

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages



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Why do we study??

To understand the mind of God!

Isaiah 55:8-9

⁸ “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.

⁹ “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.

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What are the two most dangerous words we can use trying to understand scripture??

"I Think"

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

What is the hermeneutic used in the Lord's church to "interpret" scripture??

1. Direct Command

2. Examples of the Apostles

3. Necessary Inference (what can be logically inferred by studying the passage)

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Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Why should we even ask this question since it such an accepted tradition within the church and seemingly unchallenged by virtually everyone?

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Point #1: There have been those in the past who have advocated the question here is not whether the minister(s) “should or should not” be compensated. But rather, should there be a stipulated wage (compensation) or should there be some type of freewill offering provided by the church? So this question is certainly worthy of our study!

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

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Point #2: *This is the most important and the overriding subject of our study this morning.* It is incumbent upon **every** generation of Christians within the Lord's church to study these matters. Relying not solely on what previous generations have done, but basing the decisions of scriptural interpretation which are grounded in their own study!

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

There are any number of areas which we should perpetually study and consider:

- *What is required to be "saved?"*
- *Can we lose our salvation?*
- *What is acceptable during worship?*
- *Can we use a building? Microphone? Overhead? Heating & A/C?*
- *Can we utilize the instrument of music in our worship?*

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There are any number of areas which we should perpetually study and consider:

- *Can an elder be compensated?*
- *Is there a right / wrong way to select elders & deacons?*
- *Raising our hands in worship? Clapping? Swaying?*
- *How we dress?*
- *How our ministers dress?*

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

There are any number of areas which we should perpetually study and consider:

- *What about the organization of the church? Locally and universally??*
- *Women's roles within the church.*
- *What in scripture is "cultural" vs. what are timeless biblical principles which apply to Christians of all ages??*
- *The list is seemingly endless.....*

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

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Consider the NT principles and teachings which apply:

- a. The laborer is worthy of his hire. This principle appears several times in the NT, but specifically, Jesus cited it in Luke 10:7
7 Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Consider the NT principles and teachings which apply:

Also by the apostle Paul in Romans 4:4

⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Consider the NT principles and teachings which apply:

b. The minister is entitled to be supported as a matter of right, and not be the object of charity. A principle carried forth in Galatians 6:6

⁶ The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches *him*.

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

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Consider the NT principles and teachings which apply:

c. The Apostle Paul took wages from churches as he stipulated in

II Corinthians 11:8

⁸ I robbed other churches by taking wages *from them* to serve you;

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Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Consider the NT principles and teachings which apply:

d. Paul elaborately taught in I Corinthians 9:1-18 that the minister is to be supported on the basis of “service rendered”. This passage is our de facto teaching in the NT which we use as our guiding instruction on this matter! Paul here provides seven foundational standards for our utilization:

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Argument #1: The minister has a right to have his sustenance provided and have his family with him! (I Corinthians 9:4-6)

⁴ Do we not have a right to eat and drink?

⁵ Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

⁶ Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

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Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Argument #2: Other workers in the secular world expect compensation and it is provided! (I Corinthians 9:7)

⁷ Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Argument #3: God, in the old law, provided even the oxen to be fed from the fruits of their labors! (I Corinthians 9:8-10)

⁸ I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

(I Corinthians 9:8-10 – cont.)

⁹ For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING.” God is not concerned about oxen, is He?

¹⁰ Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*.

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Argument #4: Since ministers are sowing spiritual things for the congregation, it is appropriate for them to expect material rewards! (I Corinthians 9:11)

11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

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Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Argument #5: Although Paul did not claim compensation due to his love for the Corinthian church, compensation is a “right” so the gospel will not be hindered!

(I Corinthians 9:12)

¹² If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Argument #6: Compensation is provided to those who work in the temple and attend to the altar! (I Corinthians 9:13)

¹³ Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Argument #7: *Most importantly!* It is the Lord's will and explicit direction that those who proclaim the gospel receive their living from their efforts!! (I Corinthians 9:14)

14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

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Our Conclusions:

1. ***The main principle of this lesson:***

It is incumbent upon every generation of Christians within the Lord's church to study these matters. Relying not solely on what previous generations have done, but basing decisions of scriptural interpretation which are grounded in their own study!

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Our Conclusions (cont.):

2. Regarding the topic of compensation, both Jesus (in Luke 10:7) and the apostle Paul (in Romans 4:4) teach the biblical principle that those who work should be compensated!

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Our Conclusions (cont.):

3. The minister is entitled to be supported as a matter of right, and not be the object of charity. A principle carried forth in Galatians 6:6.

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Our Conclusions (cont.):

4. We find the example of the Apostle Paul taking wages from churches in

II Corinthians 11:8. This is one of the standards which we apply as part of our hermeneutical interpretation principles.

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Is it scriptural to pay our ministers?

Our Conclusions (cont.):

5. The Apostle Paul taught in I Corinthians 9:1-18 that the minister is to be supported on the basis of "service rendered". This passage defines seven principles which are our de facto teachings in the NT that we use as our foundational instruction on this matter!

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

