

Deuteronomy 17-20 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Remember now – This is 40 years after the Exodus and Israel is preparing to enter Canaan.

Moses knows that he will not be leading this new generation into the Land of Promise, so he is careful to rehearse for them their history and the entire law God had given them.

Their success would be determined by their obedience to all these things he's speaks to them about in Deuteronomy.

Outline of Deuteronomy

II. MOSES' SECOND DISCOURSE Chs. 5–28

K. Various Rules Ch. 16-18

6. No defective offerings 17:1

1 “You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God.

Very simply, God deserves our best, not what's left.

Moses knew some of the people would be tempted to offer to the Lord that which was useless & defective.

Sheep with blemishes or defects would be taken out of the flock anyway because they didn't want them passing on these traits to others.

Some of the people would think, “Since I have to kill this sheep anyway, why not offer it to the Lord?”

Moses says this is an abomination because it treats the sacrifices, which were to be a holy thing, as nothing more than an empty ritual.

The worship of God was never to degenerate into this – just a religious duty devoid of any real meaning or heart.

This ought to speak to us about how we bring *ourselves* to the Lord.

We no longer bring an animal as a sacrifice – we come as *living sacrifices*.

So – is our offering *defective*?

Not in external blemishes; God doesn't care about that.

He looks on the *heart*.

Even with the people here – a blemished offering was the sign of a defective heart.

God deserves our best, not what's left.

7. Dealing with apostates 17:2-5

2 “If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing His covenant, ³ who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, ⁴ and it is told you, and you hear of it, then you shall

inquire diligently. And if *it is* indeed true *and* certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel, ⁵ then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones.

When there was a report of apostasy, a thorough investigation was to be performed.

If it was discovered that indeed the person was guilty of apostasy, they were to be put to death.

8. The rules for capital crimes 17:6-7

⁶ Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. ⁷ The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

In order for someone to be executed under the Law of Moses, there had to be a *minimum* of 2 witnesses.

The judges who heard the matter and rendered the verdict could determine if 3 witnesses were needed.

You see, the principle was that disputes can arise between people and someone can be *falsely* accused by another.

Therefore, 2 witnesses would be needed to secure valid testimony.

But the judges of Israel were given the leeway to decide if the 2 witnesses were in cahoots and so require a 3rd witness who was not linked to the first 2.

Once the guilt of the accused was determined, the first ones to exact the judgment would be those witnesses.

After they threw the first stones, the rest of the community would join in until an entire mound of stones was raised over the condemned one's body.

These executions were performed outside of town.

They would usually throw the condemned off a cliff.

This would stun him and make for an easier target as they began hurling large stones.

The mound that resulted from the execution was built by everyone in the community and served as a highly graphic lesson to all of what happens if you run afoul of the Law.

Now, this brings up the whole issue of capital punishment – and whether or not it's a proper form of punishment for those guilty of certain crimes.

The short answer is = YES, when it's applied in a Biblically-consistent & just manner.

As Genesis 9 and Romans 13 make clear, it is the God-ordained & basic function of civil government to protect the sanctity of human life.

One of the tools for safeguarding this pre-eminent value is to give government the authority to execute those who show a blatant disregard for it.

Let me use an example – a surgeon will cut out a cancerous tumor because if not removed, it will kill the person it's in.

Now, that tumor is itself alive – but its diseased life is fed by destroying healthy life.

The same is true of certain individuals in society.

If they are allowed to remain alive, their influence will bring more harm & death to the innocent.

So God gives civil government the power of the sword to remove those who threaten others.

But there are strict guidelines for an execution to occur.

As we read here – there had to be solid evidence of the guilt of the accused.

And the execution had to be a public event in which the community took part.

This would be a good time to announce that we're going to be making a significant change to the Saturday evening service in January.

Instead of giving the same message as Sunday morning, we're going to begin a lengthy series on Building a Christian Worldview. [Explain]

We'll be taking an in-depth look at issues like capital punishment.

9. Israel's court system 17:8-13

8 “If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses.

As we've mentioned in previous studies, the gate of the ancient city was the city hall of that day.

It's where the city elders and judges sat.

When there was a legal dispute, the warring parties would go to the gate for a judgment.

Moses says here that if a case comes that is too tough for the local judges to decide, they are to go to the temple and have the higher court decide.

9 And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire *of them*; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment.

We need to do a little defining of terms.

Levites were the men of the tribe of Levi which were charged with the religious duties of Israel.

The Levites were generically referred to as *priests*.

But technically, the priests were a subset of the tribe of Levi – they were just one family; the descendants of Aaron, Moses' brother.

The patriarch of the priests was the High Priest, and he served as the Chief Judge.

Levites → Priests → High Priest (Chief Judge)

So, when a case was brought to the temple, it would be heard by some of the Levites serving there.

If they couldn't decide, then some of the priests would hear it.

If they were unable to decide, the High priest would be called.

If at any point along this line of appeal a judgment was rendered by the judges

hearing the case, that judgment stood . . .

10 You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you. ¹¹ According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you. ¹² Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. ¹³ And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.

To refuse the judgment rendered by the highest court in Israel was to show a level of rebellion against authority that was dangerous & potentially ruinous to the nation.

People must submit to government.

If they are allowed to rebel, it encourages more rebellion and soon things are spinning out of control.

God authorized the execution of such blatant rebels as a way to keep order & peace and protect the innocent & powerless.

10. Rules for Israel's king 17:14-20

14 “When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,’ ¹⁵ you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.

It was God's desire that Israel be a *theocracy*; that is, God would be their King.

But He knew there would come a day when they would demand a human king.

He makes provision for that office here.

They shall look to the Lord for His choice of a king.

We know what happened. In the time of Samuel, the people demanded, against much protest by Samuel, that he give them a king so they could be just like everyone else.

God began by giving them a king after their own hearts, their own ideas of what a king should be like;

Big, tall, strong, manly! Saul.

And he ended up being a horrible failure.

He started out really well; humble, careful, even godly.

But he proves the truism that power corrupts and ended up arrogant, cruel, & lost.

That's when God then moved to give Israel a king after his own heart – David.

God says that when they took a king, He was to be of Israel, not a foreigner.

It was this principle that moved the Founding Fathers to write the provision for

our President that he be native born.
Interesting that now we're hearing about some who want to make a change in the Constitution to do away with this provision.

Moses then gives a list of the things the king of Israel is prohibited from doing.

16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

There were 3 things he wasn't to do . . .

- 1) Multiply horses
- 2) Multiply wives
- 3) Multiply gold & silver

Horses were the backbone of military power in that day.

The army that could field a host of cavalry and chariots was the dominant power.

Egypt bred the best warhorses – and thus the warning about going to Egypt to secure this valuable military asset.

But God didn't want Israel to depend on the strength of its military or the late4st and greatest of defense technology.

They were to look to and depend on Him.

Another thing ancient kings did to secure their throne was to make political alliance with other nations to forge a power block that would thwart would-be invaders.

These alliances were forged by marrying relatives of the royal family.

The warning to not multiply wives was a warning about trying to secure political power through alliances with other nations.

God wanted Israel to depend wholly and only in Him.

The danger to the king of many foreign wives as that they would bring their native religions with them and into the royal home.

This would have a detrimental impact on the king's devotion to the Lord.

The third way in which kings try to secure their thrones is through economic power.

So God told Israel's kings not to amass silver & gold.

They were to understand their holding the throne as the result of God's favor, and look to Him for guidance in serving the nation.

They weren't to seek to find their strength in military, political, or economic power, but in the Lord alone.

Now, if God chose to bless the nation militarily, politically, & economically – great.

But the King was not to make such means of earthly power the basis of his rule.

It's interesting that Solomon, David's son, is referred to as having specifically violated all 3 of these prohibitions.

In fact, when we visit Israel and tour the ruins of Megiddo, we'll see the evidences of the massive stables Solomon constructed there.

It was one of his *chariot cities*, a military fortification he built to secure his power.

18 “Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from *the one* before the priests, the Levites. **19** And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, **20** that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment *to the right hand or to the left*, and that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

While the king wasn't to count his strength in military, political, or economic terms, he *was* to find it in his relationship with the Lord.

And the single most important thing he could do to enhance that base of strength was by being a man of the Word.

He was to write his own copy of the law and then read it daily.

Scholars aren't sure if this means he was to copy the Pentateuch; Gen-Deut, or if this meant just the book of Deuteronomy; this is more likely.

The problem with power is that it corrupts.

It's corruption begins by making the one who wields it think that that power has made him *better* than others.

A daily walk in the Word would remind the king that he was only king because God chose him and the power of His office was only a tool to be used in serving others.

He wasn't better than others just because he was king; he just had a unique office.

The only way power can be used safely is if the one who uses it realizes he/she is *answerable to* the Giver of power.

11. Supporting the Levites 18:1-8

In vs. 1-8 God reminds the people that the tribe of Levi were not going to be given land.

Instead of being farmers & merchants, they would be priests.

The offerings of the people would provide the support for the Levites.

12. Warning not to follow the Canaanite's abominations 18:9-14

9 “When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.

10 There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,* **11** *or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.* **12** For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. **13** You shall be blameless before the LORD

your God. ¹⁴ For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.

This list of occult arts being practiced by the Canaanites gives us an idea of just how far gone and deserving of judgment they were.

All of these occult practices involve communication with demons.

And demons have one goal in mind – humanity’s destruction.

This is why the Canaanites were offering their children as human sacrifices to their gods – because demons had told them of they did they would become rich and powerful.

Molech was an especially hungry idol. [Explain]

We hear about this and shudder and wonder how people could be so superstitious and cruel as to kill their infants this way.

But really is our culture & age any better?

We are still burning our unborn children in the womb with saline abortions.

People are actually *debating* the issue of partial birth abortion, in which all but the head of the child is delivered, then an instrument is driven into the child’s skull & its brains sucked out so the head will collapse.

There are millions of people in our nation who think this is an acceptable practice!

Why? “Well, having a kid right now would cramp my style.”

“I can’t afford a child right now – I want to get a new car.”

People may not bow to Molech any longer, but the demonic lie behind Molech is alive & well in 21st Century America.

L. Prophets: The True & The False 18:15-22

1. The True Prophet 18:15-19

¹⁵ “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, ¹⁶ according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’ ¹⁷ “And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.

Moses tells them to look for those who will come after Him who will bring God’s Word to them.

This makes it clear that the 5 Books of Moses aren’t the end of Scripture; more will come.

And as a nation, they can continue to expect messengers from the Lord who will bring them a definitive message from Him.

But Moses points past the *continuing office* of prophet in Israel to ***One Prophet*** who is *like him*; One who brings & mediates a New Covenant with the Nation.

Just as Moses has been formative in the life of the Nation of Israel, so this Prophet will prove formative.

Of course, Moses is pointing to the Messiah and all the ancient rabbis understood him this way.

Now Moses turns from speaking about true prophets to false ones . . .

2. The false prophet 18:20-22

20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’²¹ And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’—
“How do we know if a word is from the Lord or not?”

22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Don't listen to false prophets. And they don't get 3 strikes!

First time they blow it – they are not to be listened to anymore.

I will never forget reading a “Believer’s Voice of Victory” magazine many years ago.

It's put out by Kenneth Copeland, one of the luminaries of the Faith Movement.

In the back they would print some of the “Words from the Lord” given through ‘Brother Copeland’ at various rallies and meetings across the country.

One of them came at the height of the Watergate scandal and Copeland confidently spoke a word of prophecy that President Nixon would be proven innocent and exonerated of all charges against him.

Now, I noted that prophecy because contrary to so many of the prophecies you hear, it was something definite that could be clearly seen when it came to pass.

As we all know – it didn't. Nixon resigned in disgrace.

But Copeland was **NEVER** held to account for being a false prophet.

On the contrary, his ministry grew dramatically in the following years.

I've heard prophecies from well known Christian celebrities about the value of gold, about who would win what elevation and by what amount, and other things that didn't come to pass.

But the failure of their prophecies seems to have had no real effect on their popularity.

Yet God says in v. 22 we are not to listen to false prophets; we are to turn away from them and give them no heed.

M. The Cities of Refuge 19:1-13

In vs. 1-13, Moses repeats the command to set up cities of refuge in Israel so that those who accidentally kill someone have a place to flee to to escape the Avenger of Blood.

He says these cities were to be spread at central and key locations throughout the land so that someone could get there with relative ease.

The roads and paths there were to be kept in good repair as well. Then he tells them if after their initial conquest of the main territory of Israel the Lord expands their borders, they must set up new cities of refuge as well. The goal was to have a city within a day's travel from anywhere in the land.

N. Civil Court Guidelines 19:14-21

1. Boundary-markers are sacred 19:14

14 “You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

The land of Israel was going to be portioned out and divided up by lot to each of the tribes, then clans, and finally families.

Once the assignments were made, they would mark off the boundaries by setting up landmarks as property lines.

Moving one of these markers was considered a hideous crime because it was a blow to the very foundation of the nation – which was the belief that the Land had been given them by God – each person's lot falling to them by the assignment of none less than Yahweh Himself.

To get an idea of just how serious this crime was, do you know who the Rosenbergs were?

They were a couple who were convicted of treason in 1951 for passing nuclear secrets to the Russian Communists.

The sense of *outrage* on the part of millions of Americans was deep & profound.

There was a sense that Julius & Ethel Rosenberg had endangered the life of every man, woman, and child in the Nation.

That's the same kind of feeling the ancient Jew would have at the thought of someone moving a property line.

2. Rules for evidence 19:15-21

15 “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.

Again, the rule that it takes more than 1 witness to establish evidence as fact in court.

16 If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days.

¹⁸ And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, ¹⁹ then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. ²⁰ And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. ²¹ Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

If someone who stands accused contends that the witness against him is lying, then an investigation is to be made.

If it's discovered the witness committed perjury, then he is to suffer the punishment he thought to inflict on the accused.

No mercy was to be shown to perjurers because they sought to corrupt the very system that is supposed to be devoted to truth & justice.

O. Guidelines For War Ch. 20

1. Trust God for victory 20:1-9

1 “When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God *is* with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. **2** So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people. **3** And he shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; **4** for the LORD your God *is* He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.’ **5** “Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying: ‘What man *is there* who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. **6** Also what man *is there* who has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it. **7** And what man *is there* who is betrothed to a woman and has not married her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man marry her.’ **8** “The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, ‘What man *is there who is* fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.’ **9** And so it shall be, when the officers have finished speaking to the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

This seems like a rather strange way to raise an army – by sending guys home!

But that was precisely the point.

God wanted Israel to realize that their strength came from Him, not from how many men they could field or what weapons they carried into battle.

All God needed was a few guys who looked to Him in faith for the victory.

By giving the soldiers an out & excuse to go home, it would leave only those who **WANTED** to be there.

I've grown a bit tired of hearing the latest polls about how many people call themselves Christians.

A few years ago Gallup set the number at 84% – 84%?!?!)

If 84% are Christian – then the remaining 16% must live in Southern CA.

More likely, what people mean by ‘Christian’ is very far from what the Bible means by it.

But some believers hear that 84% are Christian and get all excited.

They think that because so many make the claim, surely we're winning the culture war.

Listen, if 84% were *genuinely Christian*, there'd be no culture war – it would have been over a *long time ago*.

We don't need large numbers of people calling themselves Christians in order to make a massive impact on our culture.

All we need is a few who really *ARE* born again, and who live a life of vibrant faith on the battlefield of modern American society.

And you know what – we don't even need the weapons and tools of our time, as convenient or powerful as they may be.

God told Israel to not be afraid of the enemy's horses and chariots.

We don't need to fear the media's tools of TV, radio, & the Internet.

We have something far more powerful; the Spirit of God!

The Spirit becomes effective in our lives through faith.

And faith comes by hearing God's Word.

And that comes through relationships which are the most basic of all social and cultural dynamics.

Listen, the media's main tools are TV, radio, the print media, & the Internet.

All of these need something else – electricity.

If the power went out – the media's voice would be silent.

But we'd still have all we need in the Spirit and the Word.

2. The order of battle 20:10-18

a. vs.10-15 outside the nation

10 “When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. ¹¹ And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people *who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you.*

There would come times when armed conflict would carry them outside the borders of Israel.

When it did they were to make an offer of peace to any city they came to.

If the city surrendered, they were not to attack it but to agree to peace, placing the inhabitants under tribute.

12 Now if *the city will not make peace with you, but war against you, then you shall besiege it.* ¹³ And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and you shall eat the enemies' plunder which the LORD your God gives you. ¹⁵ Thus you shall do to all the cities *which are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations.*

If a city refused to surrender then they were to do battle with it.

When it was subdued, all the adult males were to be put to the sword, because they were enemy combatants.

The women & children were spared and became part of the plunder of war, serving as slaves.

Now, this seems harsh and barbaric to us, and it is to a mindset that has been shaped by Christian ideas of equity and human dignity.

What we need to keep in mind is that these were concepts that had absolutely no form in the ancient world.

Slavery was as much a part of the economic and social setting as was growing crops or tending flocks.

So while slavery seems hideous and brutal to us, keep in mind that slavery in that time was a standard and accepted norm.

It was God's instructions to Israel about their treatment of slaves that began the long slow process of reforming human society so that we've come to a point in the modern world where slavery is nearly eradicated.

We'll get in to a bit of that instruction next week.

b. vs. 16-18 inside the nation

16 “But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, ¹⁷ but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, ¹⁸ lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

While they could plunder and keep the people and goods of cities *outside* Israel, their conquests *in* Canaan were to be utterly and completely destroyed.

Even the material goods were to be heaped up and burnt.

The reason why is as we've already mentioned; the Canaanites were so far gone, so corrupt, that even the women and children were hopelessly lost.

These people were like a rabid dog; they were doomed to die, but could inflict a lot of pain and suffering on the way to their final end.

Again, this may seem harsh, but consider this:

Israel failed to heed what God said here. Instead of wiping out the Canaanites, they simply dominated them and let them remain.

It wasn't long before Israel was emulating the very same terrible abominations. The very thing God had warned them about at the end of v. 18 came to pass.

3. Sieges 20:19-20

19 “When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them; if you can eat of them, do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the tree of the field *is* man's food. ²⁰ Only the trees which you know *are not* trees for food you may destroy and cut down, to build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it is subdued.

To stage a successful siege an army needed to make a camp and probe the city defenses.

Wood was the main material used for all this. [Graphic 1] [Graphic 2]
But God warned them not to cut down fruit trees since this would ruin the
future economic vitality of the area.

War comes and goes, but people live on and He wanted them to make sure
there would be provision for those who were still there after the battle was
over.

When the Jews began returning to the land of Israel in the early 1900's they found
a near desert wasteland.

What wasn't dry & arid was swampy & fetid.

Slowly but surely the Jews have turned the land into a garden.

They embarked on a massive tree-planting program that today boasts
wonderful, thick forests.

The swamps have been drained and hundreds of thousands of acres converted
to crops.

The reason the land was so barren at the outset of the 1900's was because the
Romans had cut down most of the trees throughout the land in the wars of the
first and second centuries for their siege works. [Graphic 3] [Graphic 4]