

## Threshing floor

Walled in compressed clay or rock floor  
Mechanism to separate the chaff from the wheat

### History

The wheat would be spread out on the threshing floor. An ox or a donkey would pull a wooden sleigh over it, underneath which stones were attached to separate the grains from the chaff. The farmer would stand on top of the sleigh to guide it.

In the process, the wheat would be thrown into the air. The wind would blow away the chuff; the grains would fall back onto the ground where they could be gathered into earthen pots. Harvest was reason for celebration. Pentecost was the celebration of the wheat harvest. A rich harvest was understood to be God's blessing - a poor harvest punishment. In the bible, God's judgement is being portrayed as the separation of wheat and chuff.

Will you be able to stand God's judgement?

2Sam. 24, 18 ff; Rut 3, 1 ff; Mt 3,12

## Oil press

One armed oil press  
To extract oil from olives

### History

Olives, including the stones, would be placed in sacks under the press. By adding a weight to the lever, pressure would be put on the fruit so that the oil would flow out.

By adding another weight each time, it was possible to have four pressings. The first pressing produced the best oil, which was reserved for the temple and the king. The second one produced the cooking oil, the third one oil for lamps and the fourth one gave a poor quality oil, which was used to make soap.  
Gethsemane means: oil press.

Would you like to be treated to something good?

1Sam 10, 1; Ps 23, 5; Lk 22, 44; Joh 12, 1-8

Sheep stable

Stone shed  
Shelter for animals

History

The animals needed sufficiently large grassing areas. Over night, they would be housed in sheds like this.

Animals would be brought in one by one through the small entrance. At this point, they would be counted and checked for injuries.

The shepherd would spend the night in front of the entrance - he would himself become the door.

Thistles and thorns would be fixed to the top of the walls, so that wild animals would not jump over them. If necessary, these could be set alight. The shepherd knew his animals very well and they knew him.

In whose care are you entrusting your life?

Ps 23; Lk 2,8; Lk 15, 4-7; Joh 10, 1-16

Wine press

Basin in which the grapes were pressed with bare feet

History

The seeds of the grapes were not to be damaged, because that would have caused bitter substances to leak into the wine and spoil the taste. The workers who pressed the grapes would hold onto ropes so that they would not slip. In an adjacent basin, the juice would be fermented and filtered and then stored in earthen vessels or wine skins.

Wine was considered a main staple. Its anti-bacterial qualities helped to prevent infections from drinking water, which was often drawn from cisterns. Jesus said: „I am the vine, you are the branches ...“

Have you got a relationship with Jesus Christ?

1 Mo 9, 18-28; Lk 10, 33+34; Joh 2, 1-11; Joh 15, 1-8

Lifting crane

Mechanism to lift weights of several tons  
Mostly used in quarries

History

Limestone was the most widely available building material in old Israel. The stone would be chiselled on four sides. Wooden wedges would be lodged underneath the stone, over which water would be poured. The wood would swell, thus dislodging the stone. The body weight of several people would move the wheel. The rope would be wound around the axle of the wheel and by means of guide rollers, the weight would be lifted. Course animals would pull the stone on wooden rollers or on carts to the building site. The importance of a solid foundation for the stability of a building is being highlighted several times in the New Testament.

Does the building of your life have a solid foundation?

Ps 118, 22; Mt 7, 24-27; Mt 16, 18; 1Ko 3,11; 1Pt 2, 5

Nomad tent

Mobile home of the antiquity  
Weaved from goats hair

History

Tents were traditionally made from goats hair due to its particular characteristics - it swells when it rains, making the tent completely water tight. On the east side, the tent was open to make the best use of the warmth of the morning sun. A curtain divided the tent in two halves - one for men and one for women. Even Abraham, the founder of the Israeli nation, lived in a tent. The tent symbolises the unrest in life. We have no permanent home on earth. We are on a journey - a journey to God. The apostle Paul was a tent maker.

Where would you want to be at home?

1Mo 18, 1-15; Jes 33,20; Apg 18, 3;

## Israeli Altar

Altar to bring burnt offerings  
Place of judgement

### History

Moses was instructed by God to build an altar for burnt offerings from unhewn stone, the measurements of which were to be 5x5x3 inches. A ramp allowed the priest to climb on top of it to prepare the sacrifice. Anyone who was in mortal danger due to a crime he had committed or due to an act of revenge, could find refuge between the horns of the altar. In this place, he stood under God's protection and had a right to a proper trial. There were strict rules on what would be acceptable as a sacrifice and how the sacrifice was to be presented. Jesus is called the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for the forgiveness of our sins.

Do you know what to do with your personal guilt?

2Mo 20, 24-26; 2Mo 21, 12-13; 4Mo 35, 6-15; Joh 1, 29

## Roman crosses

Rough bars or de-branched trees were used as crosses  
Crucifixion as method of execution in the Roman Empire

### History

During the Roman Empire, crucifixion was often practiced to punish murderers, robbers, pirates as well as political troublemakers. The condemned would have to carry the bar, on which he was to be nailed our bound, to the location of the execution. The condemned would die slowly of suffocation. To rest on the seat bar would mean to prolong the death fight. Wine mixed with myrrh would be given to ease the pain. Jesus died like a criminal. His crime: He was the King of the Jews.

Did you know that Jesus died for you?

Jes 53, 5; Mt 27, 32-38; Mk 15, 21-37; Lk 23,26-46; Joh 19, 17-35

## Tomb

Tomb chambers carved into rock  
Entrance closed with a round stone

## History

The deceased needed to be buried as quickly as possible. The body would be embalmed with special oils containing myrrh and aloe and then wrapped in linen cloths. The herbs aided a speedy decomposition of the body, but they also helped to odorise the tomb chamber. After one year, the bones would be collected and stored in the grave that held the bones of the ancestors (in a sarcophagus). It was important for Jews to be buried with their ancestors. Joseph of Arimathea offered his newly built and as yet unused tomb for Jesus's burial. On Easter Morning, Jesus had risen and the tomb was empty.

Where will you spend eternity?

1Mo 47, 29-31; Mt 27, 57-60; Lk 23, 50-24,12; Joh 19, 38-42

## Watch tower

View point on top of the city wall  
or in a winyard

## History

A winyard was an extremely valuable property and was, for that reason, very carefully guarded, so that thieves or animals could not do any harm to the crops. During harvest time, the family of the winyard owner would live in the watch tower which contained simple bed chambers. The with leaves overgrown roof allowed for a glimpse of the night sky. This reminded the workers of God's promise to make the nation of Israel as numerous as the stars. The watch tower was an outward sign of a very well kept winyard.

Does God's provision bear fruit in your life?

1Kö 21, 1-29; Jes 5, 1-7; Mt 20, 1-16; Mt 21, 33-44; Joh 15, 1-2

## Oven

Vaulted clay structure  
retains heat

### History

Burning a wood fire for several hours ensures that enough heat is stored in the oven to bake bread in it even after the fire has been put out.  
The bible recognises bread as the most important food.  
The request for our daily bread in the Lord's Prayer is in reality a request for everything we need in life.  
Jesus calls himself the Bread of Life. He is the only one who is able to satisfy our hunger after a fulfilled life.

What do you feed your soul?

1Mo 3, 19; Ps 104, 13-15; Mt 6, 11; Mt 14, 14-21; Lk 24, 29-31; Joh 6, 35

## Well

Approx. 50 meters deep  
A stone was used as a safety cover

### History

Humans could only ever settle where they could find water. The well was necessary for survival.  
The well became a central point in peoples' lives. Every day, water needed to be drawn for themselves and their animals. This physically highly demanding task was carried out by the women. Usually, they would do this in the cool of the evening.  
This time was also used to socialise with neighbours.  
Because of their importance, wells could often become the centre of military conflict Wells were preferred to cisterns due to the better water quality.

At which well do you satisfy your thirst for life?

1Mo 24,1-21; 2Mo 2, 16-17; Joh 2, 5-9; Joh 4, 7-14