

Ezra 7:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them.

Analysis

The tax exemption—"Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them"—exempts temple personnel from imperial taxation. This financial relief enabled full-time ministry without secular employment necessity. The comprehensive list shows no temple servant was excluded from this benefit. God providentially arranged circumstances freeing His servants for spiritual service.

Historical Context

Ancient empires funded state religions partially through tax exemptions for priests and temple personnel. Persian policy extended this to subject peoples' temples, viewing it as promoting stability and securing divine favor. The tax exemption (toll, tribute, custom) covered all imperial revenue types: road tolls, head tax, and customs duties. This significant fiscal concession demonstrated serious commitment to supporting temple worship. Archaeological evidence shows various Persian provinces exempted temple personnel from taxes.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does tax exemption demonstrate God's provision enabling full-time ministry without worldly entanglements?
2. What does comprehensive inclusion (singers, porters, Nethinim) teach about valuing all ministry roles, not just prominent positions?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא יְהִי אֶתְכֶּן לְךָ וְלֹא מִקְרָדֵעַ יְהִי אֶתְכֶּן
H0 Also we certify H1768 you that touching any H3606 of the priests H3549 and Levites H3879

וְלֹא יְהִי אֶתְכֶּן לְךָ וְלֹא מִקְרָדֵעַ יְהִי אֶתְכֶּן
H2171 singers H8652 porters H5412 Nethinims H6399 or ministers H1005 house H426 of God H1836 of this

עַלְיָקְם: לְמַרְמֵם אֲשֶׁר יְהִי לֹא יְבֹלֵל הַבָּلָן מִנְתַּח הַ
H4061 toll H1093 tribute H1983 or custom H3809 it shall not H7990 be lawful H7412 to impose H5922 upon

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 4:13 (Parallel theme): Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings.

Ezra 7:7 (Sin): And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.

