

Isaiah 30:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.

Analysis

The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender (וְהַאֲלָפִים וְהַעֲרִים עֹבְדֵי הָאֲדָמָה בְּלִיל חָמִיץ יֹאכְלוּ)—Even working animals eat belil chamits (clean, salted fodder). The adjective chamits means seasoned, savory, or fermented—higher quality than ordinary straw. Animals that ovdey (work, serve) the land receive premium food. **Which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan**—The verbs mizreh (winnowing shovel) and rachath (winnowing fork/fan) describe grain processing that separates wheat from chaff. Applying this to animal fodder suggests exceptional prosperity—even livestock eat what might feed humans in lean times.

This detail reveals God's comprehensive care in restoration. He doesn't neglect even draft animals. The principle echoes Deuteronomy 25:4: 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn'—workers deserve good provision. Paul applies this spiritually: ministers of the gospel should receive support (1 Corinthians 9:9-11). The eschatological dimension: when God fully restores creation, even the animal realm experiences abundance. Romans 8:19-21 describes creation's liberation from futility—this includes livestock eating 'clean provender' rather than scrounging. It's a preview of the peaceable kingdom where all creatures flourish under Messiah's rule.

Historical Context

Ancient farmers typically fed working animals basic straw or stubble. Winnowed, salted fodder was human-grade grain. Isaiah's vision of such abundance that even oxen eat premium food would astonish his agricultural audience. This hyperbolic blessing imagery appears throughout prophetic literature describing restoration (Joel 2:24-26; Amos 9:13-14)—nature itself superabundantly fruitful.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's concern for working animals' provision challenge exploitation of creation for human benefit without care for the creatures themselves?
2. What does it mean that restoration blesses not just humans but the entire created order?
3. How does Paul's use of the 'don't muzzle the ox' principle spiritualize this physical blessing into New Covenant realities?

Interlinear Text

וְהָאֵלֶּפֶי יִם	וְהַעֲגִיר יִם	עֲבִדֵי	הָאֲדָמָה הַ	בֶּל יֵל
The oxen	likewise and the young asses	that ear	the ground	provender
H504	H5895	H5647	H127	H1098
כִּמְּ יֵץ	יֹאכֶּ לֹו	אֲשֶׁר	זֶה הַ	בְּכֶ חֶת
clean	shall eat	which hath been winnowed	with the shovel	
H2548	H398	H834	H2219	H7371
וּבַמְזִרָה:				
and with the fan				
H4214				

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 45:6 (Parallel theme): For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.