

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 (εύδόκησαν γάρ, καὶ ὄφειλέται 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 ἐκοινώνησαν τὰ ἔθνη, ὄφείλουσιν 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

εύδόκησαν γὰρ καὶ ὄφειλέται 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

όφειλουσιν 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.

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