants between the shores of the Persian Gulf and Palestine:

"In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies [caravans] of Dedanites" (Isaiah 21:13). The number of camels in a caravan in modern times has differed widely, but one writer tells of joining a caravan which was divided into four companies, and the first three of these numbered sixteen hundred camels.¹³

The usual arrangement of a caravan is a string of camels with each one tied to the one before it, and the leader of the caravan either riding on the back of it or walking by the side of a donkey. A cord from the first camel in the line, is tied to a ring that is fastened to leather strips on the hips of the donkey. Thus the camels learn to follow implicitly the donkey that heads the procession.¹⁴

The social influence of the caravans. In ancient times as well as today, in large sections of the Orient, the caravans take the place of newspaper, telephone, and radio. Ordinarily, the knowledge of what was going on was limited on the part of the women to what they heard at the village oven, or the village well; and on the part of the men, to what they heard at the village guest room, or at the gates of the city. But when a caravan arrived in the village, it was an event of great importance, because there was always news brought from a distance.¹⁵

The familiar proverb must have referred to such an event: **"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country"** (Proverbs 25:25).

The swift Arabian camel. This animal is often called the *deloul*, has long and wiry limbs, and is without superfluous fat. Its shoulders are broad and its hump small, although hard and firm. It is an ungainly looking creature, but the Arab is very fond of this animal.

The ordinary camel travels along at the rate of about three miles an hour, whereas the *deloul* if not heavily loaded will traverse nine or ten miles an hour. Some of the natives even claim that this animal can outrun a race horse. Jeremiah the prophet speaks of **"a swift dromedary traversing her ways"** (Jeremiah 2:23). The movements of this swift animal are hard on the rider, who usually prepares for the trip by "belting himself tightly with two leathern bands, one just under the arms, and the other round the pit of the stomach."¹⁷

Various camel products. The Arab of today makes use of camel meat and camel milk. The Mosaic law forbade the Jews to use camel meat **"because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you"** (Leviticus 11:4). It is possible that they did use the milk, at least in patriarchal times (cf. Genesis 32:15). Camel's hair serves many purposes in the Orient.

At the right season of the year it is removed in tufts and the women spin it into strong thread.

Various coarse fabrics are made from this thread. The Bedouin tents are sometimes made of camel's hair, as are also carpets, rugs, "abayas" or the outer garments, and other items. Matthew says of John the Baptist that he "**had his raiment of camel's hair**" (Matthew 3:4). The camel's skin is made into leather and from this material are made sandals, leggings, and water bottles. Even the dung of camels is commonly used for fuel.¹⁷

Two references to the camel in Christ's sermons. The first reference is given by all three synoptic Gospel writers: "**It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God**" (Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25). It must be remembered that Orientals are very fond of exaggeration as a figure of speech, and so would appreciate this hyperbole that JESUS used. In Luke's account, the word ordinarily referring to a surgeon's needle was the one used by the writer of the third Gospel, who was himself a physician.¹⁸

The words that Jesus added, need to be taken with his statement: "**With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible**" (Matthew 19:26). The other reference to the camel was given when Jesus was denouncing the Scribes and Pharisees, and said to them: "**Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel**" (Matthew 23:24).

The reference here is to the ancient custom of filtering wine. The gnat and the camel are in striking contrast to each other in size. The use of the camel here was obviously a hyperbole, but was appropriate, not only because of its great size, but because to the Jews it was an unclean animal (because it does not divide the hoof, although it does chew the cud). The Pharisees were careful to strain out the smallest creature, but swallowed the larger one. They were scrupulous about small things, but very careless about the more important matters.¹⁹

THE DONKEY

The donkey as the Oriental pack animal. He has been the beast of burden from time immemorial. The packsaddle used with this animal differed somewhat according to the load being carried. When firewood was carried, a crosstree was used as a saddle. No doubt Abraham loaded his donkey in this way with wood for the sacrifice he was to make (Genesis 22:3). When sheaves of grain were carried by the donkey, a kind of cradle was either suspended to the crosstree or to the flat saddle. This saddle had as its under layer thick felt, and as its upper layer haircloth, with a padding of straw or sedges between.

When sacks of grain or cut straw are carried, they are thrown over this saddle and tied with a rope going under the beast's breast. The sons of Jacob probably packed their donkeys in this way (Genesis 42:26,27). Large baskets are used for carrying bread and other provisions. If fruit is being taken, two boxes are slung in a similar way. Jesse and Abigail doubtless packed their donkeys in such a way when they sent their presents (I Samuel 16:20; I Samuel 25:18).

Children are often carried in larger boxes on the donkeys. Sacks of grain are sometimes slung across the bare back of the donkey.²⁰

The donkey sometimes utilized for ploughing. The ox has been more generally used for this purpose, but occasionally the donkey becomes the animal to pull the Oriental plough.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of both the ox and the donkey being used thus: "**Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass**" (Isaiah 32:20). The law of Moses forbade the mixed yoke, i.e., ploughing with an ox and a donkey together, or any other combination (cf. Deuteronomy 22:10).

The donkey sometimes used for grinding grain. Here again, the usual method of grinding the grain is for the women to use smaller stones for their mills. The larger mill is elevated so that a singletree becomes suitable for the work. A camel may be used in place of a donkey. It was this type of a mill that the Philistines required Samson to pull (Judges 16:21).

JESUS referred to this larger type of millstone when he said: "**But whoso shall offend** [cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble], . . . **it were better for him that a millstone** [turned by an ass] **were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea**" (Matthew 18:6). The size and weight of this stone made its illustrative use by JESUS very forceful.²¹

The donkey used for riding. Before the tenth century B. C. it was used more than any other animal for this purpose. At that time, the mule came into use, especially among the rich, but the donkey has continued to be in use by many through the years.²²

Riding the donkey not considered a mark of humility. Rich people and important people rode on this animal. Of Abraham Scripture records that he "**rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass**" (Genesis 22:3). Concerning one of the judges it was said, "**And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities**" (Judges 10:3, 4). Also Achsah, the daughter of Caleb (Judges 1:14), and Abigail, the wife of wealthy Nabal (I Samuel 25:23), each rode on an ass.

White donkeys used by persons of high rank. "**Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way**" (Judges 5:10). These white donkeys are used today in many places in the East by people of high social standing. They are usually larger animals and are supposed to be swifter.²³

The donkey used as a symbol of peace times. The horse has usually symbolized times of war, but the donkey, times of peace. In Old Testament times this was especially true from the days of King Solomon. This fact helps to explain the words of the prophet about the Messiah that were fulfilled in the triumphant entrance of JESUS into Jerusalem: "**Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass**" (Zechariah 9:9; cf. John 12:15). Here the use by JESUS of the donkey was to signify that He was Prince of Peace, rather than Captain of an army, when He entered the Holy City.²⁴

Drivers sometimes used for donkeys. When women rode on donkeys, it was customary at times to have a driver for the animal. Thus it says concerning the trip made by the woman of Shunem: "**Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee**" (II Kings 4:24). On the journey made by Moses and his family

(Exodus 4:20), his wife and sons were mounted on their donkey while Moses no doubt walked along beside the animal. Because of this arrangement of travel for the journey of Moses and his family, it is believed by many that Mary and the child JESUS rode on the donkey (Matthew 2:13-15), and Joseph walked alongside in their flight into Egypt.²⁵

However, in the Orient, many times husband and wife are seen to ride both of them on the backs of a donkey.

Special donkey riding-saddles. Those used in the Orient today are rather large. A cloth of wool folded several times is spread over the animal's back. On this is placed a thick pad of straw which is covered with carpet. It is flat on top instead of being rounded. The pommel is quite high, and a cloth or carpet of bright color is often thrown over the saddle. This usually has fringed edges and tassels. It is quite likely that the saddle of Bible times was much simpler than this arrangement. It was probably a simple covering of cloth or skin which was used for the convenience of the rider, and especially to protect the animal from chafing.²⁶

MULES

Mules used by the Arabs of Bible lands. They scarcely ever breed the mule themselves, but instead import them from either the Lebanon district of Syria, or from Cyprus. The Arabs very seldom use the mule for the purposes of agriculture, but rather use it for riding or for carrying of burdens particularly in rocky country.²⁷

Mules used in later Old Testament times. The mule is not mentioned in the Bible until the reign of King David.²⁸

The law of Moses prohibited the rearing of any animals which were the result of the union of different species (Leviticus 19:19). So the Jews never bred mules, but evidently they thought the law did not prohibit them from using them. From the days of King David, they came to be used as beasts of burden, and for the saddle, and were imported from other countries, especially Egypt. Included in the tribute which King Solomon received from other nations was a quantity of "**mules, a rate year by year**" (I Kings 10:24, 25; II Chronicles 9:24).

The first Scriptural reference to the mule is in connection with the sheep-shearing feast planned by Absalom for the plot against Amnon. It says: "**All the king's sons arose, and every man got him up upon his mule, and fled**" (II Samuel 13:29). Each prince had a mule for his personal travel use, and thus this animal had taken the place of the donkey for such use. The mule was used by King David when he traveled in state, and to ride upon the mule belonging to the king was considered to be much the same thing as sitting upon the throne of the king. Thus David said concerning Solomon whom he wanted to make king to succeed him: "**Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon**" (I Kings 1:33).

Adonijah, who attempted to usurp the throne against the wishes of his father, heard that Solomon had ridden on the mule of David, he knew thereby that he had been made the new king (I Kings 1:44f).

By the time of Isaiah, the mule was in common use. The prophet says: "**And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem**" (Isaiah 66:20). Kings had especially made use of them, as Ahab who was much concerned about keeping his mules alive in time of famine (I Kings 18:5). The Bible does not anywhere mention the obstinate disposition of the mule. A reference by the Psalmist says: "**Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee**" (Psalm 32:9). But this is not a reference to that trait of character for which the mule is noted today in the West.²⁹

The New Testament does not mention the mule.

HORSES

Bible time horse same as Arab horse today. Assyrian and Egyptian sculpture would indicate that the horse of Bible times was the same as the Arabs use today. In those days the horse was used mainly for war purposes, although Isaiah, in connection with threshing, speaks of the use of horses (Isaiah 28:28), thus indicating that to a limited degree at least, horses were used in agriculture. But today the Arabs make much use of horses for riding. The horse is looked upon as part of the Arab's family. Although it is heavily bitted, the reins are rarely used, It is controlled by the rider's voice.

When the camp or oasis is reached, the horses are unsaddled or unharnessed and allowed to roam free. They will graze around the place and always come when called. Hoofs of the Arab horses are never shod, this practice being made useless by the hot climate.²⁰

In ancient days the same thing was true. In Scripture the quality of a horse was judged partially by the hardness of its hoofs. Isaiah said: "**Their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint**" (Isaiah 5:28). Micah wrote: "**I will make thy hoofs brass**" (Micah 4:13).

Care of horses. In Old Testament days the horse was cared for much as it is by the Arab today. In addition to the use of grass in grazing, the horses were fed barley and cut straw.

Thus both "**barley also and straw for the horses**" (I Kings 4:28), were in use in King Solomon's time. The Psalmist indicates the use of bit and bridle: "**Be ye not as the horse . . . whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle**" (Psalm 32:9). And the Book of Proverbs speaks of "**a whip for the horse**" (Proverbs 26:3).

Horses and chariots used in Egypt from early times. Joseph rode in "**the second chariot**" which King Pharaoh had (Genesis 41:43). When the Israelites made their escape from the bondage of Egypt, they were pursued by "**all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army**" (Exodus 14:9). In later years, Egypt was the main source for the supply of horses used by the kings of Israel (I Kings 10:28, 29).

Regulation in the law of Moses concerning horses. The Book of Deuteronomy was explicit about the use of horses by future kings of Israel. Concerning a ruler it was said: "**But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he**

should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way'" (Deuteronomy 17:16).

Use of horse and chariot impractical in much of Canaan. This was due to the mountainous character of much of the country. This was especially true of most of Judea and Samaria, except on the main roads through this territory. This is the reason for their absence in the battles that took place there.

Horses and chariots not used in conquest of Canaan. Joshua did not make use of them in his conquest of Canaan. There is no record that he made use of either cavalry or of chariots in his warfare. But Moses had predicted that Israel would have to face enemies that did have their horses and chariots. **"When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt"** (Deuteronomy 20:1). When Joshua went against such foes and conquered them, he was commanded by GOD to cut the hamstrings of captured horses and to burn the chariots thus secured. The Bible records his obedience to this command (Joshua 1:1:6,9).

War chariots used by Israel's enemies in the days of the Judges. When the Canaanites oppressed Israel in those days **"the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he [i.e., the Canaanitish king] had nine hundred chariots of iron"** (Judges 4:3). But the LORD gave Israel victory over these chariots without the Hebrews themselves using such implements of warfare.

King David's use of horses. David made some use of horses in battle. On the occasion of his victory over Hadadezer, King of Zobah, **"David houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for an hundred chariots"** (II Samuel 8:3, 4). Doubtless he wanted these chariots and their horses for battle use on the Hat ground of his country.

King Solomon's excessive use of horses. He disregarded the Law of Moses, and began to import great numbers of horses and chariots from the land of Egypt. **"And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt . . . and a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty"** (I Kings 10:28, 29). He had many stalls made for his large number of chariot horses and cavalry. These animals were stationed in chariot cities where the stalls were constructed (I Kings 4:26; II Chronicles 1:14; 9:25). Archaeologists have uncovered the ancient city of Megiddo, which was one of Solomon's chariot cities, and there in the southeast corner of the tell (ancient mound) was discovered that which gives every evidence of being the stables of Solomon.

Between four and five hundred of these stables were laid bare with nearby quarters for the grooms who cared for the horses. A manger was located in front of each horse. Massive stone hitching posts remain with holes in them for inserting the halter-shanks.³¹

Use of horses and chariots by kings of Judah and Israel. Following the example of Solomon, the kings that followed during the history of the divided kingdom, made use of horses and chariots. King Ahab died in his battle chariot in war with the Syrians (I Kings 22:35). And the prophet Isaiah warned the kings of his day against going down to Egypt for help in securing horses for the day of battle. **"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and**

trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 31:1).

Use of horses and chariots in time of peace. It was mainly kings or men of wealth or position who used chariots drawn by horses in times of peace. As prince, Absalom rode in a chariot, and King Rehoboam and King Ahab had their chariots in which they rode in state (II Samuel 15:1, Absalom; I Kings 12:18, Rehoboam; I Kings 18:44, Ahab).

And Jeremiah made this prophecy concerning the city of Jerusalem: "**Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes**" (Jeremiah 17:25).

In New Testament times the use of chariots was also limited to men of prominence. The Ethiopian eunuch of Queen Candace rode in a chariot when Philip joined him and won him to CHRIST (Acts 8:28f). In the Revelation, the noise of the judgment locusts is compared to "**the sound of chariots of many horses**" (Revelation 9:9).

Description of ancient chariots. There have been numbers of pictorial representations of ancient chariots discovered by archaeologists. These give a fair idea of what they were like.

These implements so often used in warfare were very simple in style and yet very uncomfortable for the occupants. "They were semicircular boxes on wheels and of very small size. They were hung very low, so that the occupants could step in and out without trouble."³²

There were no springs, but the floor was made of a network of rope stretched so as to be elastic and thus overcome some of the effects of the jolting. Often two horses pulled one chariot. In battle it was customary to have two men in each chariot, one to drive the horses, and the other to do the fighting.³³

Figurative use of chariots and white horses. Chariots and white horses were often used as figures of speech in the Bible. Chariots are referred to as symbols of power. Thus GOD "**maketh the clouds his chariots**" (Psalm 104:3). The LORD is said to have his army of angels and many chariots: "**The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels**" (Psalm 68:17).

And concerning the coming of the LORD, Isaiah prophesied: "**The Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind**" (Isaiah 66:15). The coming of CHRIST to fight the battle of Armageddon is predicted to be on a white horse, and the armies that follow him from Heaven will be upon white horses (Revelation 19:11, 14).

Generals of armies have usually been known to ride upon white horses, and so as General of a great army, CHRIST will ride such an animal; and since His saints share with Him in the victory, it is appropriate that they too shall ride upon white horses.

CATTLE

The domestic cattle of Palestine have been much like those raised in the West, only there have

not been as many kinds of breed. In the time of Israel's prosperity, cattle were much more numerous than they have been among the Arabs today, and were probably better developed animals. The ancient Jews used the cattle for sacrifices, and for this purpose they had to be without flaws. The Arabs do not use cattle for meat very much, but rather use sheep and goat meat.

Various words are used in our English Bible to indicate cattle. The word "ox" is often used, and it is sometimes indicated that this animal was especially fattened for table use. "**Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith**" (Proverbs 15:17). The words "bull" or "bullock" are used in Scripture to designate the male cattle. The bullock was one of animals that could be offered under the law of Moses as a burnt offering (Leviticus 1:5).

Milk-giving cows, sometimes called "milch kine," were in common use (I Samuel 6:7; Deuteronomy 32:14). Bull calves were often used in Bible times for meat. But the chief use of oxen was by the farmer in his various activities. The Jews used the oxen where the modern farmer has used the horse. Oxen were put under the yoke and made to pull the plow. Cows as well as bulls were utilized, the latter having been castrated. "**Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen**" (I Kings 19:19). Oxen were used in threshing grain. "**Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn [grain]**" (Deuteronomy 25:4).

During part of the year, the cattle in Palestine are allowed to graze. In the thickly populated sections, a boy will act as herdsman to see that they do no harm. But in the thinly populated districts, the farmers will sometimes turn their herds loose and let the cattle forage, hunting their own pasturage. While doing this they take on some of the characteristics of a wild animal. The Bible refers to some of these habits.

The Psalmist cried: "**Many bulls have compassed me, strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion**" (Psalm 22:12). The prophet Joel referred to the custom of turning herds loose to search for their own pastures: "**How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture**" (Joel 1:18). Under the dire conditions described by the prophet, the cattle could find no pasturage.³⁴

Special use of the fattened calf. The "fattened calf" as used by the Jews served a special purpose. This calf was stall-fed as is indicated by the prophet Malachi: "**And grow up as calves of the stall**" (Malachi 4:2). This animal is not only allowed to eat all that he wants to eat, but he is forced to eat more. The whole family, and especially the children, are interested in feeding it. It is fattened up in order that it may be killed for some special occasion.³⁵

Two occasions called for the slaying of this animal.

First, if a special guest was to be received and thus honored, the calf was then killed. When the witch of Endor entertained King Saul with a meal, the account says that she "**had a fat calf in the house; and she hastened, and killed it**" (I Samuel 28:24). The well-known New Testament example was when the prodigal's father said to his servants, "**Bring hither the fattened calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry**" (Luke 15:23). It was the custom to kill the animal, cook it, and then eat it, in quick succession. Abraham, Gideon, Manoah, the witch of Endor, as well as

the prodigal's father, are examples of this. The Bedouin Arabs do this today when unexpected guests arrive. These Orientals would appear to be expert in the art.³⁶

Second, the "fatted calf" was sometimes slain as a special sacrifice or offering unto the LORD. The prophet Amos mentions "**the peace-offerings of your fat beasts**" (Amos 5:22, Keil).³⁷

DOGS

There are two kinds of dogs that are referred to in the Bible.

First, There is the wolf-like, short-haired creature, that stands guard over the tent or the house, and which barks fiercely at strangers that come that way. He will eat whatever garbage is tossed to him, and in the evening he is usually heard barking about the city (cf. Psalm 59:6). Sometimes he is allowed to be under the table ready to receive scraps given to him (cf. Matthew 15:27).

Second, there is the shepherd dog that goes out with the shepherd to help him in rounding up the sheep. Job speaks of these animals as "**the dogs of my flock**" (Job 30:1). Because dogs were so often regarded as mere scavengers, the Bible does not use the word "dog" as Westerners are accustomed to think of this animal. The price of a dog was never brought to the house of the LORD (Deuteronomy 23:18). To call anybody "a dog" was to consider him as very low down indeed (Revelation 22:15).

The attitude of the Orientals toward dogs needs to be kept in mind in interpreting the Scriptures that refer to them.³⁸

1. Because some scholars have not discovered what they deem to be certain evidence of the domestication of the camel earlier than the end of the twelfth century B.C., therefore they suggest the possibility that references to the camel in Genesis and Exodus are anachronistic. But in the face of at least some early references to the camel outside the Bible, such a line of reasoning is indecisive. For answer to these critical views, see Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, pp. 170-171.

2. J. G. Wood, *Bible Animals*, pp. 218-229.

3. H. R. P. Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert*, pp. 413, 414.

4. Wood, op. cit., pp. 237, 238.

5. Ibid., p. 239.

6. E. P. Barrows, *Sacred Geography and Antiquities*, p. 370.

7. Wood, op. cit., pp 223,224.

8. Dickson, op. cit., pp. 416,417.

9. Wood, op. cit., p. 228.

10. W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, Vol. III, p. 550. .

11. Wood, op. cit., pp. 228, 229.

12. Ibid., p. 222.

13. A. Forder, *Ventures Among the Arabs*, pp. 174, 175.

14. Cunningham Geikie, *The Holy Land and the Bible*, Vol. I, p. 17.

15. Albert E. Bailey, *Daily Life in Bible Times*, p. 158.

16. Wood, op. cit., pp. 229, 230.

17. Ibid., pp. 218,241.

18. A. T. Robertson, *Luke the Historian in the Light of Research*, p. 95.
19. John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 473. (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886.)
20. "Ass," *The People's Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 53.
21. Wood, op. cit., p. 275.
22. Edwin C. Bissell, *Biblical Antiquities*, p. 117.
23. Wood, op. cit., pp. 264-267.
24. Bissell, op. cit., p. 117.
25. Ibid., p. 118.
26. Wood, op. cit., pp. 271, 272; Bissell, op. cit., p. 118.
27. Wood, *ibid.* p. 291.
28. The word "mules" as translated in the A. V. of Genesis 36:24, is rendered "hot springs" in the A. R. V.
29. Wood, op. cit., pp. 285-289.
30. Ibid., p. 250.
31. Cf. George L. Robinson, *The Bearing of Archaeology on the Old Testament*, pp. 179, 180.
32. Wood, op. cit., p. 257.
33. Ibid., p. 257, 258.
34. Ibid., pp. 101-110.
35. From class notes in course: "Manners and Customs of Bible Lands," Pasadena College, June, 1950, taught by Dr. G. Frederick Owen.
36. W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, Vol. II, p. 205.
37. Amos 5:22, translation of C. F. Keil in, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, Vol. I, p. 288. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1880.)
38. Miller, *Encyclopedia of Bible Life*, p. 36.

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