

Assignment 11-1

Deuteronomy 25:4 ESV “You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.

1 Corinthians 9:7-14 ESV Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? (8) Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? (9) For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? (10) Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. (11) If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? (12) If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. (13) Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? (14) In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 ESV Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching. (18) For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The labourer deserves his wages.”

In the light of the above scriptures, do you think Paul is over-using his imagination to give a far-fetch interpretation of Deuteronomy 25:4? Does Paul misinterpret this passage to suit his financial situation? If not, then why? Is the typology of an ox eating threshing grain suitably applied to Paul’s situation? Is he adding an extra layer of meaning and intent that wasn’t in the original text?

Write a passage explaining your understanding and response to the above.

To muzzle an ox while it is treading out grain, is to deny the ox from eating from the work it is doing. To get no reward for the effort it is putting in.

Paul takes this scripture, and explains the meaning of it to the Corinthians, a church he has served, ministered and cared for a long time. He has spent time with them, and now writes to them with further instruction and would feel a responsibility for them as his congregation.

Paul serves as a full-time pastor, which we assume doesn’t draw a wage. Without a trade or a job to support or cover his living expenses, he needs to be able receive support from where he puts his time and energy – which in this case is the congregations he supports.

He takes the scripture about the muzzled ox and applies it to his own context – he works for the congregation, so who are they to deny him a wage, supplies or support.

Paul is within his rights to take this scripture and remind the Corinthians of – not their duty- but their commitment to upholding scripture. Just because the ox is unmuzzled, does not mean it will eat, but it has the option to if it is hungry. In the same way, Paul may not need something from every single person in the church, but everyone is obliged to have something to offer should Paul call upon them.

Assignment 11-2

Feel free to discuss another passage of scripture of your own choosing for which you would like to explore with regard to levels of meaning, typology, literal meaning and spiritual meaning, and/or allegory?

Exodus 16:4-8 The Israelites in the wilderness receiving bread from heaven – manna.
John 6:32-35 Jesus calls himself the bread of life.

These two scriptures, one from the old and one from the new testaments, both talk about bread from heaven, but in a very different way.

One is literal bread that was supplied every morning (except the sabbath), from God to the Israelites as they wandered through the desert. It provided them with sustenance and fuel for their bodies to get through the days.

While Jesus also came from the Father in heaven, and he supplies our every need – both spiritually but also physically, by providing opportunity, health and life.

This would be an allegory and a wider meaning of “bread from heaven”.