

Romans 15:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Analysis

It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are (εὐδόκησαν γάρ, καὶ ὀφειλέται αὐτῶν εἰσιν, eudokēsan gar, kai opheiletai autōn eisin)—Paul reaffirms their willing pleasure (eudokēsan) but adds a theological dimension: opheiletai eisin (they are debtors). Gentile believers owe material support to Jerusalem—not legal obligation but spiritual debt of gratitude. The verb opheilō (to owe) echoes 15:1 ('we ought to bear')—moral obligation rooted in grace received.

For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things (εἰ γὰρ τοῖς πνευματικοῖς αὐτῶν ἐκοινῶνησαν τὰ ἔθνη, ὀφείλουσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς λειτουργῆσαι αὐτοῖς, ei gar tois pneumatikois autōn ekoinōnēsan ta ethnē, opheilousin kai en tois sarkikois leitourgēsai autois)—Ekoinōnēsan (have shared in, been partners in) uses koinōnia language again. Gentiles received ta pneumatika (spiritual things)—the gospel, Scriptures, apostles, Christ himself—from Jewish believers. Therefore they owe (opheilousin) ta sarkika (material/fleshly things, i.e., money). Leitourgēsai (to minister) is the same priestly service term from v. 16—giving is worship, priestly service to God and his people.

Historical Context

This principle—those who receive spiritual benefit should provide material support—undergirds NT teaching on supporting ministers (1 Cor 9:11, 14, Gal 6:6, 1 Tim 5:17-18). Paul extends it to inter-church support: Gentile churches owe the Jerusalem church because salvation came 'from the Jews' (John 4:22, Rom 11:17-18). This theology counters supersessionism: Gentile Christianity shouldn't despise its Jewish roots.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing the 'spiritual debt' Gentile Christians owe to Jewish believers shape your view of Christian-Jewish relations?
2. What 'spiritual things' have you received from others that create a responsibility to serve them with 'material things'?
3. How does viewing financial generosity as 'priestly service' (leitourgia) elevate your approach to giving?

Interlinear Text

εὐδόκησαν	γὰρ	καὶ	ὀφειλέται	αὐτοῖς	εἰσὶν	εἰ	γὰρ
It hath pleased them	For	also	debtors	of their	they are	if	For
G2106	G1063	G2532	G3781	G846	G1526	G1487	G1063
τοῖς	πνευματικοῖς	αὐτοῖς	ἐκοινώνησαν	τὰ	ἔθνη		
G3588	spiritual things	of their	have been made partakers	G3588	the Gentiles		
	G4152	G846	G2841		G1484		
ὀφείλουσιν	καὶ	ἐν	τοῖς	σαρκικοῖς	λειτουργῆσαι	αὐτοῖς	
their duty is	also	in	G3588	carnal things	to minister	of their	
G3784	G2532	G1722		G4559	G3008	G846	

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 9:11 (Spirit): If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

Galatians 6:6 (Parallel theme): Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.