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I dedicate this work of mine to the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit who has been the author and finisher of my entire educational journey, without whom, I would not have made it thus far. To my late father, Rev. Paul Saleh Dapaye I, who saw through the eyes of faith the call of the Lord upon my life and for which he sowed almost half of his teacher's salary to get me through high school. To my widow mother, Hannah D. Dapaye, who kept me through the trying times, and to my darling wife Sandra L. Dapaye, for faithfully keeping me in her prayers and lavishing me with all of the necessary support I needed through this journey. To you all I owe this dedication.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ELCL	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia
LCMS	Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
NIV	New International Version
NET	New English Translation
LML	Lutheran Mission in Liberia
ESV	English Standard Version
NASB	New America Standard Bible
CJ	Concordia Journal
AA	American Anthropologist
CTQ	Concordia Theological Quarterly
BDAG	Bauer, Danker, Arndt and Gingrich (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament)
JSOT	Journal for the Study of Old Testament

ABSTRACT

Dapaye, Simon Tenyen, "Tithing: A Biblical Principle for the Sustenance of Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia." Master of Arts Thesis. Concordia Seminary, 2016. 115pp.

This thesis discusses the implication of Numbers 18:22–32 and Malachi 3:6–12 regarding the sustenance of the priesthood and its bearing on New Testament stewardship and giving with an emphasis on a pastor's sustenance. These Old Testament texts set the basis for the Levite tithe, instituted for the sustenance of the priests and Levites, whose function was to lead Israel in its ritual duties before the Lord. These passages are used to examine the theological, biblical, and historical function of the Levite tithe in order to lay a foundation for a closer study of stewardship and generous giving for the sustenance of pastors and ministers in the New Testament and the church today.

An exegetical study of Old Testament texts (Num. 18:19–32, Mal 3:6–12) that highlight the sustenance of the priesthood through the Levite tithe was accomplished. In like manner, similar studies of New Testament texts (Matt. 23:23–24, Heb. 7:1–10, Matt. 10:1–15, 1 Cor. 9:1–18, 2 Cor. 8:1–6, Gal. 6:1–10) were also carried out. Both Old and New Testament passages support the Levite tithe as a biblical principle which parallels the New Testament teaching on stewardship/generous giving for the sustenance of those who teach the faith.

Through a broad analysis of the lack of sustenance of pastor and clergy members of the ELCL, its causes, and possible solutions, this paper proposes useful ways to teach and enlighten people on tithing so as to improve the desperate situation in Liberia depicted above.

A proposal of a stewardship committee is recommended to help the church organize and manage its resources of time, talent and treasure. In addition, a bible study that will teach from scriptural perspective further details of the tithe, and generous giving has also been highlighted

in this paper. This researcher is of the conviction that adherence to all of the aforesaid will allow the ELCL to unwaveringly teach and preach the gospel with minimum struggle over pastor's sustenance, mission and evangelism.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO TITHING: A BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PASTORS

The Lord's promise to provide for the children of Israel was one they could trust and rely on forever. Although Scripture reveals the vicious cycle of the Israelites' apostasy and repentance, the Lord never changed his promises to sustain them. In spite of his chastisement for their sins, when they repented, he delivered them from the hands of their enemies. As a means of allowing Israel and all peoples (Exo 19:5–6) to receive the full benefit of his promise, the Lord appointed the tribe of Levi to coordinate and lead the religious life of Israel and to make atonement as a means of his grace and mercy.

In order to address the priesthood's sustenance, the Lord did not raise or increase the amount of the tithes or offerings. Instead, he took their cost upon himself (Num 18:22–32). The first tithe was the Lord's anticipated share which was to come from Israel but was transferred to the tribe of Levi as their share of inheritance and reward for the job they were called to do at the tent of meeting. Through the first tithe, the priests and the Levites were adequately sustained.

Today there is no specific tent of meeting, restricted tribe (Levites), or people chosen to serve as priests before the Lord, through Israel and Ephraim his first born son (Jer 31:9). Indeed, the Lord has instead fulfilled his promise to all peoples in Christ's atonement. Thereby he invites all peoples without restriction.

Through the fulfillment of the New Testament priesthood in Christ, all believers have been invited to offer their praise, worship, and thanksgiving. However this is not done without an individual who is mandated by God to lead such ritual life. Just as priests were responsible for

carrying out the religious functions, the pastor/minister, though not offering sacrifices for atonement, serves God's people with his gifts through word and sacraments. Furthermore, as the Old Testament priests were called to be dedicated to this ministry, so also the pastor/minister through the church has been duly called into this public ministry to proclaim the gospel with similar dedication. God ordained this public office, though no longer hereditary or sacrificial.

Despite the aforesaid, a congregation's financial support for the sustenance of pastors has been and remains one of the greatest challenges of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia (ELCL). This lack of provision is an obstacle to the growth, mission, and evangelism in the church. Neglecting the sustenance of pastors has led many pastors to seek their means of livelihood outside the work of the ministry. They do this in order to sustain their families in agreement with what the apostle Paul says to Timothy in 1 Tim 5:8, "But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." The church's failure to address pastoral sustenance puts the true proclamation of the gospel at risk of being compromised. In an attempt to maintain the stability of their congregations, pastors in Liberia are forced to succumb to financial pressure and resort to activities such as farming, casual labor, or other engagements outside of their pastoral calls so as to avoid compromising the truth of the gospel for their sustenance.

The ELCL cares for a total of 200 pastors in 163 congregations. Less than 10% of the pastors are on regular salary, and of this 10%, 5% are paid not more than US \$75.00 a month¹. It is important to note that a larger portion of their limited salary comes from tithes offered by the congregants.

¹ Amos Bolay, "ELCL Executive Quarterly Report to the National Church Council" (Report, Christ Assembly ELCL, Monrovia, September 29, 2012)

Attempts have been made to rectify the economic situation and improve tithing so as to enhance pastoral sustainability in ELCL. Missionaries who took the gospel to Liberia did a tremendous job by uncompromisingly teaching the truth of the gospel. The ELCL shares an unfaltering stance with the LCMS confessional dogma—the means of grace², distinction of law and gospel, justification and sanctification—all due to missionaries’ effective teaching of the gospel.

Nevertheless, most missionaries’ economic background served as impetus to their lessened emphasis on giving for the support of both the pastor and the mission. Since the living condition in Africa were far lower than in the West, missionaries saw African’s living condition as a depiction of poverty. Applying the Pauline approach in 1 Cor 9, missionaries thought it expedient to be of no burden to African converts. Instead, they sought to improve the living conditions of these new converts. On similar note, it is said “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”³ Indeed, although missionaries’ assistance aimed at meeting the needs of believers were helpful; it has left the church with the dependency syndrome. With the departure of the missionaries since the emergence of the Liberian civil conflict, the ELCL has struggled and continues to struggle to sustain its congregations and pastors. What is more, even with the advent of the national leadership of ELCL, both the leadership of ELCL and local congregation still struggle to address the issue of giving or sustenance. The church’s failure to encourage members to see tithing and giving as a

² Steven P. Mueller defines Means of Grace as “specific ways in which God has promised to give us forgiveness, life and salvation which Christ has won for us...i.e. the gospel and the sacraments are the means of grace.” Steven P. Mueller. *Called to Believe, Teach, and Confess: An Introduction to Doctrinal Theology*. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 522.

³ Wiktionary: the Free Dictionary. Online: [http://en.wiktionary.org/w/index.php?Lifetime & oldid=37907781](http://en.wiktionary.org/w/index.php?Lifetime&oldid=37907781) (Accessed July 30, 2016).

means of worship and living out their active righteousness⁴ in spite of the economic challenges serves as the overall reason for the poor record of pastor's sustenance. In order to improve the economic situation of pastors for their sustainability, stewardship campaigns by the national leadership of ELCL are needed. This church's proper awareness of tithing and giving as active obedience to God's command, an act of worship, and expression of faith through the support of pastoral ministry will positively affect its growth and missions. This thesis will illustrate that the proper understanding of tithing is necessary for the growth of the ELCL and propose a way to teach tithing within the ELCL.

Literary review of other scholars shows that researchers have long assumed that the issue of tithing as a biblical principle for the sustainability of pastors is not necessary today. This has, consequently, become an issue of contention which must be addressed. The main area of departure is how the Old Testament fits into the life of a believer and into the context of the New Testament. For instance, in his book, *Why Christians Should Not Tithe*, James D. Quiggle disputes the issue of the tithe and its relevance to believers today. He argues that tithing was not necessary for the post-apostolic church. In that case, there is no need to tithe today because it was never documented in the historical writings nor was it emphasized by the early Church Fathers. He writes:

Tithing is seldom mentioned in the writings of the church in the first one hundred years or so following the death of the apostles. During the third century (A.D. 200–300) voluntary giving began to be compared unfavorably to tithing... In the fourth century, tithing was recommended as a biblical means to support the church... not money but a tenth of the agricultural product.⁵

⁴ Robert Kolb and Charles Arand, "Active righteousness of works serves the well-being of creation by looking after our neighbor... within the context of a person's earthly calling, leads to the recognition that they serve creation and not salvation." *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 31.

⁵ James D. Quiggle, *Why Christians Should Not Tithe: A History of Tithing and a Biblical Paradigm for*

It is against such thought that this thesis will argue, instead upholding the view of other scholars who see the tithe as a necessary principle for the church to teach, specifically for supporting pastors, maintaining New Testament stewardship, and encouraging generous giving. Finally, this thesis will make a proposal suitable for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia.

Unlike Quiggle, whose view of tithing seems to be law oriented, George E. Salstrand sees His view seems actually to be law oriented as well ... he says that God's people need to be taught about proportionate giving, or their giving will be inadequate. He writes:

The discussion of tithe—giving is important because with too many people giving is only a matter of impulse. As long as God's people give by impulse rather than principle the cause of Jesus Christ will continue to suffer and languish. Until the people of God are taught to tithe as what the scriptures says about proportionate giving, they will continually give inadequately for the need of God's kingdom, the greatest enterprise on earth.⁶

In line with Salstrand's perspective, Oscar Lowry observes that God values tithe as a necessity for the sustainability of the pastors. He questions:

Do you think God almighty can be satisfied with this haphazard, go easy, hit-or-miss, give-when-you-feel-like-it, lawless, loveless, method of supporting the cause which is dearest to the heart of His son, our Lord, and Savior Jesus Christ?... too many are imbued with the satanic... Teaching that we owe everything to God in general and nothing in particular.⁷

As Lowry asserts, nowadays in congregations of believers, people are not committed to giving. Whereas Salstrand and Lowry's views provide ample evidence that tithing is a prerequisite for every believer, quite often believers equate tithing with good works. It is true that good works are done to meet another person's needs in accordance with God's will, but the tithe discussed in this thesis is not to be seen as such.

Christian Giving (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 92–93.

⁶ George A. E. Salstrand, *The Tithe: The Minimum Standard for Christian Giving* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952), 14.

⁷ Oscar Lowry. *Should Christians Tithe?* (Fort Wayne: Glad Tidings, n. d.), 12.

In the words of Alexander Blackburn, “the more I study the financial problem of our religious life the more I am convinced that the only solution is the adoption of some system of proportionate laying aside for the Lord’s work ... Something definite and exact.”⁸ Pastors in their responsibilities given by God are accountable for feeding God's people rightly with his gifts in word and sacraments just as the priest and the Levites were designated to take care of His people Israel. With this dedicated service in mind, the apostle Paul questions the Corinthians, “if we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?” (1 Cor 9:11). The tithe and offering in this light are not perceived as obedience to the law to attain righteousness but as an appreciation to God, acknowledging him as the provider and the source of every good and perfect gift.

The goal of this research will be to help people understand that tithing is done not in obedience to the law to attain “passive righteousness of faith ...but rather the active righteousness of love which flows from that core identity out into the world.”⁹ This research will not dwell on the Old Testament second or third tithe¹⁰ but will concentrate on the first tithe given by the Israelites to the Levites for their sustenance. As Salstrand affirms:

It is true that as Christians we do not need to go to festival or make pilgrimages as did the Jews, thus spending one tithe of their income in this way. But granted that the second and third tithes are no longer necessary because of the different circumstances under which we live; we have still the first tithe to account for at the very least. This tithe was used to support the Levites who ministered in the tabernacle. Instead of the tabernacle, we have the church as a place of worship, and instead of Levites we have

⁸ Emmanuel P. Burroughs, *The Grace of Giving* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board, 1934), 101.

⁹ Kolb and Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 26.

¹⁰ Richard Wolfram explains that: the first tithe was of crop and flocks for the support of the Levites or the priest (Lev 27:30–33), while the Second tithe was for the holding of annual festival. The Israelites needed to give this tithe to be reminded that everything comes from Almighty God and if they were blessed abundantly, they could convert to silver as recorded in Deut 14:22–27. And the third tithe was to be given every third year for the release of the poor (Deut 14:28–29). *Bible Study: Tithes and Offerings*, 2.

the Minister of the gospel to support, and instead of a program that was local, as was the case with the tabernacle , we have a program that is worldwide in it outreach.¹¹

From the New Testament perspective of giving detailed further in subsequent chapter, this paper will argue that tithing is a foundation of stewardship and giving which Mark Allen Powell says is “an act of worship, and expression of faith and a spiritual discipline.”¹² Although some downplay the importance of tithing by limiting it to the Israelites, they, however, fail to see God's universal invitation and the inclusion of all believers into a second Israel which the Lord has called through Christ's death and resurrection (Matt 8:11–12).

This thesis proceeds as follows: Chapter two presents an exegetical study of both Old and New Testament texts. A proposal on what needs to be done about tithing in ELCL will be made in chapter three. Chapter four presents a bible study on tithing and finally, a conclusion is made in chapter five.

¹¹ Salstrand, *The Tithe: The Minimum Standard for Christian Giving*, 29–30.

¹² Mark Allan Powell. *Giving to God: The Bible's Good News about Living a Generous Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 9–47.

CHAPTER TWO

OFFICE OF THE PRIEST & LEVITES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Call of the Priest in the Old Testament

The priests and the Levites in the Old Testament serve pivotal roles on behalf of Israel before the Lord by offering sacrifices and coordinating Israel's ritual life. However only those designated by God could perform such priestly duties. Paul Schrieber notes that "All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests."¹ Neither Moses nor his descendants were chosen for the priesthood (1 Chr 23:13) except Aaron and his descendants appointed for this task (Num16:40). This suggests that the priesthood was graciously instituted by the Lord at Sinai to coordinate and maintain Israel's covenantal relationship with him against the violation of his will. Prior to this specific appointment of the priest, the patriarchs throughout the pre-mosaic period stood in this office for and on behalf of their community or family to make offer or sacrifice to the Lord in reverence of his provision, and protection (Gen 8:20–21; 4:3–8). "The patriarchs, as head of families or tribal groups, perform what we would consider priestly function, such as offering sacrifice"² (Gen 22:2, 31:54). Therefore, the patriarchs' sacrifices to God are an offering of worship and reverence.

Aaron and his son's preference for service before the Lord in the tent of meeting was one which required diligence and commitment. Because of the sacred nature of their duties, it was essential for Aaron and his sons to be separated from the rest of the eleven tribes so as to remain

¹ Paul L. Schrieber, "Priest among Priest: the Office of the Ministry in Light of the Old Testament Priesthood." CJ, 14 no. 3 (July 1988): 215–28.

² Raymond E. Brown, *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections*. (Paramus: Paulist Press, 1970), 6.

effective and efficient in their vocation and duties before the Lord. It is unfortunate though, that the Roman Catholics today literally applies the “priest’s separation” from the rest of Israel to their priest or pope. “The priest was sanctified for and by his work; he had to be holy in order to handle the things that belongs to God”³ Raymond Brown contends. In contrast, this researcher from 1 Peter 2:9, sees the *sanctification and holiness of the priest* not as making him any different from the rest of priesthood, but as one called by the church and chosen by God to serve God’s people through his gifts in Word and Sacrament. As a means of keeping the aforesaid priestly sanctity, their means of sustenance was addressed and spelled by the Lord according to Num 18:19–21. It may be that, “the gift of the priesthood was a gift of grace to the nation Israel, whereby they might live in holiness and righteousness in their relationship to God and not suffer death as a result of violation of their holiness.”⁴

The Call and Duties of the Levites

Care of the sanctuary and offering sacrifices for and on behalf of all the Israelites were the responsibilities of the Priests assisted by the Levites. During the Hebrew wilderness wandering the tribe of Levi acted as a barrier between the people of Israel and the holiness of the tabernacle. This was Yahweh’s instruction to Moses:

The Levites shall take it down, and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. And if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death. The people of Israel shall pitch their tents by their companies... But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the people of Israel. And the Levites shall keep guard over the tabernacle of the testimony (Num 1:51–53).

The call of the Levites and their subsequent responsibilities were to be considered with due

³ Brown, *Priest and Bishop; Biblical Reflections*, 8.

⁴ R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 278.

diligence and commitment in their services to the priest, the Lord and the people of Israel. This meticulous call to serve at the tent of meeting denied the members of this tribe their share of the land distribution (Josh 14:1–16:10). The Lord commanded, “You [the Levites] shall have no inheritance in their land...I am your portion...To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service.” (Num 18:20–21). Quiggle affirms that “the part of first tithe that went to the Levites was given them as wages for their sustenance for their service to the priest and the temple (Num 18:6), and their service to the people, (Num 18:22–23).”⁵

In addition to the Levites responsibilities; they were charged with the maintenance, providing gatekeepers, choir, musicians and guardian of the sacred vessels and treasures, after the first Jerusalem temple was built. The Levites also supplied men to collect taxes, prepare cereal offerings and butcher animal for sacrifices. Schrieber summarized their task as follows:

The Levites were not to serve as priest but as auxiliary helpers they were dedicated to this service on several grounds: 1) they had shown themselves to be zealous for Yahweh (Ex 32:25–29); 2) they serve as substitutes for the first born son spared in the Passover(Ex 13:2–13, Num 3:11–13; 16–18); 3) they represented Israel as a wave offering to Yahweh (Num 8:11); and they were gifts from the people to the priests. (Num 8:19)⁶

Understanding the distinctions between the priest and Levites set the basis to interpret the priesthood in the Old Testament and its fulfillment in the New Testament [through Christ] applied to all believers (1 Pet 2:9) which will be discussed in later chapters.

⁵ Quiggle, *Why Christians Should Not Tithe*, 36.

⁶ Schierber, *Priest among Priests*, 217.

Exegetical Study of Old Testament Texts

Numbers 18:21–32

Introduction

Like the preceding books of the Pentateuch, Numbers is concerned with the religious order and life of Israel. With emphasis on these ritual specifics, all sacrificial instructions were aimed at offering genuine sacrifices and worship to Yahweh by a new medium that requires a systematic and obedient execution. Most of the sacrificial rites were concerned with various organizational details. Understanding the ceremonial life of Israel is crucial to grasping Israel's religious relationship with the Lord through the offerings and sacrifices presented by the priest.

The text under considerations (Num 18:21–32) builds on previous chapters (3, 4, 8) with an additional piece connecting the Levites to the priest in chapters (25–32). However, this section of the underlined text (18:20–32) is a continuation of earlier chapters but with specificity as opposed to general commands given to Moses, “Every tithe of the land, ... is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD” (Lev 27:30).

Numbers reiterates the instruction given to the people of Israel in a rhetorical rather than sequential manner. Because of the chiasm in this text, tracing the logic of the passage is difficult. Nevertheless, this research will follow the logic of the passage instead of its numerical sequence. The text under review has six points which highlight the entire passage beginning from Num 18:1–32, but due to the focus of this research topic, the analysis will center around verses 20–32, which is of major interest to the topic under discussion.

Historical/ Narrative Analysis

Aaron and his sons' appointment as priests amongst the twelve tribes was Yahweh's compassionate way of dealing with his people through an intercessor who would offer animal

sacrifices to the Lord as a ransom for their sins. Yahweh's preference of a specific tribe is not stated. His provision of the tithe as the priesthood means of sustenance was crucial in keeping with their duties of assignment in the tent of meeting.

The Socio-Political and Economic Situation of the Time

In the introduction of his commentary on Numbers, R. Dennis Cole avers that “transitional period in the life of a nation often serve to define the character and future of the people, for they built upon earlier foundations and yet diverge into a new arena of livelihood, character, and constitution.”⁷ Certainly, Numbers serves such defining purpose both in the life of the patriarchs and the larger appearance of Israel's history. Numbers focuses on the recurring theme of God's revelation to humankind through word and deeds. He works through the lives of the patriarchs and their descendants, by birthing the nation apportioning the land to the eleven tribes excluding the tribe of Levi. Hence, Cole clarifies this blessing of the land as follows:

The geographical movement of the nation parallels the threefold pattern of the response-relationship the people had with God. (1) In the setting of Mount Sinai two cycles of material emphasize God's faithfulness to his people, the fullness of his blessing, and the purity and unity of the people in their devotion. (2) In the wilderness region and plains of Moab ... (3) The final chapter consisting of two cycles situated in the plains of Moab on the doorstep of the land of promise ...through the fruitfulness of the land.⁸

With such successful distribution of the land among the eleven tribes excluding the tribe of Levi, Yahweh's concern for the tribe of Levi's sustenance cannot be overemphasized.

Literary Analysis

The literary and structural outline of this text (Num 18:20–32) highlights many rhetorical

⁷ Cole, *Numbers*, 22.

⁸ Cole, *Numbers*, 43.

emphases in this chapter. Cole asserts that “the repetition of themes and integral elements may signal key theological issues or provide structural cohesiveness. Chiastic, convergent, and divergent structure function as vehicles for conveying important theological point.”⁹ Likewise, understanding the chiastic structure of the text is paramount to analyzing the logic of the text, without which the passage may appear to be self-contradictory (as seen in Num 18.19, 20– 21).

Another commentator elaborates further, suggesting that “any attempt to trace a coherent plan in numbers is inevitably frustrated by the presence of a large amount of disconnected unit.”¹⁰ Cole records that in Numbers 18 the “literary skill¹¹ and artistry of the author/editor are demonstrated in the use of rhetorical devices and variations of form for the purpose of highlighting internal components.”¹² Cole further points out that this chapter has “a metrical calculation that further suggests that the passage has a structure that facilitated memorization and recitation of this passage.”¹³ It is worth noting that memorization and recitation of this passage stresses the need for Israelites to remember their obligation to Yahweh by bringing forth their tithes and offering so as to avoid his judgment.

Connecting the literary meaning of Numbers to the geographical setting of Israel’s history, Longman and Dillard propose that “In Jewish circles the book goes by the name ‘In the wilderness’ *be midbar*, (the fifth word in the text). This means that the [Jewish] title names the setting of the entire book as the Israelites move from Sinai (1:19) to the wilderness of Haran

⁹ Cole, *Numbers*, 38–39.

¹⁰ Eryl W. Davies, *Numbers: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1995), liii.

¹¹ See note below on textual analysis, where this chiastic structure will be engaged.

¹² Davies, *Numbers*, liii.

¹³ Davies, *Numbers*, 279.

(10:12) and finally to the plains of Moab (22:1: 36:13).”¹⁴ In addition, like Exodus and Leviticus, Numbers begins with the conjunction *and*,¹⁵ signifying the continuity that exists between the books of the Pentateuch. Thus, Numbers serve an important role as it narrates the transition from the old generation that left Egypt and sinned in the desert to the new generation that stands on the edge of the Promised Land. The book thus presents readers with a visualization of “new beginnings and hope.”¹⁶ Yet, this new beginning still holds a detailed repetition of the ritual sacrifices of Israel if they must be spared of Yahweh’s anger and wrath because of their complaints. “Numbers is a continuation of the preceding three books, thus falling into the same general pattern of composition for the rest of the Pentateuch.”¹⁷

In relation to Israel’s ritual life and the priesthood, Monica Wilson observes “Ritual reveals value at their deepest level... men express in ritual what moves the most, and since the form is conventionalized and obligatory, it is the value of the group that are revealed. I see in the study of ritual the key to understanding of the essential constitution of human societies.”¹⁸ This ritual life of Israel allows one to grasp the significance of Christ’s atoning death. That being the case, the Priest’s sacrificial services were a foreshadowing of how Yahweh would demonstrated the fulfillment of his plans and promise to the people of Israel and all peoples.

¹⁴ Tremper Longman and Raymond R Dillard, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapid: Zondervan 2006), 93.

¹⁵ Longman and Dillard, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 93.

¹⁶ Longman and Dillard, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 93.

¹⁷ Longman and Dillard, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 93.

¹⁸ Monica Wilson, “Nyakyusa Ritual Symbolism:” AA, 56 no.2 (April 1954):228–41.

Translation of Numbers 18:21–32¹⁹

21 “And to the sons of Levi, Behold!²⁰ I have given all the tithes²¹ in Israel for an inheritance, in exchange²² for²³ all the service which they render in the tent of meeting. 22 And the sons of Israel shall not approach the tent of meeting to take or bear²⁴ sin, lest they die. 23 Only the Levites shall render their service in the tent of meeting and they shall lawfully bear their iniquity. It shall be a perpetual duty throughout your generation and among the sons of Israel, they shall inherit no inheritance. 24 Because,²⁵ the tithe of the sons of Israel, ²⁶which they set apart as a contribution for the Lord, I have given²⁷ to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore

¹⁹ Because of the researcher’s limitation in the Hebrew language this paper uses: Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta; id est, Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*. Stuttgart: Privilegierte württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935. In addition, both the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the English Standard Version (ESV) are used comparatively in my translation of the Old Testament passages. However, at some point where both NASB and ESV vary the researcher stays with the LXX Septuagita.

²⁰ ἰδοῦ is of εἶδον, used as a demonstrative particle when accented. Can be translated variously: (you) see, look, behold, or left un-translated Matt 2:1,13; 13:3; Luke 1:20; 22:10; Acts 2:7; James 5:9; Rev 9:12 see. Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 92.

²¹ ἐπι-δέκατος, For the lack of the proper, the Hebrew rendered it the as one in ten: τὸ ἐπιδέκατον the tenth, tithe. But the Hebrew specifically consider it as the *Maaser, Maasar* or *Masrah* meaning the tenth part

²² The word חֲלֵף *Chaleph*, is translated in the Hebrew as “return,” or Exchange” while in the Greek it is replaced with the word ἀντὶ which also then makes the case that the priest has taken up a new vocation, instead of their share as other Israelites, the tithe now stands as “an exchange” or “replacement” of their share of inheritance.

²³ ἀντὶ a preposition that is used in this text to explain the purpose of the tithe

²⁴ λαβεῖν is a more or less active sense take, take hold of, grasp Matt 26:26a; Mark 12:19–21; 15:23; this infinitive is functioning as a purpose clause See. James W. Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*. (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 16.

²⁵ ὅτι is functioning as a causal conjunction “because” as seen in Matthew 5:3–12; Wallace, *Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 142.

²⁶ τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ, is a subset of the possessive genitive. “The key to determining whether or not a possessive genitive is a genitive of relationship is (1) if the noun to which the genitive is related is a *family* relation noun (e.g., son, mother, etc.) or (2) if the noun to which the genitive is related is *understood* (i.e., must be supplied from the context) and what one supplies is a family relation noun, then the possessive genitive is a genitive of relationship. Furthermore, the genitive noun is routinely a proper name”. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 83.

²⁷ δέδωκα The perfect may be used to *emphasize* the completed action of a past action or process from which a present state emerges. It should normally be translated into English as a present perfect. This usage is common. See, Wallace, *Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. 577.

concerning this,²⁸ I have said to them among the sons of Israel, they shall have no inheritance. **25** Then,²⁹ the Lord spoke to Moses saying,³⁰ **26** Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and you shall say to them, whenever,³¹ you receive from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given to you for your inheritance, you shall share a tribute³² from it to the Lord, a tenth [tithe] of the tenth [tithe]. **27** And your offering shall be reckoned³³ to you as the tribute of grain from the threshing floor also as a tribute from the winepress **28** thus, you shall take away a tribute to the LORD from all your tithes, which you receive from the people of Israel. And from it, you shall give the LORD's tribute to Aaron the priest. **29** from all the gifts to you, you shall present every tribute due to the LORD; from all the first fruit which has been sanctified from it. **30** And you shall say to them, 'When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be counted to the Levites as produce of the threshing floor, and as produce from the winepress. **31** And you may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it is to you reward in return for your service in the tent of meeting. **32** And you shall bear no sin by reason of it, when you have contributed the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy things of the people of Israel, In order that you do not die.'"

²⁸ τοῦτο is a demonstrative pronoun pointer, singling out the direct object κλῆρον in a special way. It agrees in case and number as the referent of direct object κλῆρον.

²⁹ This translation follows the NASB which renders the καὶ then, to mark a shift in person. The instruction is now shifted from Aaron to Moses. Detail of this shift is discussed in the analysis of this passage.

³⁰ λέγων is the first of limited participle in this passage. The Lord is the referent of the participle. λέγων in this text is in apposition to the Lord. The time of the participle is past with a current result.

³¹ ἐὰν λάβητε has a conditional construction but in this context it is taken as an imperative denoting God's instruction to ἀφαίρεμα(to share with the priest upon receiving from the sons of Israel the tithe). Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 250.

³² The ESV renders ἀφαίρεμα, as a contribution while the NASB renders it as offering.

Textual Analysis

The beginning of the passage under discussion highlights features which indicate a continuance in speech to the same person (Aaron). Jacob Milgrom notes that “the introductory phrase ‘*And the Lord said to Aaron*’ is the last of three phrases which begin a new section.”³⁴ The above mentioned phrase addresses Aaron directly in (vv. 1, 8 and 20) in the following ways: The first section (v. 1–7) highlight the share of the Priest and the Levites’ responsibility for the custody and guardianship of the tent of meeting, the second section (8–19) focus on the provision of tributes for the priest, while the last segment (20–24) stresses on the denial of the Priest and Levites inheritance and assigning the tithe: Yahweh’s own share as a reward for their services and duties offered at the tent of meeting. Despite the three points stated above this paper will make its analysis on the third section (20–32) using the later part of the second section as an introduction and foundation.

No Inheritance for the Tribe of Levi (vv. 20, 24)

This section begins on a rhetorical note that raises concern for the well-being of the Levite but gives an instruction which apparently contradicts the initial promise made in verse 19. It begins with the denial of inheritance for the Levites and Yahweh’s offering himself as their inheritance. These instructions are given ahead of Israel’s entrance into the Promised Land which would mark the exchange of her status from wanderers to a more settled life in Canaan. Prior to this transformation, Aaron is chosen and instructed to have no inheritance in the land. Beginning the analysis at verse 20 allows one to leave out an important segment (vv. 18–19) which

³⁴ Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers=[Ba-midbar]: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 154.

introduces what should be anticipated further in this third segment of the passage.

As stated above verse 24 complete the chiasmic structure by reiterating both instructions of verses 20 and 21 concerning the tithe as the Levites' inheritance (v. 24a) instead of territorial allotment (v. 24b–32). Israel's contributions of the tithes to Yahweh were, in turn, his gifts to the priesthood for their dedicated service. This further explains why the tithes are still called "the Lord's" in (Lev 27:30). According to Milgrom, "It may reflect an earlier period when the tithes were the property of the sanctuary before they were transferred to the exclusive possession of the Levites."³⁵ This is why the tithe was to be kept undefiled and considered holy unto the Lord. Seeing the passage as part of a whole allows one to recognize this segment as a continuation of the previous section (v.1–8), which described the duties of the priest and the Levites. Viewing the entire passage as a whole answers the question and doubts mentioned above.

In verse 21 the perfect tense in the Greek δέδωκα indicates a past action with a demanding result on both the present and the future if possible. The phrase "I have given" seems more binding than a request or appeal. Milgrom prefers the term "give" to "assign," arguing that "the tithe is compulsory permanent grant to the Levites."³⁶ The tithe here requires of Israel a portion of every crop in the Promised Land as annual wages (v.31) for the Levitical duties in the tent of meeting. Furthermore, Deuteronomy imposes the tithe obligation not only on the grain, wine, and (oil) crop but also on the firstborn of Israel's herd and flock (Deut 14:23). Reflecting the true meaning of the tithes to the Priesthood as their share of inheritance and reward for services rendered in the temple, the preposition ἀντὶ, (in exchange) is most appropriate. It was Yahweh's portion given over to the priest as both their wages and inheritance.

³⁵ Milgrom, *Numbers*, 150.

³⁶ Milgrom, *Numbers*, 155.

Duties of the Priest (vv. 22–23)

Verses 22–23 uses the personal pronoun αὐτὸς, which sets the restriction and indicates the limitation as on who is qualify to enter or go near the tent of meeting. Because Yahweh was about to regularly dwell with his people in the tent of meeting whenever sacrifices would to be offered, the consequence stands and falls on the priesthood for any Israelites apart from the tribe of Levi who came near the tent of meeting. The Levites stands the risk of incurring the punishment for any encroachment. In other words, their failure to guard or provide guardianship for the tent of meeting would result in Yahweh’s wrath upon them (Num 17:27–28). Cole sees the role of the Levites in this section as the *focal point of this section* since it is “the reiteration of the critical and dangerous role the Levites served on behalf of the Israelite community.”³⁷ Unlike the critical function of the Levitical office in the Old Testament (Lev 8:10, Num. 10:2–4) governed by the law (which requires death in case of faults), the pastoral office today is one graciously given by God to serve and be served the Means of Grace. Taito A Kotenon summarizes it when he says, “one of life greatest and most meaningful laws is the paradox that we cannot find ourselves until we have first of all lost our lives in some service or wholehearted endeavor.”³⁸

Tributes for the Priest (Num 18:8, 11, 19, 27, 30)

Provision for the priesthood is addressed in an ascending order which explains that: After making provisions for Israel through the distribution of the lands (Josh 12–14), the Lord obligates Israel to tithe his share for the benefit of the Levites (Num 18:21). In addition, he also instructs the Levites to tithe the best part of the tithe received from Israel to the priest as his share of inheritance in exchange for his service render in the tent of meeting (Num 18:26). Only the

³⁷Cole, *Numbers*, 294.

³⁸ Taito A Kotenon, *A Theology for Christian Stewardship* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1956), 14.

Priest was exempted from the tithe because there was none higher to whom they could present their tithe except Yahweh himself.

In verses 25–26, the Lord speaks directly to Moses and not Aaron as He did previously (vv. 1, 8). He says. “You shall speak to the Levites and you shall say to them, ‘whenever, you receive from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you or your inheritance, you shall present a tithe from it to the Lord, a tenth [tithe] of the tenth [tithe].’” Cole is one who thinks that this was done in order to avoid the conflict of interest that would have resulted if Aaron were told to collect the tenth of the Levitical tithe assigned to him³⁹ (v. 28). The preference of speaking to Moses also validates the voice of the Lord without any bias on Aaron’s part. Since Moses was still in command and had been Yahweh’s primary mouthpiece, he uses him to transmit the Levites’ responsibility to provide also for Aaron the Priest without any prejudice. Against this backdrop, the verb *Receives* rather than *take* portrays Israel’s willingness to obey the Lord’s command. Furthermore, the preference to speak to Moses over Aaron concerning the Levite’s tithe was to emphasize the Levites’ as subordinate in role and obligation to the priest. Because, the tithe was to be brought to the Levites at the tent of meeting as part of worship (a distance away, because it was forbidden to approach the tent of meeting) the verb *receive* better expresses the manner under which the tithe was to be given. From the Levites tithe received from Israel, Yahweh instructs the Levites to appropriate through the compulsory tribute which was subject to the tithe statute. As will be discussed in further section, this text carefully clarifies that the Levite tithe is rendered first to Yahweh and then to Aaron.

³⁹ Milgrom, *Numbers*, 156.

Contribution Collection of the Tithe (vv. 28–29)

These two verses emphasize the significance attached to the source of the Levites' tithe which also supports Aaron the priest as reward for his service and share of inheritance. The Levites obligation to Aaron was the tithe of the finest tithes given as his portion—the most Holy thing (Lev 21:22). Verse 30 set the basis for verse 31 by explaining how the Levites are to first of all offer to the priest their best part of the tithe before claiming their share. This instruction reflects similar instruction given to the rest of the eleven tribes of Israel regarding the significance of the Levite's tithe.

Offering Consumption (10, 13, 31)

Having set the guideline for handling the tithe given to the Levites as their reward for their work carried out at the tent of meeting, verse 31 then grants permission to eat, and further details specification as to how the Levites' share ought to be eaten so as to prevent ritual sacredness of the consecrated things. This prevented unworthy eating which could lead to death. Equally, Milgrom quotes Abraham ben Meir Ibn Ezra, who says “after the priestly portion is removed, the tithe's status becomes profane and it may be eaten anywhere without concern for ritual purity”⁴⁰ (cf. Deut 26:14). However, once the priest's portion—the sacred part is removed the tithe retains its sanctity and is permitted to be eaten.

Consequently, verse 32 concludes with a reminder of the duties of both priests and Levites highlighted in verses 22 and 23. Verse 32 reassures the Levites' safety once the priest's portion is firstly taken out of the tithe before regarding it theirs. They were free to eat the rest which were now considered their wherever they pleased. Furthermore, the above restrictions served as a

⁴⁰ Milgrom, *Numbers*, 156.

deterrent to prevent the Levite because any disregard of the aforesaid could profane the sacred donation –which was punishable by death.

Conclusion

In succeeding chapters, this research will address the connection of the Old Testament priest to Christ the Most High Priest, the priesthood of all believers and the significance of the tithe to the church today with regards to pastor's sustenance for mission and evangelism. Until then, the aforementioned text highlights the importance of the Levites tithe to the diligent office of the priest. Israel's responsibility to care for the priest's wellbeing shows the Lord's lasting care and concern for his servants. This concern is also expressed in the New Testament for pastors or minister who are also called to proclaim the gospel of Christ without compromise and ceasing (Gal 1:6–7, Acts 5:42).

The appointment of Aaron and sons as intercessor for and on behalf of Israel was a prophetic eschatology of Christ—the Most High Priest. He came not to offer himself as a propitiation for the people of Israel only but for all generations. His sacrifice grants all people access into his presence, the Holy of Holies (Heb 10:19–25). As such Isaiah writes, “Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities...(Isa 53:11). It is against such backdrop that the next section of this paper will highlight the blessing and benefit of adhering to the payment of the tithe and the danger associated with the withholding of the tithe.

Malachi 3:6–12

Introduction

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. The appearance of the tithe and offering in this last book before the advent of the new covenant reiterates the significance of the tithe and offering to both Israel and all believers. Malachi's mention of the tithe serves as a reminder inviting Israel to return to the status quo —her ritual life of obedience through the tithes and offerings, to refrain from speaking as heathens. Yahweh assures the Israelites that upon their return he will bless protect and prosper them above other nations (2 Chr 7:14–18).

Among the various issues of historical context, this paper highlights the following three which are of great significance to understanding the New Testament teaching of pastoral support. These includes: the exile, restoration, and the economic situation of Judah upon her return.

The Exile

As a result of the last of the succession of the rebellion of Judah against Babylon their master, in 589 BC an army from Babylon devastated most cities in southern Judah. After a protracted and relentless blockade, Babylon imprisoned Jerusalem in July of 586 BC along with King Zedekiah who displeased the Lord and later cast out the people of Israel and further rebelled against Babylon (2 Kgs 24:18–25). Due to Zedekiah's rebellions, his sons and officers were banished in Babylon where they later died. The city of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple were plundered and ruined while some of the citizens were exile (2 Kgs 24:18–25:21; Jer 73:1–39:10; 52:1–30; 2 Chr 36:3–21).

Babylon's aggressions abolished Judah's monarchy leaving the nation as one of Babylon's provinces administered from a new capital at Mizpah (Tell en-Nasbeh) by a Jewish governor, Gedaliah. After an unstipulated time, Gedaliah was assassinated along with some of the

Babylonian soldiers by a surviving member of the royal family of Zedekiah. This assassination began the emancipation of many Jews who fled to Egypt and Judah which “may have become part of the province of Samaria”⁴¹ (Jer 39:11–44:30). The return of the Israelites in the sixth century (Jer 52:28–30) numbered 4,600 people; while Kings gave the figure at 1800 men (excluding their families) these separate figures may raise a concern of doubt or inconsistency⁴². In spite of the many deportations back to Judah, there were yet Jews who remained in Babylon because of their comfortable lifestyle.⁴³ Considering the above suggests that the decision made by Jews living in Babylon to return home was a difficult choice, since they were accustomed to the culture and the society this made it difficult to return to a home that had been ravaged and destroyed.

Restoration

Yahweh’s answer to the exiled Jews was “the Persian conquest of the Babylonian empire.”⁴⁴ Babylon fell for two reasons: absentee leadership of Nabunidus (555–539 BC) and opposition to the worship of the Babylonian “god Marduk.”⁴⁵ Consequently, Nabunidus’ absence was a principal cause of Babylon’s weakness. Soon after Cyrus took control of Babylon (probably for political reasons) he issued orders for the rebuilding of walls in Babylon and the restoration of

⁴¹ Taylor, Richard A, and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 207.

⁴² Edwin M. Yamauchi, suggests that the number mentioned in kings (1800 men) may “have counted only nobles.” Of course the number returning over some period of time as indicated in the scripture was 46,360 (Ezra 2:64; Neh.7:66), but one can be certain that many of the Israelites remained in Babylon, while thousand surely died either in battle or of starvation and diseases. He adds that “many were executed and had fled. *New Testament Cities in Western Asia Minor*. (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1980), 86.

⁴³ Taylor and Clendenen, suggest that, “There is every indication that they experienced ‘economic well-being’ retention of right and maintenance of the certain degree of autonomy. *Haggai, Malachi*, 210

⁴⁴ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 210.

⁴⁵ See. Provan, Iain W., V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman. *A Biblical History of Israel*. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2003), 285.

the worship of the Marduk and the lesser god of His Pantheon in Babylon and the other cities of the empire. Although not stated, it can be inferred that the Jews may have strongly supported and participated in the Babylonian rebuilding process, since the Jews were also great builders.

According to Ezra 1:2–4;6:2–5, In the first year after the conquest of Babylon, Cyrus issued a decree which allowed the Jews to return with items which Nebuchadnezzar looted from their temple in order to rebuild their sanctuary.

The Economic Situation of Judah upon her Return

The favorable relationship that existed between Cyrus' leadership over the Persian Empire and the Jews facilitated the Jews' return and the rebuilding of their temple, city, and walls. Regrettably, this relationship deteriorated after the rule of Cyrus "Support for local religion ceased and tax structure throughout the empire shifted to favor the Persian and increase the taxation upon all other ethnic and national groups."⁴⁶ This may have been a prime reason for the Jews' desertion of their religious responsibilities as they strove to satisfy their emperor rulers rather than Yahweh. Their attention was drawn to themselves and their national responsibility and they neglected their religious obligations, as the prophet Haggai says "Is it a time for yourself to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?" (Hag 1:4).

Literary Analysis

Malachi has a style that is unique to the Old Testament prophetic books. In a broad-spectrum it may be described as sermonic or oracular, but its frequent use of quotations, rhetorical questions, and polemical argument gives it a unique character. Richard A Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen describe the underline passage as "discourse speech" where charges are raised

⁴⁶ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 215.

and evidence presented in a confrontational mood.⁴⁷ Due to the distinctive structure of Malachi, scholars have a difference of opinion on what genre is best suitable for the book. Amid the many descriptions of Malachi by scholars, this research highlights the following suggestions: H. Gunkel invited the form critical—term “disputation Speech” in which opponents are quoted and then refuted. Others note that the primary argument for Gunkel's description of Malachi as “disputation speech” comes from E. Pfeiffer who cites comparative passages of Amos 5:18–20 and Isa 40:27–31. A. Graffy⁴⁸ argues that “a proper disputation, consist simply of a quotation from the people and the refutation from God or the prophet.”⁴⁹ Thus in his judgment the aim of the forms in Malachi is to convince the listener of the initial stated point and not to reject the people's opinion,⁵⁰ which he considers as an essential feature of the disputation. In disagreement, David Murray argues that “the disputation should not be defined on the basis of formal characteristics but by the presence of thesis, canter- thesis, and dispute in the logical structure”⁵¹ for him a disputation may occur in the form of a *platonc dialogue*. Therefore, he concludes that the difference “is simply that in the opening of the thesis, the people the Lord is arguing against must be inferred from his initial remark.”⁵² Taking a completely dissimilar form-critical analysis of this book, O’ Brian accepts Graffy’s argument against Malachi disputational description although he did not give an alternative to his objection. On the same note, expanding on J.

⁴⁷ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 218.

⁴⁸ Adrian. Graffy has exemplified that on the basis of form the dialogue Malachi have a different structure and aim than the disputation genre. *A Prophet Confronts His People: The Disputation Speech in the Prophets*. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1984).

⁴⁹ Graffy, *A Prophet confronts His people A Prophet Confronts His People: The Disputation Speech in the Prophets*. 16, 22.

⁵⁰ Graffy, *A Prophet Confronts His People: The Disputation Speech in the Prophets*. 16, 22.

⁵¹ David F. Murray. “The Rhetoric of Disputation: Re-examination of a Prophetic Genre,” *JSOT*, no.38, (June 1987):95–121.

⁵² Murray. *The Rhetoric of Disputation: Re-examination of a Prophetic Genre*, 12.

Harvey's 1967 study of Mal 1–2:9, O'Brian makes an interesting case that "the entire book of Malachi ... employs the form of the covenant lawsuit" or *rib*."⁵³ She proceeds to analyze the book as comprising five accusations.⁵⁴ O'Brian concludes that the covenant lawsuit" or *rib* analysis accounts for the use of covenant terminology that many have been observed in the book.

From all of the above-mentioned description of Malachi, this paper will focus on two separate reports of the book and suggests a way to consider both by looking at the book from two different perspectives. Gunkel's "disputation speech" description is a well-structured description that brings out the feature of the prophet's message addressed to the nation Israel. This description best fits the book when highlighting the prophet's message in Israel's economic context, bearing in mind that Yahweh is a compassionate and merciful father calling his people to repentance. This description of Malachi mirrors Yahweh's call for reconciliation as he says "Come now, let us reason together" (Isa 1:18).

Secondly, described by O'Brian, the book of Malachi fits a Covenantal *Lawsuit* against an unrepentant people who stand in the wrath of God because they have turned away from their creator. Granting such, Malachi 3:6–8 presents charges that indict Israel of apostasy, awaiting Yahweh's judgement and wrath.

Translation and Notes

6“Because⁵⁵ I, the LORD, your God do not change; therefore, you, sons of Jacob, are not

⁵³ Julia O'Brien, M. *Priest and Levite in Malachi*. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 63. cf. also E. Achtemeier, *Nahum- Malachi*, (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986), 172.

⁵⁴ O' Brian. *The Rhetoric of Disputation: Re-examination of the prophetic Genre*, (1:6–2:9; 2:10–16; 2:17–3:3; 3:6–12; 3:13–21) plus a prologue" (1:2–5), a "final admonition" (3:22) and a "final ultimatum" (3:23–24, 95–121).

⁵⁵ διότι Subordinating conjunction functions as a causal conjunction *because, since*.

consumed. **7** From the day of your fathers⁵⁶, you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. But you say,⁵⁷ ‘How shall we return?’ **8** Will a man rob God? Yet, you are robbing me, but you ask, ‘In what sort of things are we robbing you?’ “it is with your tithes and offerings.” **9** With a curse, you are cursed for you are robbing me even this whole nation. **10** Bring⁵⁸ the whole tithe into my house, into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. Now try me in this say the Lord Almighty [and see] if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out to you blessing as to make sufficiently sufficient. **11** I will give order to the devourer for you, and it will certainly not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD Almighty. **12** And all nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a desirable land, says the LORD Almighty.

Textual Analysis

Verse 6a: This verse begins by presenting a covenantal reason for the Israelites continued existence despite their repeated disobedience and apostasy. Yahweh reaffirms his consistent promise to Israel as the prophet Balaam says, “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?” (Num 23:19). From Yahweh’s self-introduction (v. 6a) he reminds Israel of who he is and why they are not consumed (v. 6b). This affirmation ignores Israel’s questioning of Yahweh’s justice (Mal 2:17) and proves that he is faithful to his promises in spite of Israel’s

⁵⁶ Both ESV and NASB render ἀπὸ τῶν ἀδικιῶν τῶν πατέρων as “from the days of your fathers.”

⁵⁷ εἶπατε Verb indicative aorist active used as historical present imperative.

⁵⁸ BDAG.s.v. 1.εἰσηνέγκατε is an aorist from the verb εἰσφέρω meaning to bring in an area, bring in. However, within this context it could also function as an Aorist imperative. Wallace notes that "The imperative is most commonly used for commands, as a command, the imperative is usually from a superior to an inferior in rank. It occurs frequently with the aorist and present (only rarely with the perfect tense)" *Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 585.

unfaithfulness. In the entire verse (v. 6), the Lord speaks of himself using his covenant name *Yahweh* which expresses his eternal self-existing nature as in Exodus 3. That is, five of the fifteen appearance of the word “Lord” in chapter three is found in verses 6–12. Because of his unchangeableness, his gifts and calling are irrevocable (Rom 11:29), Israel [Jacob] is definitely disciplined and corrected, but not consumed; they remain a nation through whom *Yahweh* has promised to reveal himself to all people. The economic situation of the people depicts *Yahweh*’s punishment (Jer 30:11) and even more to come if they would not return. Yet he calls the people “Sons of Jacob as a way of reminding them of his everlasting covenant made with their forefathers, which was “indestructible” regardless of Israel’s disobedience (Jer 33:20–21).

Count 1: Apostasy

Verse 7a gives specific time and days of Israel’s apostasy to serve as the Lord’s evidence against Israel. As their forefathers turned away from the Lord and his wrath was kindle upon them he warns the current generation. Amidst the economic difficulties and challenges Israel faces, through the prophet Malachi *Yahweh* extends a gracious call for Israel to return to her covenantal relationship.

Verse 7b: Having exercised his gracious Fatherly role instead of his judgement for Israel’s apostasy, the Lord places before Israel solution to avoid his wrath and invite his blessings. On the other hand, he knew what the response of their hearts would be to his gracious invitation, because of their pervasiveness in sin. Regardless, he yet extends an earnest call to return to this covenantal relationship. He assures Israel of his faithfulness to keeping his promise and blessings. As he says, “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves ... I will hear from heaven and will heal their land” (2 Chr 7:14). God promised blessing for the returns of the tithes and offerings is not limited to the healing of their land; it included financial, spiritual

Moral etc. Seeing Israel as a repentant nation allows us to understand the prophet's message addressed to Israel as a "disputation speech" to which their likely response provides an answer to their question, "wherein shall we return?" (v. 8) Israel's response to this question then brings us to the next issue that also stimulates concern.

Count 2: Robbery-through Tithes and Offerings

Verse 8a opens with a rhetorical question with which the prophet then indicts Israel of corruption and robbery to which they seem oblivious. The question posed to Israel is a hypothetical one that allows them no middle ground. Two critical issues arise from this question. First, if Israel's response to the question is "No," they stand guilty of making God a liar, thereby refuting his charges against them as unjustifiable. Second, if their response is "yes," they stand guilty of corruption and robbery, by refusing to offer to the Lord whole tithe and offering, which is why Israel is disciplined through the political, economic and social havoc.

Israel responded to Yahweh's indictment with the question "...in what sort of things have we robbed you?" (v. 8b) brings about two concerns which serve as the platform for both Gunkel's *disputation speech* description of Malachi and O'Brian's *covenantal lawsuit description*. On one hand, granting that Israel agrees to Yahweh's charges against them, then presenting Malachi's speech as *disputation speech* would portray Yahweh's message as a compassionate Father who reveals Israel's (his first born son's) wrong so as to educate him in love and mercy.

Conversely, if Israel's response to Yahweh's accusation is one of denial, self-justification and impenitence, then Yahweh's address to Israel is rather seen as an indictment of wrath, judgment and condemnation (as in Mal 2:17) and the reverse of Malachi 3:11-12.

In reality, the Israelites acceptance of their wrong brings out how they deliberately robbed

the Lord and rejected him in every aspect of their lives. With these evidences stated, the prophet reveals how the people of Israel departed and abandoned their religious responsibilities and covenantal relationship. The tithes and offerings were due to the Lord; hence, withholding them was considered cheating or defrauding God not man.

Quiggle is one scholar who argues that “the first tithe was considered a heave offering from Israel to the Lord.”⁵⁹ This assertion suggest that only the breast and the shoulder of the peace offering was the priests’ portion (Exo 29:27 and Lev 7:14, 32–34). In contrast, the tithes entitled to the priest were never restricted to the *heave* but were inclusive of grain, first fruits, firstborn sons, and cattle, as Nehemiah records (Neh 10:35–39). Assuredly, there is no limitation mentioned in the above text restricting the tithe and offering to the *heave*. It is clear that Israel stood guilty of abandonment of her creator and sustainer.

Verse 9 presents a curse which seems ambiguous. It could be interpreted as the cause of Israel’s past sin with a current effect or its current condition which has the potential future effect if not addressed. On the one hand, perceiving Israel as a repentant people to the prophet’s message makes these curse potential causes of all their past calamities. While on the other hand, granted that their response to the prophet’s message was arrogance, the Israelites stood speechless to defend themselves against these charges, awaiting Yahweh’s condemnation and judgments.

However, understanding God’s compassion allows us to see the curse not as a future judgment but as a past judgment having a current effect on them. With an invitation to Israel is called to repentance and reconciliation.

Verses 10–12: The last section of this passage completes Yahweh’s case against Israel and

⁵⁹ Quiggle, *Why Christians Should Not Tithe*, 15.

resolves the matter in the following way: If the people of Israel will disobey Yahweh, they are to anticipate more of his judgments, the opposite of verses 10b–12, but if she will obey and return as he is calling her to, divine blessings and posterity are assured. Therefore, this section discusses the following: a solution to Israel’s problem, the purpose of the tithe and offering a test (step of faith) and result, and the benefits of Israel’s obedience.

Verse 10: The Hebrew verb *bo* (translated as “to bring”) also in the Greek is εἰσφέρω (“to bring or lead”) is an indicative but has a sense of an imperative, instructing Israel to come with all, the whole tithes and offerings which she may have supposedly kept back, withheld or refused to bring. Furthermore, the adjective *all/whole* suggests and proves that the people of Israel were withholding some or all of the tithes and offerings. The withholding of the tithe and offerings therefore substantiates Yahweh’s charges against Israel.

Although one may partly agree with James D. Nogalski who argues that “reference to the full tithe brought to the storehouse should not be understood as a full 10 percent, but the temple tax that should be brought ...to the temple.”⁶⁰ It is also worth noting that the tithe was not the only required support; there were also temple tax, gleaning, and alms (Lev 19:9–10, cf. Deut 24:19–21). Insofar as Israel had trappings of both “church and state,” the tithe may have also function as some of our other form of taxation to support the common good. Hence, if Nogalski understanding of the ten percent is a replacement of the tithe for the temple tax, then, his argument does not in any way conform to the tithes and offerings mentioned in this text. Furthermore, if Yahweh was concerned about the temple’s regional tax, he would not have mentioned the offerings which Israel was required to give as part of their obligation to Yahweh. Rather, everyone is required to give a tithe and offering, including the Levite, except the Priest in

⁶⁰ James D. Nogalski, *Books of the Twelve, Micah–Malachi*, (Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2011), 1057.

accordance with Numbers 18:9–12, 19. Because of the significance of the of the tithe, the entire nation is suffering Yahweh’s judgement and stands to suffer more if they do not turn in fear and trembling (v. 9), including the Levites.

In addition, Israel is required to make punctual and full payment of all tithes of corn, wine and oil. Concerning such Nehemiah confronts the rulers. He says:

Portions of the Levites had not been given to them, so that the Levites and the singers, who did the work, had fled each to his field. So I confronted the officials and said, “Why is the house of God forsaken?” And I gathered them together and set them in their stations. Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouse (Neh 13:10–12).

Nagasaki’s assertion therefore is a stark contrast of the above excerpt. Because he sees he tithe and offering as limited to the temple’s tax which does not stress Yahweh’s instruction for each and every Israelite to bring their tithe and offering as part of worship but he rather sees it on the basis of a legal instruction. In other words, the tithe was not an ordinary command but was a part of Israel’s religious relationship with Yahweh.

Verse 10c begins by stating the purpose of the tithes and offerings “that there may be food in my house.” That the tithe and offerings served as food reiterates Yahweh’s promise to sustain Aaron and sons through Israel’s tithes and offerings which he had already assigned to them. Israel’s failure to bring their tithe and offerings makes God a liar or failure (Num 23:19). It is worth noting that, Israel’s failure to bring the full tithes and offerings did not only rob God, but it also denied the Levites and the priest their right of sustenance because of lack of food in the store house for their upkeep (Neh 13:10–13).

“Now try/test me in this says the Lord Almighty” (Mal 3:10c) Nogalski argues that, “the ideal of testing was controversial.”⁶¹ Although his argument seems probable the invitation to test

⁶¹ Nogalski, *Books of the Twelve: Micah–Malachi*, 1057.

can only be controversial depending on the context: unlike other contexts, this context shows no danger but rather invites Israel to trust by testing and waiting in expectation for Yahweh's response to the test. In this case the end justifies the means. Therefore, rather than seeing the test here as a danger, it is inspiring to take the step of faith. In other words, Yahweh is saying, "Do it and watch me respond on your behalf." Hence the test in this context is a motivational test. It is Yahweh's way of reminding Israel that he has been and remain their provider in whom they are to trust by taking the step of faith and bringing all the tithes and offerings without fear of their needs being met.

After inviting Israel to test or try him, Yahweh now invites them to see the result of what they were instructed to bring in verse 9. Yahweh says, "see if I will not open wide the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing enough that there is not enough room for it" (v. 10). Yahweh invitation to test does not suggest his wrath but rather reminds him of his promise, to release his blessings which have been withheld because of Israel's desertion of their duties.

This final section (vv. 11–12) concludes the passage and gives the benefits of obeying Yahweh—by returning to the status quo (v. 7). Yahweh's call for Israel to return the full/whole tithes and offerings puts Israel back on the rightful trajectory in preparation for the coming of Christ. Ultimately, Christ would fulfill the priestly duty for sin once and for all generations.

Conclusion

Despite the many difficulties Israel was facing, Malachi's call is similar to other prophets whom Yahweh raised in the time of Israel's apostasy. In spite of their hardship Israel is called to return to their covenantal obedience by bringing the full tithes and offering into the store house (v. 10). Not only in their abandonment of the tithe and offerings were they sinning against the Lord, but their hearts were driven far away, just as their offering and tithe. The call to return the

tithes and offerings was a call to return their trust and faith in the Lord who had been their means of sustenance as stated above (2 Chr 7:14). Indeed, it was also a call to worship the Lord through their tithes and offerings despite their poor condition. It is on similar principles that the New Testament will address the relevance of the tithes and offerings.

The New Testament Perspective of the Priest and Levites in Light of Tithe-Giving

Matthew 23:23–24

Introduction

Among scholars who reject the tithe, Quiggle is one who argues that “Matthew 23:23–24 and Luke 11:37–54 are hardly a call for New Testament believers to tithe. Furthermore, they concern the most legalistic sect of Judaism in an activity where they believed they excelled in righteousness over other Jews. Jesus is not commending them.”⁶² It is true that in the New Testament, the tithe is not a command or law to be fully observed, albeit, Jesus’ mention of the tithe in this text in no way condemns it. Instead, he rebukes those leaders who tried to use the tithe as a means of securing their salvation or prove their self- righteousness. However, Jesus went beyond the tithe by pointing out matters which were more important (mercy, faithfulness, and justice) than the tithe. In essence, Jesus’ commendation of the tithe suggests that it is good to pay the tithe but doing so could not secure one’s salvation or God’s grace. This segment of the paper will then address the question: How is the tithe commended rather than commanded in the New Testament?

Historical /Narrative Analysis

The apologetic nature of Matthew over the historicity of the gospel tradition has caused

⁶² Quiggle, *Why Christians Should Not Tithe*, 58.

many Evangelical scholars to reluctantly see the theological motivation of the book. Some liberal scholars tend to view Matthew as an imaginative document compiled to meet the church's need of a story concerning the faith they proclaim rather than reliable traditions and teachings of Jesus. David Turner is correct to reject the dispensational view that "the church derive history from the gospel and theology from the epistle of the New Testament especially those of Paul."⁶³ Because the gospel's accounts are full and complete on their own despite their inter-relational nature. Turner further rejects the evangelical assertion when he says, "This history versus theology dichotomy is false, whether in conservative *detheologizing* context or in liberal *dehistoricizing* context."⁶⁴ While suggesting an alternative way to view the gospel, he adds that "the gospel narrates what happened but does so in part for theological reasons. In like manner, each gospel story is calculated to meet the need of its respective audience."⁶⁵ Indeed, each writer of the gospel fits and presents their narrative account of Jesus's ministry according to their purpose and theme in light of the, prophecy and fulfillment of the Old Testament. Also providing a helpful way to view Matthew amidst the unanimously unresolved synoptic Gospel problem, Jeffery A. Gibbs suggests that "Matthew's gospel should be read primarily and first on its own terms as a Narrative."⁶⁶ He further clarifies that the above suggestion does not propose that "we should never compare the gospels to gain greater historical or theological insight; [but rather recommends that] we should do that."⁶⁷ What is more important about the aforesaid is that Matthew's gospel is understood based on his purpose and intent put forth in his gospel account

⁶³ David L. Turner, *Matthew: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Michigan: Baker 2008), 5.

⁶⁴ Turner, *Matthew*, 5.

⁶⁵ Turner, *Matthew*, 5.

⁶⁶ Jeffery A. Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1* (St. Louis, Concordia, 2006), 30.

⁶⁷ Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 30.

while other unclear passages or parallels are better understood by comparing the other accounts. This then leads one to agree that the intention of Matthew's gospel account is honor when we consider "his narrative for its own sake."⁶⁸

A unique feature of Matthew is that it has various numerical patterns which bring to the reader's attention some theological significance. These include: the seven patterns in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–13), the seven Parables (Matt 13), and the genealogy pattern of double sevens narration (Matt 1:1–17).

In their recent work, D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo highlight the close relationship between both discourse and narratives features in this gospel. Their analysis affirms that, "Matthew presents five discourses, each of which begins in a specific context and ends with a formula found nowhere else..."⁶⁹ (Lit. 'And it happened when Jesus had finished saying these things...' Matt 7:28–29; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Consequently, this gospel has a genre unique in its presentation of the historic and orderly ministry of Jesus in his fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

Translation

23 Woe to you scribes and Pharisee because⁷⁰ you pay tithe of the mint, and drill but you have neglected the important things of the law: justice mercy and faithfulness; these are the things you ought to have done without neglecting the others. **24** [You] blind guides, who are straining the gnat but the camel you are swallowing.

⁶⁸ Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 30.

⁶⁹ D. A. Carson, and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 135.

⁷⁰ BDAG, s. v. ὅτι 3.a as a causal conjunction *because, since*.

Meaning and Implication

Matthew 23:23–24 is the fourth of the seven woes Jesus uses in this discourse to condemn the Pharisee and scribes. Chapter 23 is a discourse which serves a dual purpose: Teaching and rebuke. As part of his teaching in verses 1–12 Jesus warns the disciples from becoming like those deceived leaders who sought to attain all the earthly respect and dignity by burdening the people with the works of the law, while in the second part of this discourse, Jesus faces the Jewish leaders and teachers who acclaimed righteousness by observing the least requirements of the law, abandoning the greater ones.

In verse 23 Jesus mentions the tithe as one of those least requirements which were normal to every Jew. Yet, Jesus goes further to expand on the greater things—mercy, justice, and faithfulness, which were uncommon to deal with outside a human person. Concerning the tithes mentioned in this gospel, many contemporary scholars have used Jesus’ description of the tithe as “the least things” to argue against the practice of tithe in the church today. Quiggle for example writes, “These verses are hardly a call for the New Testament believer to tithe. In addition, they concern the most legalistic sect of Judaism in an activity where they believed they excelled in righteousness over other Jews.”⁷¹ On the one hand, it is correct that these verses are hardly a call for the New Testament believer to tithe but on the other hand, it is also not a call to forbid the issue of the tithe.

In view of verse 23, Jesus begins by acknowledging the religious leaders’ obedience to the tithe, which was the term of the old covenant but not the new covenant. In essence, the Jewish leaders claimed to love God and were keeping the covenantal relationship of their ancestors by being obedient to the Law of Moses. Proving the leaders’ hypocrisy and deceit, Jesus interprets

⁷¹ Quiggle, *Why Christian Should Not Tithe*, 58.

and summarizes the entire commandments to *love* (Matt 22:39–40). Their lack of love put them in the wrong and gave no significance to their tithes. In fact, these leaders used their tithe payment and other ceremonial observances as proof of their righteousness. Similarly, the Pharisee in Luke 18:11–14 sought to justify himself by pointing to the works of the law just as the leaders mentioned in this text are using the tithes as guarantees for their righteousness.

This paper is not arguing that the practice of giving tithes and offerings is a necessary means of attaining God’s blessings or impetus for God’s favor. By way of contrast, this research argument for the tithe and offering is to be seen as a sacrifice of appreciation and thanksgiving to God for the many blessing he has bestowed on his people. More specifically, tithes should be given for the support of God’s servants, the ministers who serve his people with his sacred gifts through the gospel without any strains or compulsion attached to giving the tithe.

Amongst many others, Albert Barnes is one who suggests that the saying, “straining the gnat but the camel you are swallowing” in verse 24 is a *proverb*. He is one who thinks that the literal translation of v.24 is a “mistranslation or misprint which should have been ‘to strain out gnat’... it was undoubtedly rendered by the translation. Moreover, the common reading is a ‘misprint,’ and should be corrected to provide the meaning appropriate to the Greek translation ‘strain out by a cloth or sieve.’”⁷²

Basically, Barnes offers this suggestion since; otherwise, the verse is meaningless, because “to strain at a gnat” does not make sense. In agreement with his line of thought, Jesus’ explanation of why he considered the Pharisee hypocrites⁷³ makes it probable to accept Barnes’

⁷² Albert Barnes. *Notes on the New Testament: Explanatory and Practical*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1949) Online Bible Hub.Com/Commenteries.Barnes/Matthew/23.htm (Accessed July 2, 2016)

⁷³ Matt 23:25ff. Explains why Jesus considers the Pharisee and rulers hypocrites and blind guys because they abandoned the greater matters for the lesser, they preferred the outside of the cup to the inside (vv. 25 26).

suggestion.

Considering the historical context, Jesus' proverb connects the process of water purification and the religious attitude of the Pharisees and leaders in relation to the law and the tithes. Jesus' reference to the tithe as a *smaller matter* or *gnat* therefore suggests that, although the tithe was good, it was not a necessity to one's salvation. Above all, Jesus affirms that one could be saved even without the tithe and brings in the matters that were of more concern (justice, mercy, and faithfulness) such as the camel which was being swallowed by the rulers and the Pharisees. Given these points, Jesus' mention of the tithe in this text is neither to abolish the tithe nor assure salvation through it, but point to the most important things – God's gift of justice, mercy and faithfulness for the salvation of humankind through Faith in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 7:1–10

Introduction

This chapter is a re-echoing of the story of Abram's brief encounter with Melchizedek after he successfully defeated his enemies. The above text prompts many questions about Abram and Melchizedek's meeting and interaction. The passage highlights two theological issues such as: Melchizedek a type of Christ and Abraham's tithe as worth emulating today. With reference to the first, the majority of scholars have a similar interpretation; however the other is interpreted from different theological perspectives, raising an unending debate. In this text, Abram meets Melchizedek who bears the identity, personality, and offices of the pre-incarnate Christ, the Most High Priest. At the same time, Abraham stands as a representative figure, projecting the Levite, as he pays a tenth of the spoils to the High Priest, and projecting Israel when he receives the blessing on Israel's behalf.

For the most part, the meeting of both individuals sets the basis for Israel's religious life

discussed in the previous chapter. This segment of the paper will therefore argue from this New Testament text that Abraham's response to tithe out of his own volition sets the stage for the ritual and covenantal life of Israel fulfilled in Christ, the Most High Priest.

Meaning and Analysis

The introductory phrase of verse 1 reveals Melchizedek's highlights two typical characteristics that reflect a type of Christ in two of the threefold offices⁷⁴ of Christ. First, in his personal name, Melchizedek bears the attribute of Christ: "Melchizedek— *King of righteousness and peace*". Second, in his vocation, Melchizedek is a type of Christ by in his priestly office. Abraham recognizes both King and Priestly offices of Melchizedek by paying homage. Abraham pays a tenth of all his spoils after which Melchizedek blesses him, thus, exercising his sacerdotal duty.

Representing the nation of Israel as its patriarch, Abraham gives a tithe to serve as a portion given for and on behalf of the nation. Although Abraham's tithe given to Melchizedek was not as a result of any commandment as stated in Leviticus and Numbers, but Abraham believes that Yahweh was the source of everything he had acquired from the battle; therefore, he saw it befitting to tithe in gratitude for his success.

By presenting the tithe in verses 2–3, Abram is cognizant of Melchizedek's priestly office and his character as a king of peace. Melchizedek portrays Christ's attribute spoken of by the prophet Isaiah who says "And he shall be called, Prince of peace" (Isa 9:6). Christ fulfills this

⁷⁴ Francis Pieper, *The Threefold Office of Christ* – All that Christ has done and is still doing for man's salvation can be conveniently grouped under three heads. Scripture tells us that Christ was sent (a) to preach the gospel to the poor (Luke 4:18; John 1:18; Heb 1:1; Luke 13:33); (b) to reconcile the world with God (2 Cor 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself"; Matt 20:28; Rom 5:10; 1 John 2:2); and (c) to govern the church as its head and King and to rule the universe (Luke 1:33: "He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever"; Eph 1:22: "And hath Put all things under his feet"; John 18 :33–37)". *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 2, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1951), 333–34.

prophecy in his ministry when he says to the raging wind, “Peace be still”(Mark 4:39, Ps 104:7, John 20:19). Furthermore, testifying to Christ’s kingly office of righteousness, the prophet Jeremiah also says “The Lord is our righteousness” (Jer 23:6). Additionally, the apostle Paul confirms, “For our sake...we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 2:21).

Verse 3 says, “He is without father or genealogy.” The genealogy mentioned speaks to Christ’s pre-existence, personal union and origin of which there is neither beginning nor end. The apostle John speaks clearly of this identity: “I am the Alpha and the Omega...who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev 1:8; 21:6; cf. Isa 41:4; 43:10, 44:6). Taking on the form of the pre-incarnate Christ, Melchizedek is described as one who “resembles the [Christ] Son of God (who, having fulfilled his priestly duties on earth) continues as a priest forever” (Heb 7:3).

In verses 4–6, Abram the patriarch is representing both the Levitical priest (Levi) and his descendants. Although Melchizedek is not of the tribe of Levi and had no legal entitlement to Abraham’s spoils or his descendant, Melchizedek yet receives the tithe even prior to the institution of the tithe in Leviticus and Numbers. By receiving the tithe Melchizedek demonstrates his God-given authority as both priest and king, thus showing his ability to bless Abraham despite the fact that he had the promise, still the priest blessed him. This confirms that Melchizedek, a type of Christ, is the beginning of the priesthood and remains that Most High Priest forever. Moreover, Abram’s tithe was [a blessing] given back to the very giver and source of the blessings (spoils) he had acquired. In gratitude to God, he returns a portion to bless the priest and, ultimately, to bless God.

Verses 7–8 indicate that without opposition, Abram, the less, is blessed by the greater, the Priest of God. This is a self-evident and undeniable truth that cannot be opposed. Similarly, the

priests (Aaron's sons) were greater in their priestly office than the Levites and the people of Israel, who were blessed by the priest. As a priest of the most-high God, Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham was a prefiguring of the hierarchy within the priesthood which finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. The author of Hebrews gives this framework for understanding Christ's Priesthood in light of the Aaronic priesthood.

In addition, these verses indicate that although the tithe is received by mortal man, it is ultimately received by Christ [the Most-High Priest] because Melchizedek stands as a type of Christ as discussed above. This explains why Yahweh instructs Israel to "Bring all the tithes and offerings" (Mal 3:10).

In a way, verse 8 highlights the significance of the tithe given first to Yahweh before it becomes the share of the priest, as described previously in Numbers 18:30–31. Furthermore, it stresses the need for Israel to understand that though the tithes would be received by "mortal men" (the Priesthood) it was yet his—Yahweh's. Connecting Abram's tithe to the priesthood and Christ, Hebrews 8, concludes that though the tithe stated is received by mortal man yet "it (the scripture) testified that he lives". This then explains how Christ in his priestly office offers himself as a sacrifice to God the Father of whom the scripture testifies that he received Christ's offering.⁷⁵ Steven P. Mueller explains the phrase *he lives*, this way: "since no death is recorded for Melchizedek, and since there is no recorded end to his office, his priestly office is, in a sense, without end (cf. John 6:57; Rev 1:17–18)."⁷⁶ Undeniably, the characteristics of Melchizedek prefigure Christ who offered himself as a propitiation for mankind's sin and rose from the dead to free humanity from temporal limitations to live forever as himself. The Psalmist confirms this

⁷⁵ See detailed in Heb 10:12–14.

⁷⁶ Steven P. Mueller, *Hebrews*. (St Louis: Concordia, 2015), 91.

when he says, “The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek’ ” (Ps 110:4).

Verses 9–10 explain that as the people were instructed to pay their tithe to the Levites, the Levites were to also adhere to instructions of the tithe for Aaron, the High Priest (Num 18:26–29). As the patriarch of all Israelite priests, Levi rightly received tithes, as did his priestly descendants. Hebrew 7:1–10 is not one to be seen literally, but figuratively. That is, the descendants of Abraham were in his loins not only as he was their forefather physically, but also because he was the recipient of the promise recorded in Genesis 12:1–3.

Amongst many scholars who believe the Levites pre-existence in Abraham, Mueller says, “Before Levi was born, his ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek. Besides, Levi was in a sense genetically present in Abraham. When Abraham paid the tithe; he demonstrated the legitimacy and supremacy of Melchizedek to Levi.”⁷⁷ Scholars are right to argue that Christ was in the loins of Melchizedek as prefigure in view of his priestly and kingly offices. This cannot be overemphasized. Responding to the question: was not Christ Himself, according to the flesh, as well as Levi, in the loins of Abraham (cf. Acts 2:30)? Albert J Bangel clarifies:

Christ is expressly set forth by the psalm as priest after the order of Melchisedec (sic) and that too in such a way that Melchisedec is made like to the Son of God, not the Son of God to Melchisedec: nor is Christ subject to Abraham, but stands in opposition to the sons of Levi.⁷⁸

Hebrews 8:5 explains the preexistence of heavenly things as more ancient than that of the Levitical priesthood. Finally, Abraham’s reaction to the tithe can be considered a prolepsis of

⁷⁷ Mueller, *Hebrews*, 91.

⁷⁸ Johann (John) Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Vol.5, Bible Support.com, Submitted June 13, 2012 11:16PM, accessed Oct 4, 2016, www.biblesupport.com/e-sword-downloads/file/5526-bengel-john-gnomon-of-the-nt-commentary-dictionary-commentary-5-vols.

God's plan of redemption for his chosen people (Israel) and all nations through the priestly office of Aaron and sons and finally fulfilled in Christ. Because Christ's atoning sacrifice has abrogated the ceremonial laws setting all free, it is increasingly anticipated of all believers to joyously bring into the storehouse all the Levitical tithes and offerings in thanksgiving and appreciation to God for the many blessings he bestows on his people. It is therefore on these principles that the New Testament encourages all believers to give cheerfully and voluntarily for the support of pastor, mission, and evangelism of the gospel.

Office of the Minister, Overseer in the New Testament

Unlike the Old Testament, the New Testament has no explicit office or appointment over the body of Christ as was required in Numbers 18:1–32. Instead, there is a general consideration of the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2:9). This general priestly office is best understood as every believer exercising their spiritual right and privilege to offer to God their sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving (Ps 50:14, 23) without restriction or hindrance. Hebrews affirms that, “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses... (But calls us to) draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace” (Heb 4:15–16). The church is that place where Christ calls every believer to draw near in order to receive his gifts through word and sacraments administered by his servant—the pastor or minister who is duly called by the church. In spite of the priesthood of all believers, there is still need for leaders and shepherds of the body of the church to speak the word of God faithfully (Acts 20:28, Eph 4:11). The pastoral office is one that has no authority on its own; rather pastor have their authority conferred upon them by God through the Christian congregation, as the original possessor of these, and by the call which the congregation, according to the will of God, has issued them. Comparison of the pastoral office to that of the priest will be further discussed in

later chapters.

Duties of Pastors and Ministers in the New Testament

This section will make the necessary connection between the duties of the priest of the Old Testament, the role of the priesthood of all believers, and the task of the bishop, overseer and deacon in the New Testament. In making the comparison this research will argue that the Levitical tithing which was intended for the Old Testament priest is still associated with a pastor's sustenance in the church today.

The primary duty of Aaron the priest was to directly handle the burnt offering and altar or anything inside the Holy of Holies (Num 18:1b). The priesthood had oversight over the many offerings and sacrifices in the tent of meeting. As specified in Lev 6:8–7:36, the priest took care of the blood, fat, flesh, and special portion. The priests benefited from certain parts of the offerings as their payment and were also responsible to maintain the sanctity and purity of the sanctuary (Lev 10:10).

In the New Testament, Christ's death and resurrection has fulfilled all of the ritual purification and atonement required by the Law for the sins of both Israel and all of humanity today. Thus, it has become common today amongst scholars to reject the necessity of the office of the priest or the Levite. Along these lines, many scholars have interpreted Christ's *sacrificial death* for the propitiation of sin to mean the simultaneous payment for sin and the cancellation of the priesthood and all of its functions, including the tithes. Using 1 Peter 2:9 these scholars make their argument.

Indeed, Christ's atoning sacrifice has fulfilled all priestly sacrifices for sin. In addition, Christ establishes the New Testament church by calling out servants/ disciples who were taken away from the rest of the nation just as the Levites were (Luke 5:1–11, Matt 19:27, Mark 1:17–

20). Then, through the Great Commission, the church is given all authority to carry the gospel message into the world as an organized body. Christ gave the disciples no authority to offer sacrifices to God as the priest of the Old Testament instead; he gave them authority to dispense his gifts; to heal the sick, raise the dead and baptize (Matt 10:8), a calling and mission greater and more far-reaching than that of the priest. In addition, he invites all nations to come before the throne of Grace to obtain mercy and to freely offer their sacrifices of thanksgiving (Heb 4:16; 10:19–25).

Making a similar comparison of the priestly duties to the apostolic office in the New Testament, Raymond E. Brown lists three basic functions of the Levitical priesthood. From Deut. 33:8–10, he highlights the roles which he believes poetically describe three basic functions of the priest arranged in order of importance:

Firstly, At a sanctuary the priest consulted the *Urim and Thummim*, i.e., the sacred lots that were cast in order to discover God's answer to a problem that had been posed (1 Sam 14:41–42). The Israelite went to the sanctuary to consult Yahweh and to find out his will... Secondly ... 'they shall teach Jacob your rules and Israel your law; ... offerings on your altar' (Deut 33:10) the Torah of the Law was in the hand of the Priest to communicate to men (Jer 18:18, Mal 2:6). The last of the priestly functions mentioned in Deut 33:10 is that of Sacrifice and cultic offering. "Because the first and second function of the OT Priesthood was shifted over to the prophet and the scribes respectively, sacrifice was the principal function left to the priest at the end of the OT period."⁷⁹

Today there is division over the continuation of the priestly office. Various sides ground their argument in the 1 Peter 2:9 texts to make application. One perspective comes from the Roman Catholic's interpretation of the priest "Being another Christ,"⁸⁰ Thomas P. Raush supposes that Barth's assertion was predicated upon "what many Catholics believed about their

⁷⁹ Brown, *Priest and Bishop*, 10–12.

⁸⁰ Karl Barth and Horton Douglas, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1928), 113.

priests, let alone, the position of the priest within the Catholic community was secure; the priest's role was clearly understood, and it was highly valued."⁸¹ Such an assumption must be right based on several conceptions of the priestly office by the Roman Catholics. Rausch concludes that, today the emphasis is no longer on the "sacred power" which the priest was said to possess, setting him apart from others giving him a unique authority.⁸² While it is true that much emphasis is no longer on the sacred power, there still exists if not in name but in practice many sacred names and titles which are similar and greater than the issue of the sacred power. There is still a sacred name attributed to the office of the priest such as Vicar of Christ, sovereign, supreme, and patriarch, all of which undermine the function of the Holy Spirit and are contrary to the Holy Scripture. Although the Catholics justify the sacredness of the priestly office in the *Augsburg Interim, On the Supreme Pontiff and the Bishops* which states "...in order that it [the church] can more easily be kept in unity, on the basis of right, to prevent schism, it [the church] has one supreme pontiff, set over all the others, with plentitude of power, through the prerogative given to Peter."⁸³

Preventing the church from schisms⁸⁴ is an unbiblical and unjustifiable reason to create a hierarchical throne between God and his people, which prevents or denies believers access to exercise their secondary priestly duties. In contrast the Lord says, "You shall be to me a priestly kingdom and holy people" (Ex 19:5–6). With this promise, Yahweh reassures Israel of the Abrahamic promise mentioned in Gen 15:18. In Exo 19:1–4, Yahweh instructs Moses to remind

⁸¹ Thomas P. Rausch, *Priesthood Today*: (New York: Paulist, 1992), 1.

⁸² Rausch, *Priesthood Today*, 2.

⁸³ Robert Kolb and James A. Nestigen, *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 158.

⁸⁴ The Roman Catholic reason for granting the pope and bishop all the necessary authority. I.e., the Vicar of Christ. See Raymond Brown, *Priest and Bishop*, 78.

the people of his wondrous works performed in Egypt. Against such, Yahweh guarantees Israel of his future blessings if they would obey his voice and keep his covenant. However, throughout Israel's history this promise was never fulfilled because they could not fully obey the voice of Yahweh and keep his covenant. But, through Christ Active obedience he obeys the voice of His Father by fully keeping the Law and through his passive righteousness of death on the cross he pays the price for all sinners that all may reap of this Abrahamic promise on Christ's account. By God's grace given through faith in Christ all believers are incorporated into this "priestly kingdom and holy people" (Deut 7:6; 14:2, 14:21 26:19, cf. 1 Pet 2:9) without hindrances.

Norman Nagel, interprets and makes the distinction between the Old Testament and New Testament priest by considering "Christ as the primary Priest, and all [baptized] believers—Secondary Priest."⁸⁵ The distinctions of the primary and secondary priest give a clue to understand the office of the minister, pastors, clergy, or overseer in the New Testament. The Augsburg confession further explains the function and duties of the secondary priest in the New Testament when it states: "Priests are not called to offer sacrifices for the people as in the Old Testament law so that through them they might merit the forgiveness for the people; instead, they are called to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments to the people."⁸⁶ Without a doubt, the secondary priesthood status of all believers must be seen and carried out even in the doctrine of the church.

Kurt E. Marquart strongly supports the priesthood of all believers when he says, "all are priests, not all are minister. There is priesthood and there is a ministry. They are not the same,

⁸⁵ Norman Nagel, sees the primary and secondary priesthood as, "the old sacrifice in which the victim was killed are now done and finished in Christ once and for all ... Furthermore, although the apostle Paul in (Rom 12) did not use the word "Priest" Nagel however warns that, "in the New Testament the only Priest in the primary sense is Jesus and for the Priests in the secondary sense we have to look carefully" 281.

⁸⁶ Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, *Book of Concord, The Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 220.

yet both are God-given, and there exist between them a conceptual relationship⁸⁷ Indeed, that being the case, the duty of the pastor/minister is to publically serve the Means of Grace which God has given to the church, having been duly called and ordained⁸⁸ into the pastoral ministry.

Provision for Pastors/Ministers in the New Testament

To return to the subject of pastoral sustenance as detailed in previous chapters, the tithe and offering was the Levitical priesthood's assured support from the Lord in exchange for services at the tent of meeting. In like manner, Jesus' disciples' sustenance was of similar concern. Even though some gave excuses (Luke 9:57–62) due to concern for their material sustenance, others were not dissuaded by their material sustenance but accepted the call to followed Jesus, leaving everything (Luke 18:29–30). Sending out the disciples, Jesus addresses their means of sustenance since these men were taking up a new way of life, abandoning their initial career and vocation. The disciples' provision was not to be a strange concern to Israel, “the lost sheep of the House of Israel” (Matt 10:6), to whom they were sent because Israel was familiar with the principles regarding God's messengers' sustenance. Matthew records, “Acquire no gold or silver... for your journey... for the laborer deserves his food” (Matt 10:9–10). Detail of this passage is discussed below. Gibbs interprets this instruction as one that stresses the need “not to make plans for their physical survival...or... as they journey and carry out their mission tasks, they are not to ‘fend for themselves.’”⁸⁹ In essence, the disciples were called and set apart to carry out the work of their master just as the priest, but in a public manner; their means of

⁸⁷ Kurt E. Marquart, *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatic, The Church and her fellowship, Ministry and Governance*. (Ft. Wayne, IN: International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1990), 104.

⁸⁸ Mueller, *Call to Believe Teach and Confess* “Rights which publically acknowledges a first call into the pastoral ministry and authorizes a pastor to begin this public ministry.” 524.

⁸⁹ Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 510.

sustenance was Christ's responsibility. As to the disciples' sustenance, Jesus quickly points to the Old Testament's labor law to assure the disciples of their means of provision for this public ministry. Designating their sustenance to Israel specifically, Jesus says, "And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart" (Matt 10:11). That house "that is worthy" signifies the household (people) that willingly receive the disciples as God's messengers and servants. Unlike this restricted commission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel mentioned in Matt 10:1–15, pastors and ministers are given the great commission in Matthew 28:19–20 to go into all the world to the lost sheep of the universal of Israel. In the same way Pastors and ministers are commissioned to serve God's people with the Means of Grace through Word and Sacraments.

By the same token, the apostle Paul writes:

... I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings (Rom 15:25–27).

Paul uses the final γὰρ [since, because, for] in verse 10 to explain why it was necessary for the Gentiles to share with the church their material blessings. As we will see below the establishment of the public or pastoral ministry by Christ encourages each believer to support that pastoral ministry. It is incumbent upon all believers as part of their priestly duties (1Pet 2:9) to offer sacrifices of material blessings for the support of the pastoral ministry. Paul reaffirms Jesus' concern mentioned in Matt 10:10 when he says, "The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14). Although the primary priestly office has been fulfilled and occupied by Christ himself, each believer's incorporation into this

priesthood suggests the continuation to tithe, yet under grace⁹⁰ as opposed to the initial mandate of the law.

Matthew 10:1–15

Introduction

Because much light has been shed on the New Testament means of sustenance for pastor, this section will not repeat what has already been covered but will from an exegetical perspective analyze those texts that address the sustenance of the disciples, pastors, teachers, and elders. The concern addressed in this gospel reflects the sustenance of the Levite and the Priest in the Old Testament but from a different approach. Unlike the stationed temple priest and Levites, the disciples are commissioned to go preach, heal the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse the leper etc.

Hence, this section will give a comparative analysis of Israel's responsibility to the priest and Levites, the early church's responsibility to the disciples, and make the application to pastors and ministers today. As will be seen in Matthew 10:10, the disciples are warned to provide nothing for their journey, because, they are the Lord's messengers or workers, who deserve their food and wages (v. 10). Therefore, this section will argue from the New Testament perspective that this Old Testament principle of sustenance remains the church's obligation today.

Translation and Notes

1 And having summoned⁹¹ His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean

⁹⁰ In the New Testament the instruction for sustenance is not the tithe but the general term "giving" or "generous giving" is dominant. This term encompasses the entire aspect of giving both offering and tithes. However, details on this will be highlighted in further chapter under the title: New Testament Paradigm of Giving.

⁹¹ προσκαλεσάμενος the pronoun "he" (Jesus) is the referent of the participle in the predicate position stating a past time and used substantively in the sentence.

spirits⁹², to cast them out⁹³ and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. **2** Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called⁹⁴ Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; **3** Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-gatherer; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; **4** Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. **5** These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing⁹⁵ them, saying, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles⁹⁶, and do not⁹⁷ enter any city of the Samaritans; **6** but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel⁹⁸ **7** And as you proceed to go⁹⁹, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven has come¹⁰⁰.' **8** Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, and freely give. **9** Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, **10** or a bag for your journey, or even two tunics, or sandals, or a

⁹² πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων. ὥστε ἐκβάλλειν (Matt 10:1). This kind of genitive is a lexico-semantic category. That is, it is related only to certain kinds of head substantives—nouns (or participles) that lexically imply some kind of rule or authority. For the most part, this genitive is a subset of the objective genitive. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 108.

⁹³ ὥστε is one of that rare use of the infinitive that expresses the purpose, result, means etc. of the ἐξουσίαν which is ἐκβάλλειν (to cast out).

⁹⁴ ὁ λεγόμενος the referent of this participle is Peter, its position is attributive position functioning as predicate nominative in apposition to the nominative Peter.

⁹⁵ Τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς—The uniqueness of the apostles is underscored by the demonstrative pronoun 'Τούτους and by the fronting of the direct object phrase "these twelve." In some important senses, this sending and Jesus Missionary discourse (10:5–42), which explains the sending, apply uniquely to the original apostles. Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 505.

⁹⁶ εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε -The genitive in "a way of Gentiles" is objective with the sense of a way that leads to the Gentile. See Turner, *Syntax*, 212.

⁹⁷ Gibbs, 505, the prohibition with the aorist subjunctive, μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε, "Do not depart," is the first of twenty-seven imperatival form in chapter 10. Fifteen of them employ the aorist stem, either as negated aorist subjunctives or as positive aorist imperatives: 10:5 (two), 8, 9, 11 (two), 12, 13 (two), 14, 19, '26, 27 (two), 34. Present imperatives occur twelve times: 10:6, 7, and 8 (four), 16, 17, 23, and 28 (two), 31.

⁹⁸ Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 506, οἴκου Ἰσραήλ, House of Israel," to be expegetical: "the lost sheep" (τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα), are "the house of Israel." See above .

⁹⁹ Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, Concession participle.

¹⁰⁰ Voelz 151, with ἤγγικεν the focus on result / perfect Tense expresses focus upon result, the state that follows upon past activity. The action has ceased. Now the resultant state of affairs or condition is in force.

staff; for¹⁰¹ the worker is worthy of his support. **11** And into whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it; and abide there until you go away. **12** And as you enter the house, give it your greeting. **13** And if the house is worthy, let your greeting of peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your greeting of peace return to you. **14** And whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet¹⁰². **15** Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment, than for that city.

Meaning

Matthew 10:1–8

Verse 5 commences with the first instruction which forbids the apostles from going into the territories of neither the Gentiles nor the Samaritans. From the historical and cultural context, it is clear that there existed a conflict between the Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans which the disciples were not prepared to address. These situations were to be left as part of Jesus' ultimate mission and goal (John 3:17, Mark 2:17, Matt 28:19–20). Donald A. Hagner notes that “the Samaritans were despised as racially intermixed and disloyal to the law.”¹⁰³ In addition, Chavie Lieber adds that “the first century AD, Jews regarded Samaritans as spiritually flawed, and there was an ongoing enmity between the two groups. The Samaritans had created their own version of

¹⁰¹ γὰρ, coordination conjunction used to give reason for why the disciples are forbidden from taking all necessities for their journey.

¹⁰² Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 507, ἐκτινάξατε τὸν κονιορτὸν τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν this construction is a good example of the genitive case alone indicating separation. Literalistically, this is, “shake off the dust of your feet,” but it means “shake off the dust from your feet”. See. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 108.

¹⁰³ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew: Gospel, Kingdom and Resurrection in the Synoptic Gospels*. 99–121 in *Life in the face of Death: The Resurrection Message of the New Testament*. Edited by Richard N. Longenecker. *McMaster New Testament Studies*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

the Torah called the Samaritans Pentateuch, which diverges from the Torah in certain ways¹⁰⁴.

All of the aforesaid justifies why the disciples were ill prepared to preach the gospel beyond their culture and context. Jesus also confirms this when he said to the Canaanite woman, "... I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24).

Jesus' response or instruction to the disciples did not suggest that the Gentiles and Samaritans were an ill-legitimate audience of the Gospel message. However, the scope of their apostolic mission was determined by Christ's own mission according to Matt 15:24. Donald Senior best describes the disciples' mission as "an extension of Jesus' mission."¹⁰⁵ Consequently, the disciples were to anticipate both hatred at Jesus but at the same reverence and respect because they had been sent in the name of Christ as his messengers with all authority given to them. Since Christ's plan of salvation was in alignment with God the Father's plan — through Israel to the Gentile and to all peoples, the immediate audience of the disciples' message was the Jews first and later to the Gentile—all nations (Matt 28:19–20, Rom 1:16). But this mission is not until Jesus fulfills his ministry to Israel through his death and resurrection (Rom 15:8). Only then does the apostolic mission become a universal one as stated in Matthews 28:19–20. Thus, the disciples are instructed to go nowhere near the Gentiles nor enter the Samaritan's city.

Having laid the parameter for their mission in verses 6–8a, Jesus then instructs the disciples where to go. Beginning with the first of seven imperatives in this section (v.6 πορεύεσθε, v.7. κηρύσσετε, v.8. θεραπεύετε, ἐγείρετε, καθαρίζετε, ἐκβάλλετε·and δότε.), he commissioned them

¹⁰⁴ Chavie Lieber, the Samaritans rely on the Torah and the Torah alone (as opposed to the Jews, who rely on the Torah –Masoretic Text but on some other) as a sole religious text. They use a somewhat different version. As an Ancient Semitic people, the Samaritans abide by the literal version of the Torah. Eschewing Jewish practices that are rabbinic in origin, they believe only in the five books of Moses and observe only the holidays found in the Pentateuch such as Passover and the Sukkot, as opposed to the Jewish holiday like Purim or the Hanukkah whose origins are found elsewhere in the Jewish scriptures. Tablet Observance: "The Other Torah," modified May 14, 2013. Accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/132004/the-other-torah>.

¹⁰⁵ Donald Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 117.

to preach of “the already present Kingdom of God;” put another way, it reads “the Reign of heaven stands near.”¹⁰⁶ Aside from their preaching, they were also given authority to make full use of all (six) imperatives: heal the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse the lepers, cast out demons and give freely what they had freely received. The commissioning of these twelve foreshadows the post-resurrection’s great commission. Before then, the apostles are sent out to a specific nation, tribe, and household.

Matthew 10:9–10

Verses 9–13 is a section that reflects back to the first prohibition stated in Matthew 10:5 but in the subjunctive mood¹⁰⁷ instead of the imperative, thus suggesting that the disciples stop whatever action they would have begun.¹⁰⁸ The prohibition in this missionary journey was contrary to normal cultural practice and tradition. In Jesus’ teaching on “being his disciple” (Luke 14:28–33ff), he talks about preparation before building a house or going to battle, but in relation to the disciple’s journey, he forbids them from making any necessary preparations. Considering Matthew 10:5–15 and Luke 14:28–33 from a human perspective, it appears that he [Jesus] contradicts his message. However, he does not actually contradict his own message but cultural practices and traditions, which suggest that all necessary preparations for travels, battles, or building are of extreme importance. On the contrary, in both texts Jesus reveals that man’s initiative to undertake a mission requires all necessary preparations. But with God’s mission, man is to trust him because; he takes the initiative without the help of any human person. From a human perspective the instruction to take no gold or silver suggests a mission impossible; but as

¹⁰⁶ Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 509.

¹⁰⁷Subjunctive Mood, see Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 174.

¹⁰⁸ Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 178.

mentioned earlier, Christ calls the apostle to abandon the burden of providing for the journey because it was Christ's mission and not theirs. With the use of γὰρ (because, for) in v.10, Jesus gives the ground¹⁰⁹ as to why the disciples are forbidden from preparing for their mission as has been discussed in the preceding section. Christ's instructions to the disciples were to be taken by faith and total reliance on God for their sustenance (Matt 6:25–34).

Matthew 10:11–15

Verses 11–15 holds that final instruction that summarizes the first, second, and third commands and gives the consequences for any violator. Jesus instructs the disciple to inquire, “Who is worthy?” upon entering any village, town, or city. Worthy here signifies hospitality and willingness to receive and listen to the message concerning “the reign of heaven (which) has come!” (Matt 10:7; 40–42). This final instruction is embedded with both (“If” and “If Not”) blessings (Num 6:24–7) and curses or judgment (Gen 12:3, Num 24:9). The disciples are instructed to release the blessing of peace to the household that stands worthy to receive and listen to their message, while to the household unworthy or unwilling and inhospitable to their message, the disciples are to withdraw their peace. The disciples are also instructed to leave that house or city “Shaking off the dust of their feet” (v. 14), thus inviting God's wrath upon that city or household.

The disciples' rejection of household implies that this certain city or household has not rejected the disciples but rather the rule and reign of God's kingdom. Jesus uses Sodom and Gomorrah as an eschatological typology to describe the pending danger on those who reject both

¹⁰⁹ Ground— (γὰρ) a preposition that gives the logical basis and support for making a proceeding proposition; the inverse of an inference relationship. See G.K Beale, Daniel J. Brendsel, and William A. Ross, *An Interpretative Lexicon of the New Testament Greek*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 9.

God's messenger and message. The disciples' mission in Matt 10:1–15 was a prefigure of the Great Commission in Matt 28:19–20. Until Christ unites the Jews, Gentile, and Samaritans through his death and resurrection, the disciples are to go nowhere near the Gentile and Samaritans.

Finally, Jesus warns that those rejecting the message and messengers (beginning with old Israel, the Jews) would not be exempted from his wrath, not to mention the adopted new Israel, the church (Rom 11:17).

Conclusion

In his book *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* Gerhard Forde point out that any attempt to explain about the cross leads one to similar “attempt to [interpret] Jesus cry from the cross, ‘My God My God why have you forsaken me?’ [However,] we can’t answer Jesus’ question. We can only die with him and await God’s answer in him.”¹¹⁰ Indeed Christ’s call to the disciples and the church today is not one that seeks to figure out everything about the mission before obeying the commission. But Christ has promised to provide and protect his mission. Details of how these things are to happened are not stated but as Christ called the disciples to trust and depend on him for their sustenance, so also today pastor and minister are called to exhibit similar trust and faith that God will provide for his mission through his church. Just as the priesthood was to have no worries about their sustenance, and security while carrying out their duties, similarly, the disciples are assured of God’s unending provision for their sustenance. Reaffirming this faithfulness, Jesus says “Therefore, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat...drink,

¹¹⁰ Gerhard O Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 3.

or put on ...and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you” (Matt 6:25–34).

Provision for the disciples’ initial commission was not restricted to their material sustenance but also included was God’s protection from the enemies against their mission (Matt 10:16–33). Hence, the disciples’ material sustenance was destined by God to flow horizontally through those to whom they preached, while their protection was absolutely vertical from God. To put briefly, through his suffering, death, burial and victorious resurrection, Christ has made full provision for the disciples and for us today. Therefore, as the disciples were commissioned so also the pastor and all believers are commissioned to proclaim the gospel to all nations with the assurance of sustenance from God and His Church.

1 Corinthians 9:1–18

Introduction

The church of Corinth discussed in this text is comprised of converted idolaters and adulterers (1 Cor 6:1–11). With such a background, this Church soon encounters a series of problems. Hence, Paul persuaded the Corinthians to abandon their immoral life to which they cling, while at the same time, professing Christ. Handling these many issues with care, Paul addresses some of these problems which were brought up as questions in a letter (1 Cor 7:1; 1:11; 16:17; 3:3). Most of his answers responded to the church's local situations such as marriage (1 Cor 5, 7), lawsuits against believers (1 Cor 6), celibacy (1 Cor 7:8), divorce, (1 Cor 7) and eating meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8).

Having addressed all of the aforementioned issues (1 Cor 7:1; 1:11; 16:17; 3:3), Paul then turns to the subject of “Christian freedom” which he had already discussed in (1 Cor 8:9) with the use of Περὶ δὲ (“now, moreover, concerning”). 1 Corinthians 9:1–18 serves as an application

to 8:9–13, which further explains what it means for the Corinthians to relinquish their rights for the sake of the weak (1 Cor 8:13). Paul suggests that if preventing the brethren from apostasy should require abstaining from eating meat, the church should do such (1 Cor 8:13). Making a practical application, Paul uses the defense of his apostolic right to sustenance (vv.4–6), and its abandonment (vv.15–18) as an example. He is also cognizant of the implication that would follow the application of his apostolic freedom. Paul’s rhetorical questions (1 Cor 9:1–2) show that he is aware and ready to address whoever that would question his apostleship.

Translation and Notes

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord¹¹¹? Are not you my work in the Lord? **2** If to others I am not [an] apostle, at least¹¹² I am one to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. **3** This is my reply to those who are judging/questioning me. **4** Do we not have the right to eat and drink¹¹³? **5** Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife,¹¹⁴ even as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? **6** Or is it only¹¹⁵ Barnabas and I [who] have no right to not be working? **7** Who serves as a soldier at his own expense at any time?¹¹⁶ Who plants a vineyard and the fruit of it s/he does not eat? Or who tends

¹¹¹ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν possessive genitive.

¹¹² BDAG, s.v. ἀλλά γε, 4 in the apodosis of conditional sentence: yet, certainly, at least, BDAG, (1978), 30.

¹¹³ ἐξουσίαν φαγεῖν καὶ πειν is Infinitive that is used expegetically. Further, this use of the infinitive is usually bound by certain lexical features of the noun or adjective. That is, they normally are words indicating ability, authority, desire, freedom, hope, need, obligation, or readiness. This usage is fairly common. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 607.

¹¹⁴ BDAG, s.v. ἀδελφὴν, 3. Fig. of Sister of the Faith. BDAG, (1979), 15.

¹¹⁵ μόνος ἐγὼ the singular adjective (only/μόνος) applied grammatically to Paul, by extension. However, it applies to Barnabas. See Gregory J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*. (St. Louis: Concordia, 2010), 295.

¹¹⁶ BDAG, s.v. ποτέ, 1.a Enclitic particle of time at some time or other of the past once, formerly in rhetorical questions that expect a negative ans. τίς ... ποτέ. BDAG (1978), 695.

a sheep and from the milk does not get sustenance¹¹⁷? **8** Do I not speak these things according to human right? Or does the Law not also command it? **9** For it stands written¹¹⁸ in the Law of Moses, “You shall not¹¹⁹ muzzle an ox while¹²⁰ he is threshing [out the grain].” Not for the oxen God is concern, is he? **10** or is he certainly speaking for us [our sake]? For our sake it was written, because¹²¹ the man who is plowing ought to plow in hope also the man who is threshing ought to thresh in hope of eating and drinking [sustenance]. **11** If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much¹²² if we should reap material things from you? **12** If others share the right of yours, do not we even more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things in order that¹²³ we may not cause hindrance to the gospel of Christ. **13** Do you not know that those who work [perform duties] in the temple, from the temple they eat, and those who are serving at the altar have their share with the altar? **14** Thus, even the Lord commanded that those who are proclaiming the gospel from the gospel they are to live. **15** But I have made use of none of these

¹¹⁷ ἐσθίει—literally the verb ἐσθίω means to eat. But in this context the food is figuratively use to mean sustenance from the milk or as food.

¹¹⁸ The force of the perfect tense is simply that it describes an event that was completed in the past (we are speaking of the perfect indicative here), has results existing in the present time (i.e., in relation to the time of the speaker). See Wallace (2006), 573. cf. Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 151.

Or, as M. Zerwick puts it, the perfect tense is used for “indicating not the past action as such but the present ‘state of affairs’ resulting from the past action.” Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, (1963), 96.

¹¹⁹ κημώσεις verb indicative future active 2nd person singular functioning as verb imperative aorist active 2nd person singular from κημώω. John R. Alsop, *Index to the Arndt and Gingrich Greek Lexicon.*, Calif: Wycliffe Bible Translators, 1968,108.

¹²⁰ “While”— expresses the force of the participle...it also modifies the verb of it clause, as does the adverb. See. Voelz.

¹²¹ Subordinating conjunction ὅτι is translated here as a causal conjunction: “because, since.” It serves as a “marker of causality.” BDAG (2000), 732. Gibbs also render it as causal elsewhere in Matthew 11:25, see (Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1-11:1*, 2010), 582.

¹²² Figurative to mean “is it so bad, big or wrong to...?”

¹²³ “This use indicates the goal or aim of an action. Major conjunctions for this category are: ἵνα, ὅπως, μήπως... By far the most common is ἵνα. Translations for this use are: *in order that, with the goal that, with a view to, that.*” Wallace, *Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 2006, 676.

rights, and I did not write these things that it might be in my case. For it is better for me to die¹²⁴ rather than have anyone [who] will render void my boasting. **16** For if I preach the gospel that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! **17** For if I do this willingly, I have a reward, but if unwillingly¹²⁵, I have been entrusted with a stewardship [of the gospel]. **18** What then is my reward? So that while preaching the gospel I might present the gospel free of charge, in order¹²⁶to not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Textual Analysis and Meaning

Paul’s rhetorical speech addresses whoever that would be questioning his apostleship because of his refusal to accept offering or request apostolic sustenance from the church. Paul’s application of this Christian freedom in 1 Corinthians 9:1–18 puts him in this dilemma: On the one hand, if he accepts sustenance from the Corinthians he believes he stands the risk of being considered a sophist.¹²⁷ On the other hand, his refusal of Sustenance would render him less of an apostle. Craig Blomberg says, “They have come to doubt his apostolic authority (1 Cor 9:2–3),

¹²⁴ This is Appositional use of the Infinitive. ἀποθανεῖν is used in apposition to καλὸν.

¹²⁵ Ἐκὼν... ἄκων adjective used as adverb. Willing (ly), involuntary (rily) BDAG; Rom 8:20. While the antonym ἄκων means unwilling” (and is here to be translated as adverb). BDAG, (2000), 307.

¹²⁶ εἰς is the purpose of the infinitive καταχρησασθαι. Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 2007,105 εἰς {plus τὸ the infinitive (καταχρησασθαι)}.

¹²⁷ C.C.W. Taylor and Lee, Mi-Kyoung. The Greek word Sophistes (Sophia—‘Wisdom or ‘learning’), has the general sense ‘one who exercises wisdom or learning’. As Sophia could designate specific types of expertise as well as general sagacity in the conduct of life and the higher kinds of insight associated with seers and poets, the word originally meant ‘sage or ‘expert.’ In the course of the fifth century BCE the term, while retaining its original unspecific sense, came in addition to be applied to a new type of intellectual professional educator who toured the Greek world offering instruction in a wide range of subjects, with particular emphasis on skill in public speaking and successful conduct of life.” The increasing wealth and intellectual sophistication of Greek cities, especially Athens, created a demand for higher education beyond traditional basic grounding in literacy, arithmetic, music and physical training.” “The Sophists,” ed. Edward N. Zalta, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/sophists/>.

precisely because he is not charging them for his ministry (2 Cor 11:7).”¹²⁸ Indeed, not charging or accepting payment for the gospel in the Corinthians’ context suggests cheapening or devaluing the messenger. To better explain Paul’s situation, Ronald F. Hock asserts that “Itinerant Greco–Roman philosophers and religious teachers supported themselves in one of the four ways: charging fees, staying in well –to–do households, begging or working at a trade...”¹²⁹ Paul refuses to associate himself with three out of the four mentioned vocations. Instead, he takes on the last, pursuing a trade in tent making, yet he refuses to collect sustenance from the church.

Paul’s Apostolic Claim

In verses 1–2, Paul begins by presenting to the church four sets of rhetorical questions to authenticate his apostleship. These questions are embedded into a speech that addresses the situation which had arisen from the previous chapters concerning division in the church (1 Cor 7), the Corinthians way of handling food offered to idols, (1 Cor 8) and other issues.

In Paul’s responses in the following verses (1 Cor 9: 3–14), through a perlocutionary speech act ¹³⁰he presents justifiable reasons why his gospel and apostleship is legitimate even though he along with Barnabas have not made use of their apostolic rights to sustenance.

Apostolic Practice

Verse 1a: “Am I not free?” as stated earlier Paul uses his apostolic right –freedom as practical application of the Christian freedom spoken of in 1 Cor 8. By stating his apostolic

¹²⁸ Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995),173.

¹²⁹ Ronald, F Hock. *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tent making and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 59–62.

¹³⁰ What we bring about by saying something, such as convincing, persuading” i.e., what is to be accomplished in the recipient... See. James W. Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World* (St. Louis, Concordia, 1997), 276.

rights and freedom to sustenance in 1 Cor 9:3–12a and abandoning it in 1 Cor 9:15–ff. Paul presents a perfect illustration of what it means to let go of one's right for the sake of the Gospel.

Verse 1b presents Paul's second rhetorical question: "Am I not an apostle?" The Corinthians' denial of this would nullify the authenticity of the very faith of the church. Since they were living proof to Paul's apostleship, the question shows that his indisputable work was a legitimate proof to authenticate his full apostolic identity. To further implicate would-be examiner of his apostleship, Paul avers, "If I am not to other, at least I am to you an apostle" (1 Cor 9:2). This statement invites the church to abandon every unnecessary doubt. Paul uses the church of Corinth to authenticate his apostleship by putting them in a dilemma which they could by no means reject or avoid. Hans Conzelman explains their dilemma in this way: "if it [the Corinthian Church] denies his standing then it abrogates its own."¹³¹ That is, if the Corinthians doubted his apostleship, that meant doubting their own existence.

In verse 1c Paul presents his third question: "Have I not seen the Lord?" This question implies and confirms that *seeing* and *following* were huge marks of the apostolic identity. Not all who saw and followed the Lord were considered apostles (i.e., Joseph Barsabas and Matthias in Acts 1:12–26). Even though, the aforesaid were seen walking with the Lord, neither of them neither became apostles automatically to replace Judas nor were they added to the apostles after Christ's ascension. Instead, a lot was cast, thus qualifying Matthias to replace Judas (Acts 1:26). Undeniably, though, seeing and following the Lord were tremendous marks of a true apostle, yet they were not the ultimate qualification of an apostle. Admission into the apostolic office was surely done by the original apostles and the church's body. Had it not been the case, there would

¹³¹ Hans, Conzelman *1 Corinthians*. (Philadelphia: Fortress 1975), 152.

have been no need to pray and cast lots for the replacement of Judas; rather both Barsabas and Matthias would have automatically become apostles.

Although the apostle Paul had a personal call through his Damascus encounter (Acts 9), it was witnessed by those accompanying him and the Lord confirmed it to Ananias in a vision (Acts 9:10ff). Despite the fact that he could have based his apostleship solely on his encounter with Christ, he did not; it was also confirmed by the apostles and the church having been taught (1 Cor 15:3, 11:23–ff). Both the disciples and the church were confirming witnesses to Paul’s call into the apostolic ministry. More importantly, it was concerning Paul that the Lord said to Ananias; “Go for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name to the Gentile and Kings ...” (Acts 9:15). Hence, Paul’s apostolic claim was a strong rebuke to those questioning his apostleship.

Lastly, 1 Cor 9:1d presents the last of four rhetorical questions: “Are you not work in the Lord?” With this final question from the series of rhetorical questions and answers, the apostle Paul sets his examiners against themselves. By his perlocutionary speech act, he presents evidences to support his case. Beyond all doubt, he maintains that in order that they (Corinthians) are his work or seal in the Lord, he has to first of all be an apostle, which he was already. Therefore, given these points, the church was his effort as he says, “I planted, Apollos watered but God caused the increase.”(1 Cor 3:6; 4:15, 15:1).

In response to the four rhetorical questions mentioned above, 1 Cor 9:2–3 provides the ground for an affirmative answers to Paul’s rhetorical questions. This is especially evident in verse 2, where Paul states ““If to others I am not an apostle... I am to you, for you are the seal or work of my apostleship...” This provides the initial hint for his defense for his apostolic legitimacy. With the equivalent usage of the subjunctive (εἰ) “if,” he make the assertion that if A,

then B.¹³²

The NIV argues that Paul's apostleship was actually questioned by an outside community as oppose to the Corinthians themselves (2 Cor 11:1–15). Thus the NIV translates 1 Cor 9:1d as, "Even though I may not be an apostle ..." Even so, such reading and translation weakens the apostle's assertion mentioned above by translating the subjunctive concessively. In addition, such a translation weakens Paul's affirmation of his Damascus' encounter which should be rather seen as an equivalent sentence to, "If I am not ... to you I am..." (1 Cor 9:1). With such a translation this verse defends Paul against supposed examiners.

In essence, Paul is responding to would-be accusers, who may not only question his apostolic legitimacy but also the church of the Corinthians, (i.e., If you will allow anyone tell you I am not an apostle, you yourselves are not any good work/church to God. Or if I am not authentic you are also not). From the context of his second letter to the Corinthians, the supposed attack on Paul's apostleship may be referring to an attack from an outsider from another community (2 Cor 11:1–15), whom Paul had charged with sowing seeds of discord among the Corinthians. Such external forces are possible from the contextual perspective of his second letter. Be that as it may, from the context under consideration, Paul is addressing any would-be examiner or suspicion from within the church, which had not yet been influenced by any outside force (1 Cor 1:12). Finally, in verse 3 Paul points back to verse 2 as his defense —ἀπολογία to anyone wanting to question his apostleship because of the abandonment of his apostolic right to sustenance.

¹³² The conditional phrase in this sentence functions equivalently as: A equals B. If A, then B. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 1996, 683.

Paul's Proof for His Apostolic Right (vv. 4–14)

Having reaffirmed the legitimacy of his apostleship, Paul proceeds to point out the benefits associated with the apostolic office which he believes is also his entitlement. Making his argument, he gives four reasons why he believes he is entitled to these apostolic benefits: apostolic practice, custom, the Scriptures and the Lord's command.

In this section (vv. 4–6) the apostle lists those rights which were exercised by some of the apostles. He argues that just as others were free from both the law and every other social, economic, and religious restriction, they [Paul and Barnabas] were also free to practice what was necessary for their sustenance. He further adds that they also had the right to drink and eat as others without restrictions imposed on anyone, but with caution so as to save the weak (1 Cor 8:13). Moreover, as apostles, Paul and Barnabas had all rights to get married or take up a believing wife. Here Paul is cognizant of the fact that the scripture says that, “He who finds a wife finds a good thing” (Prov 18:22) yet has chosen not to get one (1 Cor 7:7). He affirms that such choice in no way validates or invalidates his apostleship. Instead, he believes that just as others would take a believing wife, he (they) likewise had such a right even if they chose not to exercise that right (v. 5).

Furthermore, as apostles they did not use their rights to refrain from work as others did and were supported along with their wives travelling with them (vv. 4–5). He further makes the comparison that just as others enjoyed the hospitality of the church; they did also, which gave them time to concentrate on studying and administration of the word (Acts 6:2–4). Although not stated, these verses implies that Paul is fully aware of the apostles mentioned in Acts who were supported by the generous offering of the church, and other believers who brought and shared their belongings to meet the needs of fellow believers (Acts 4:34, Luke 10:7). All the same, Paul argues that as apostles, he and Barnabas were entitled to such amenities of sustenance.

The apostle Paul uses the common metaphor regarding wages as an example common to both Jews and Gentiles to defend his right to sustenance as an apostle. In his comparison, Paul makes a convincing analogy which connects the apostolic right of sustenance to ordinary cultural practices: as it is customary today for every soldier to be supported by a national army through taxes paid to government, similarly, farmers or caretakers were remunerated for their services, including shepherds who were also sustained from the milk of the flock they shepherd. Craig S. Keener confirms that “Ancient teachers often employed such conventional image, and every Christian pictured the church as God's army (cf. Rom 13:12, 2 Cor 10:3–6), vineyard and sheep (cf. 9:10–11; 3:9).”¹³³ These customary pictures support Paul's apostolic entitlement to sustenance.

The Scripture: Old Testament Law (vv. 8–13)

From the Old Testament scripture, the apostle Paul proves his apostolic right to sustenance. He supports his argument from the Torah by comparing the priesthood sustenance to the Jewish custom grounded on the law given to the people of Israel. Therefore, speaking specifically from the Old Testament law, Paul mentions the oxen's right to sustenance (Deut 25:4; 11) to make an analogy that illustrates God's concern for his minister and servants. In the above-mentioned passage, Paul's argument raises the question, if God is concerned for the working animals, how much more about his servant? Keener citing Josephus acknowledges that, “literal care for animals reflected a more general spirit of compassion.”¹³⁴ The analogy that the apostle Paul is making is intended to nullify the view of many who thought that the Old Testament's command was restricted to the animal only and not applicable to humanity. However, Paul's concern for

¹³³ Craig S. Keener, *1–2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 78.

¹³⁴ Keener, *1–2 Corinthians* (cf., Josephus Ag, Ap 2.213; Philo Virtues 140,145).

the oxen actually highlights God's care for the animal and its sustenance and ultimately, his care for human created in the likeness and image of God.

The establishment of this fact gives the apostle the freedom to explicitly apply similar concern for the benefit of the apostolic office. He acknowledges that although the law literally speaks of the oxen and was written for its benefit, yet it also stands written implicitly for servants or ministers of the gospel. This is confirmed by the force and use of the perfect indicative passive *γέγραπται*, which speaks of past action but also has a binding and implicating effect on the present. With regards to the law concerning the oxen in Deuteronomy 24, Paul's citation has been a huge debate among scholars who question whether Paul is rejecting the fact that the law is speaking of the animal, disregarding the concern for the oxen according to the law, or is making the connection between both the oxen and man. To address such a debate, Gordon D. Fee states:

He [Paul] is not trying to make a statement about the Old Testament per se. the first part of the question exist straightly to set up the second part "or do it [the law] undoubtedly [assuredly by all means] speaks for our benefit?"

Paul well understood the paradigmatic, analogical character of the law... it should be noted at this point that Paul does not speak to what the law originally meant, which tend to be our concern. He is concerned with what it means in terms of its application to their present situation..."In addition Paul's whole view of the Old Testament was conditioned by his new eschatological existence in Christ. In saying that God is not (now) concern for the oxen but for us, Paul reflects the same eschatological of the Old Testament expressed a bit later (10:11) that scripture ultimately exist for those upon whom the end of the age has come..."¹³⁵

To sum up, Fee supposes that Paul is not denying concern for the animal as much as he is recognizing that even the Law's concern for the oxen was a way of teaching Israel of God's mercy towards all. Fee concludes that "we stand at the end of the ages, toward which and for whom all former things were pointing, Paul argues, surely it says this for us, Doesn't it?"¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 450–51.

¹³⁶ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 450–51.

The apostle is not making the comparison to invalidate the Old Testament law concerning the oxen; rather his reference is an expressive illustration of God's concern for his servant/minister as well as all who work as soldier, tend the vineyard, and shepherd of Christ's flock (Deut 20:6, 1 Cor 9:7).

With the use of the preposition γὰρ [for/because] in verse 10, Paul gives the reason why reference to the Old Testament law is important. Comparing the care for the oxen due to its work Paul argues that even in a greater respect the labor of a human person [minister, pastor] ought to be recognized and rewarded. Hence, Paul maintains that for the sake of those who work, [preaching and teaching the word] the law it is also written for their sustenance.

Verse 11 reiterates the Old Testament text [Deut 25:4] concerning the respect of labor and emphasizes that the text was written in order to assure pastors or ministers of the church's obligation to support them through members material blessings. With the subjunctive "if" (εἰ), Paul questions the Corinthians as to whom they were to pledge their loyalty. With the "if" clause, he presents a condition contrary to fact: "if we [Paul, Silas, and Timothy, who worked alongside (Acts 18:5)] sowed spiritual things..." With this question, Paul invites the church to face his contention as a fact that, just as every farmer has the right to harvest; he and his companion were entitled to loyal support and material blessings just as every other apostle. He then makes the comparative analogy that if people who have not planted have the privilege or use the authority [right] to harvest, don't they who have planted have greater right? Such fact then sets the Corinthians against themselves suggesting that they owed more loyalty to Paul (1 Cor 3:6). Clarifying the use of the "if other" clause verse 12, Gregory J. Lockwood presumes that "Paul means Apollos and possibly Peter as well"¹³⁷ in the same way, David E. Garland suggests that

¹³⁷ Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 302.

“since Paul was the first to sow the seed of the gospel in Corinth (1 Cor 3:6, 2 Cor 10:14), he should be the first in line to receive their financial support, even though all workers are on the same level and are to receive the same wages”¹³⁸ Ultimately, Paul is not invalidating the other’s right to reap sustenance from the Corinthians, but in a way he claims similar or even greater right as planter of the church of Corinth (1 Cor 3:6).

Pointing to the priesthood sustenance from the temple (v.13) Paul concludes his argument with reference to (Lev 18:8–32, Deut 18:1–8), that priest means of sustenance also came from the temple. The Old Testament LXX word for temple is *ἱερόν*, but, with Paul’s use of the plural *τὰ ἱερά* Hans Conzelmen suggest that “...Paul is referring to the cult in general and may be best translated ‘those who engage in the sacred rites.’”¹³⁹ At the same time another scholar, Jean Hering adds that “If we wish to press the distinction between ‘*ergazomenoi ta hiera*’= ‘those engaged in temple service’, and ‘*paredreuontes to thusiasterio*’= ‘those who serve the altar’, then we must think of Levites on the one hand and priests, who officiate at the altar, on the other. Furthermore, there is a close parallelism between the two phrases.”¹⁴⁰ While it is probable to accept both suggestions, this researcher maintains that although both cultic and Christian priest offered sacrifices in different temples or setting, each enjoyed the right to sustenance for their services rendered.¹⁴¹

The Lord’s Command

Having dealt with the apostolic practice, customs, and the Old Testament Law concerning

¹³⁸ David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 412.

¹³⁹ Hans Conzelman, *1 Corinthians*. 1st ed. Edited by George W. MacRae S.J. Translated by James W. Leitch, (Philadelphia: Fortress 1975), 156.

¹⁴⁰ Jean Hering, *First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, Trans .A.W. Heathcote and P .J. Allcock (London: Epworth Press, 1962), 79–80.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 414.

Paul's apostolic right to sustenance, he then concludes his argument by returning to Jesus' 'command to the disciples in Matthew 10:5–15. All of the aforesaid supports Paul's previous arguments for the full use of his apostolic right of sustenance. With the proposition οὕτως [thus, therefore] Paul gives a summary of Jesus' words in Matt 19:5–15 instead, to give the concept of sustenance which is conveyed in these verses. The proposition οὕτως is used to sum up his argument that just as the scripture speaks of the oxen's sustenance; the custom, apostolic practice and the Law of Moses instructs and speaks about the apostolic right to sustenance (v.14). Equally, Garland thinks that the citation of the Old Testament passage (Deut 25:4; 11) provides evidence again (1 Cor 7:10) that Paul knew more of the Jesus tradition than simply the account of the passion (1 Cor 11:23–26) and the resurrection (1 Cor 15:3–7). One of those proponents of this line of thought is Richard Horsley, who considers that the sayings were transmitted to the Corinthians by someone other than Paul [Apollos, he supposed] to justify why these apostles were entitled to sustenance. However, Paul is also aware that this right to sustenance would render him a sophist. In a way Horsley say, "Paul does not actually recite the saying here because Apollos had appeal to it, and because Paul himself was not observing it. Instead, Paul purposely formulates the Lord's command to suit his continuing explanation of why he does not make use of his rights: ..."¹⁴² Actually, Paul is aware that Christ commands to the apostles to "remain or stay in the same house ..." (Luke 10:7) was also implicit to him, and all ministers of the gospel. Yet he choose to relinquish this right for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor 9:19–27). The renouncing of Paul's right to sustenance from the Corinthians an unusual shift which has sparked a theological debate among scholars: Is Paul renouncing Jesus' command by rejecting the duty given to church to sustain its pastor, teacher or ministers, or is he contradicting his very argument

¹⁴² Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 127–28.

put forth previously in this chapter? In response to these issues, Garland clarifies that “Paul did not understand himself to be disobeying the decree from the Lord but interpreted it as a right that he was free to accept or refuse.”¹⁴³

Paul’s Decision to not Exercise His Right

The previously discussed defensive argument gives the impression that Paul is citing all of these evidences in order to claim his apostolic support from the church. But on the contrary, returning to the topic of surrendering one's right for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor 8:13), Paul makes an unexpected shift to the opposite. Making a personal application (8:13), Paul rejects and relinquishes all of such rights and entitlements for the sake of the gospel. What is more, he clarifies that the purpose is “that in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel” (1 Cor 9:18b).

Paul presumes that accepting pay or demanding sustenance would render him as the sophist or an obstacle to those who are weak and might want to make the distinction between him and the sophist or other teachers within their context. Taking a teacher's support in the Near Middle Eastern culture into account, Keener explains:

To refuse gift was to reject proffered friendship and declare enmity (e.g., Cicero Fam.14.3.1), yet for Paul to depend on Corinthians was to risk being seen as their client or the client of one of the factions over another. Furthermore, no one could suspect that another's purse controlled his tongue. Similarly, by refusing to charge a fee (μισθός), Socrates remained “free” (Xenophon Mem.1.2.6), by lacking needs and dependence on anyone ...¹⁴⁴

That being the case, it is no surprise that the apostles would rather “die” than to have

¹⁴³ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 415.

¹⁴⁴ Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 79.

anyone make void his boasting.¹⁴⁵

Eventually, in verse 16 the apostle Paul explains why he is not willing to let go of his boasting: if he preaches the gospel at the expense of the Corinthians, he stands the chance to lose his right to boast (of freely preaching the gospel) and would be seen as one who is being paid for the job and that the Corinthians' purse would control his tongue. Against such, Paul prefers to die with his right to boast, rather than being sustained by the church but to his detriment. With the use of the proposition γὰρ ("because, for"), Paul grounds his argument on the basis that necessity is laid upon him. The necessity to preach which he mentions does not negate the church's responsibility to sustain him and other apostles. Instead, he uses the choice to relinquish his right to sustenance as an application of giving up one's right for the sake of the gospel spoken about 1 Corinthians 8:9–13. Being apparently cognizant of Jesus' instruction to the apostles in Matthew 10:1–15; 28:19–28, Paul argues that the apostolic call to preach the gospel has been likewise placed upon since he sees himself as the humble servant (Matt 20:26–28).

Conclusion

Paul's right argued above addresses two audiences: Firstly, those who downplay the church's responsibility to support pastors or workers. Secondly, it also addresses pastor or workers who oppress the congregation for their support. However, his arguments neither nullify the other apostles' right to sustenance nor pastors' today. Rather, to make an application to his previous message in 1 Cor 9:8–13, he, out of his volition for the sake of the weak, relinquishes

¹⁴⁵ Highlighting the significance of the phrase, "My boasting," Ronald Trail states: "It refers to the fact that he never accepted remuneration for his work. This boasting must be seen in the light of [1Cor] 9:12—not hindering the gospel—and of 9:18—of being able to offer the gospel free of charge. It was not meant to indicate competition with others who did accept remuneration for their preaching [NIC2]." *An Exegetical Summary of 1 Corinthians 1–9*. (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1995), 384.

his right to sustenance.

Finally, the apostle Paul acknowledges that even if he is unwilling to preach the gospel, it has already been entrusted to him, thus giving him no middle ground. Rather, he is to proclaim it, whether he makes use of his right to sustenance or not. With this in mind, Paul shows in every way that he had a mindset of a servant (“slave” 1 Cor 9:19–23).

2 Corinthians 8:1–6

Introduction

In this second letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes to encourage the church to share its material gifts with the church of Jerusalem, which was enduring trying times. As way of motivating the Corinthians to give, Paul uses the churches of Macedonia as a typical example. He reveals that though they (the Macedonians) were poor and not as worthy as the churches of Corinth, they willingly made available some reasonable contribution (vv.1–6). The apostle uses the Macedonians as a model for the sacrificial giving mentioned in Romans 12:1–3. Using this pattern, he also makes a similar model of Jesus' portrayal of true giving from the widow's offering (Mark 12:41–44). In light of this example, he sought to admonish the Corinthians with a perlocutionary speech act so as to motivate them to give, not in compulsion but either as or beyond what the Macedonians gave.

This paper will make the argument for the need of pastoral sustenance through generous giving as opposed to a demand. However, promoting generous giving does not suggest that Christians cannot be instructed to grow or increase in their offering for the sustenance of their pastor, minister or the support of the ministry. Using this text to make a case, this paper will suggest the need for the ELCL to make appropriate use of Paul's teaching on giving, which is not compulsory, but is a Christian principle helpful for the sustenance of the pastor/minister as part

of its mission to preach the gospel within and outside the church as they serve the church with the gifts of Christ through Word and Sacrament.

Historical/ Narrative Analysis

Paul Barnett categorizes three issues that the apostle Paul highlights in this book: “Those problems evident in the [sic] church discernible in 1 Corinthians that continued to be problems and are reflected in 2 Corinthians, matters associated with the second visit and follow-up ‘Severe Letter,’ and the more recent problems.”¹⁴⁶ Of the three issues mentioned, the third is of most concern to the issues at hand. Barnett writes:

In addition to the problems that had arisen during and since the ‘painful visit’ Titus also brought reports of [three] worrying new developments.

[Firstly], first of these—the cessation of the collection for the ‘saints’ (in Jerusalem) – was probably a direct consequence of Paul’s loss of standing from the Corinthians through the ‘painful visit’ and the ‘Severe letter’... In his ministry to the Macedonian churches he had informed them, on false assumption now to his embarrassment, that the Corinthians were ready with their collection (9:2) Paul addresses this major problem in chapter 8 and 9. [Secondly] a further problem was also in relation to financial matters... To the Corinthians, it was a ‘sin’ that Paul ‘lowered’ himself to work to support himself (11:17), declining their payment, a ‘wrong’ (12:13) he inflicted on them. They felt he had accepted money from the Macedonians but not from them (11:8–9) [Finally], arguably, the most important problem reported by Titus to Paul relates to the newly arrived ‘false apostles’ in Corinth.¹⁴⁷

Translation and Notes

1 And¹⁴⁸ now Brethren! We want to make known to you, the grace of God which has been given to those in the churches of Macedonia, **2** for in all proof of tribulation, their abundance of joy and from their extreme poverty they have overflowed in the wealth of their generosity. **3** For I testify

¹⁴⁶ Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 27.

¹⁴⁷ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 31–32.

¹⁴⁸ The particle δὲ and the address ἀδελφοί mark a point of transition (cf. 1Cor 1:10; 6:4; 7:29; 12:1).

[that they give] on account of their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, **4** while begging¹⁴⁹ us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, **5** and not just as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord¹⁵⁰ and to us through the will of God. Consequently, ¹⁵¹we urged Titus thus, as he has begun, so he should complete this gift¹⁵² in you. **6** But just as you abound in everything: in faith and speech and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you see that¹⁵³ you also abound in this [act of] grace.

Textual Analysis and Meaning

Paul's Testimony of the Macedonian Church

In verses 1–5, Paul testifies of the Macedonians' willingness to support the collection for the poor in Jerusalem despite their economic hardship as well as their desire to meet the needs of the brethren. This corresponds with his teaching elsewhere of living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1–2). From these pictures, Paul seeks to stimulate the charity of the Corinthians by recounting all of the doings of the Macedonians churches mentioned in verses 1 and, 4 and does the same in regard to the Corinthians in verses 6 and, 7. The apostle Paul uses the Macedonians to make visible his case that “There is neither Jew nor Greek...for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). Paul encourages practical contribution for the support of the saints in Jerusalem by establishing a deep sense of unity which would overlap the gulf of separation in race, language,

¹⁴⁹ Participle δεόμενοι.

¹⁵⁰ Dative τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ.

¹⁵¹ εἰς { plus τὸ plus the infinitive (παρακαλέσαι) states the purpose of the infinitive} see. Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 105.

¹⁵² BDAG.s.v., χάριτι.2., the favor or grace of Christ (BDAG,1979, 877) See 2 Cor. 8:9.

¹⁵³ BDAG,s.v. ἴνα,.2, with the subjunctive as a paraphrase for the imperfect (BDAG 1979),378.

and social conditions. This call was the first pulsation and cross-cultural sharing of the Christian spirit of liberty which increasingly grew in force and scope ever since the early church's sharing in Acts, which records that "there was not a needy person among them...owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds ... and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had to need" (Acts 4:34–35).

Having testified concerning the Macedonians' gifts in 2 Corinthians 8:1–6, the apostle Paul then states the purpose (εἰς plus τὸ plus παρακαλέσαι) for which he is sending Titus. The Macedonians' generous and eager collection for the Jerusalem saints despite their hardship was an impetus to the sending of Titus to the Corinthians. The charge given to Titus was to complete the collection about which Paul had earlier discussed with the Corinthians before, either while in Corinth or in his first letter (1 Cor 5:9–11;12:14). In his previous visit, Paul brought to the Corinthians' attention the need to help the saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1–4). This second letter to the Corinthian seems as an answer a query from the Corinthians. As Paul reports "In this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it" (2 Cor 8:10). Using Paul's suggested strategy to raise the support for the saints (1 Cor 16:2), Titus then succeeded in his responsibility of delivering this painful letter (2 Cor 2:3; 7:8) and dealing with the offender (7:12), Paul re-energized the Corinthians' interest to resume the collection for the saints (v.6).

From Paul's experience with the Macedonians testified earlier in verses 1–5, he seems not to be much impressed with the report of the Corinthians' collection in verse 7. On that note, he questions why that the Corinthians did not give in proportion to their means, although they had revived their interest in recommitting themselves to the collection for the saints in Jerusalem.

Therefore, Paul invites the Corinthians to see the riches of God beyond the ordinary, and,

just as they are growing in the gifts of faith, and knowledge, the apostle also admonishes them to grow, increase and abound in this grace of generosity (v. 15). That is, he urges them to give in proportion to their means. Citing the Old Testament passage Ex. 16:18, Paul says, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack” (cf. 2 Cor 8:15). By describing this sort of giving Paul is inviting the Corinthians to give generously, as Powell notes, “Jesus calls us to give up our material possessions as a cheerful sacrifice to God: it is an act of worship; it is an expression of our faith in God; and, it is a spiritual discipline that bounds our heart in love to God and allows the love of God to take hold of us.”¹⁵⁴ Thus, Paul’s call to the Corinthians is a call to worship God through their giving which shows their growth in faith by giving like these others: the Macedonians, the widow, and the Romans church (2 Cor 8:1–4, Luke 21:1–4, and Rom 12:1–3).

Conclusion

After authenticating his apostleship through the apostolic right, custom, tradition, and the Old Testament Law in 1 Cor 9 Paul makes an application of what it means to give up one’s rights for the sake of the gospel. To return to the significance of giving and sustenance for the propagation of the gospel, in this second letter to the Corinthians 8:1–6, Paul uses the Macedonians’ giving as a model to teach the Corinthians the New Testament’s generous giving. Paul based his teaching on the Macedonians’ model which he described as “cheerful”, “willing” and “eager.” In light of such a model Paul admonishes the church of Corinth to complete their initiative to support the Jerusalem saints which the church of Corinth had started (2 Cor 8:6). Similarly, the Macedonian’s model of giving is a suitable model for the ELCL.

¹⁵⁴ Powell, *Giving to God*, 9–47.

Galatians 6:1–10

Introduction

After defending the life of freedom in Christ, having been released from the bondage of the law (Gal 5:1–24), Paul conclude his message to the church in Galatia with an exhortation on how to live in the freedom of the gospel, but with a caution against being dragged down into sin.

He warns the church not to take advantage of their freedom in the gospel as a license to sin, but to rather interpret this freedom as one that sets them free from serving themselves to serving God and fellow believers. Furthermore, in this letter to the Galatian Paul admonishes them to live a life led by the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:25). Paul sees such a Spirit-led life as one that moves on a level that the law's threats and condemnation cannot touch. Along these lines, Thomas R. Schreiner affirms that “in both 5:13–24 and 5:25–6:10, Paul believes that believers carry out the admonition only by walking in the spirit.”¹⁵⁵ As will be discussed further in this paper, Paul argues that the life of a believer is not about competing with one another; rather, it is one that supports each other by bearing one another's burden but with a caution of falling into the same temptation. At the same time, he calls every believer to be responsible for their own action on the day of judgement. Finally, believers are to be generous towards those who teach and preach the gospel: “sharing with the teacher in all good things” (v.6).

Translation and Notes

1 Brothers, even if a person is overtaken in any sin, you who¹⁵⁶ are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. **2** Bear one

¹⁵⁵ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 353.

¹⁵⁶ The article *οἱ* is serving as an adjective along with *πνευματικοὶ* to modify *ὑμεῖς*. See Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 39.

another's burdens, and thus you will fulfill¹⁵⁷ the law of Christ. **3** For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. **4** But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. **5** For each will have to bear his own load. **6** Let the one who is taught the word share in all good things with the one who teaches. **7** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. **8** For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. **9** And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up. **10** So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Textual Analysis and Meaning

The Call to Bear One Another's Burden (vv.1–5)

The apostle's call to believers in Galatia is a call to show Christian concern and charity to fallen believers; however, this call includes a caution against falling into the same temptation which caused that person's fall. The apostle thinks that by carrying or bearing one another's burden, the church of Galatia would be carrying out Christ's "New Law" or "Commandment" (Rom 3:27b). Jesus says to his disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another" (John 13:34–35). Similarly, the apostle re-echoes Christ's command to the church to live out this love which was sown in the church by Christ's death and resurrection. The church is therefore called to shine this light of love which clearly distinguishes the church from the rest of the world, indicating that they are

¹⁵⁷ ἀναπληρώσετε in this instance is not used with the sense of the Old Testament fulfillment of the Law but is rather taken up as carrying out or exercising the Law of Christ. Cf. BDAG, 1979, 59.

Christ's disciples.

In verses 3–4, the apostle sends out a warning that any selfish thought for oneself will be contrary to fulfilling Christ's law and command. Nevertheless, with the use δὲ and the imperative, the apostle seems to challenge anyone who insists on competing with or boasting over fellow believers, to first examine his/her work before engaging in such boasting. Because (γὰρ) each will be held accountable for whatever boasting he/she makes (v.4).

The apostle's reference to an individual load or burden in (v. 2) at first glance seems to contradict verse 5 when taken together as a single unit. However, when verse 2 and verse 5 are taken up discretely, they then show two separate relationships. While on the one hand the burden in verse 2 addresses the love of Christ, on the other hand verse 5 refers to the burden of sin on the Day of Judgment (Rom 14:12, 2 Cor 5:10). Robert Stutzman notes that "Paul is urging believers to concentrate on their task in serving God. Furthermore, it refers to the general load which everyone must carry; there are certain responsibilities that cannot be passed out to others. For instance, each must bear the burden of his own sinful bias the infirmity of the flesh [NCBC]."¹⁵⁸ Thus, the load spoken of in Galatians 6: 5 is one that allows no believer to avoid the responsibility of their character but each is held liable for his/her own doing.

Sowing and Reaping (6–10)

In this section the apostle now turns to the order of nature, the principle of sowing and reaping. With the use of the present imperative Κοινωνεῖτω the apostle admonishes the church to continually¹⁵⁹ share all good things with one who teaches the word (v. 6). Thus, with the use of

¹⁵⁸ Robert Stutzman. *An Exegetical Summary of Galatians*, (Dallas: SIL International, 2006), 252.

¹⁵⁹ Voelz "The present form of the [of the Imperative] are abnormal ...usually focusing upon some special connection between the doer and the action to be done." *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 201.

the present imperative in this section, Paul addresses the law of nature (sowing and reaping) in verses 6–10, inviting believers to share in all good things with those who teach, as a way of fulfilling the law of sowing and reaping (v. 7). Although he mentioned bearing or sharing one another's burden earlier in v. 2, here he specifically indicates that the sharing should be done with those who teachers. In the same way, Stutzman states:

Κοινωνεῖτω (κοινωνέω) ‘share’ or ‘have fellowship’ is a Christian euphemism for the ‘let him make a financial contribution’. The most common and most likely interpretation of share is the sense of active giving and ‘all good things’ in the sense of physical goods. Most likely the phrase ‘in all good things’ refers to the material needs of life, but understood in a general sense [Herm]. They are to take good care of those who taught them about the Christian way of life and should give them money or food or lodging or all of these things.¹⁶⁰

In this segment (vv. 7–8) Paul calls the Galatians’ attention to abandon deceptive notion. Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, with the present passive imperative and a negative particle which usually means to stop an ongoing act. With the use of the imperative Paul is warning the Galatians against self-deception. From this warning it can be inferred that the Galatians were being deceived or conceiving an opinion which could mislead them from the truth of the gospel back into the slavery of the law (cf. 1 Cor 9:6, 15:33; 2 Thess 2:3, James 1:16). Against this, Paul uses because (γὰρ) to explain that as the law of sowing and reaping depicts a result, so also it is with those who sow in the flesh and spirit; they will, too, reap a result. Making a stark contrast between spiritual and natural sowing and reaping in verse 8, Paul further explains the distinction that those sowing in the flesh will reap fruit that is perishable, while those sowing in the spirit will reap an imperishable harvest of eternal life (v.8).

Having made the distinction between sowing and reaping, the apostle then makes an urgent call to the Galatians with μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν: “Let us not lose heart” (v.9). There is a debate over the

¹⁶⁰ Stutzman, *An Exegetical Summary of Galatians*, 254.

use of the negated present active subjunctive which has the meaning of stopping what they [the Galatians] have not begun. For some scholars, accepting the above translation weakens Paul's reason for accusation in chapter 1:6–10. On the contrary, taking the $\mu\eta\ \epsilon\gamma\kappa\alpha\kappa\tilde{\omega}\mu\epsilon\nu$ (the negated present active subjunctive) as a negative command of the imperative (prohibiting action already began), then makes Paul's accusation genuine to admonish the Galatians who have so quickly forgotten the truth of the gospel and were paying attention to another gospel (1:6). Nevertheless, the use of $\gamma\tilde{\alpha}\rho$ makes the apostle's case that there are benefits for not losing heart in well doing (because) there is a reward (if) they faint not (v.9).

In verse 10, Paul concludes with the $\alpha\tilde{\rho}\alpha\ \omicron\upsilon\tilde{\nu}$ ("so then") before he uses the hortatory subjunctive $\epsilon\pi\gamma\alpha\zeta\tilde{\omega}\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha$. He finishes his admonition with an exhortation, calling the church of Galatia to live out its Christian vocation by doing good works (Gal 5: 22) to Christian brothers, especially to share all good things with the one who teaches (v. 6). Concerning these good works, Ben Witherington clarifies that, and "Paul is not saying a person is saved *by* good works, but he is saying that where there is time and opportunity for doing such things, one will not be saved without them. They are not optional extras in the Christian life"¹⁶¹. Consequently, a believer's consistent refusal to support or assist the needy through their good works or their vocation is a refusal to bear the fruit of the spirit (Gal 5:22–23). Dieter Betz is one of many scholars who affirm that "good work" probably denotes "fruit of the spirit."¹⁶²

Conclusion

Chapters 5 and 6 of the letter to the church in Galatia is a call to live a life led by the Holy

¹⁶¹ Ben Witherington. *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 433.

¹⁶² Dieter H. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 311.

Spirit on a level that the law's threats and condemnation could not touch. The apostle Paul warns believers to avoid competing with one another and rather care for one another's spiritual and material needs, especially for the ones planting the seed of the gospel through preaching or teaching (v. 6). Paul's concern for sustenance with regards to the preachers or teachers in his letters (Rom 15:27, 1 Cor 9:11) corresponds to both the Old Testament principle of the priesthood's sustenance (Lev 6:16, 26, 7:6; Num 5:9–10, 18:8, 20; Deut 18:1) and Jesus' concern for the disciples commissioned to preach the gospel to all nations (Matt 10:5–15, 28:19–20).

Paul believes that by “sharing in all good things” with the teacher or preacher of the gospel, the church of Galatia was sowing a seed that would yield eternal harvest. He first warns believers to not be deceived by their perception because “God is not mocked” (Gal 6:7). From this warning, he unpacks in verse 8 the image of sowing and reaping, which further explains why it is necessary for Christian to live according to the Spirit. To this end Paul believes that the law of Christ is made practical and fulfilled when the life of a believer is lived in obedience to the Holy Spirit and in communion with one another through sharing.

The New Testament Paradigm of Giving

Throughout the New Testament, there is no mention of a specific amount identified as to what a believer ought to give to God as tithe or offering. While many pastors have used the Old Testament concept of tithing to exploit members and consequently live a flamboyant lifestyle at the expense of their members, many also use the New Testament terms “cheerful” or “generous giving” as a reason to offer less than is appropriate. Nonetheless, setting a balance on the issue of giving, the New Testament encourages the following forms of giving: generous, cheerful and proportionate giving (2 Cor 9:6–8, Prov 11:24–26). These various forms grant no excuse to a pastor or minister who seeks to enrich himself at the expense of members. At the same time; the

New Testament gives no room for members to carelessly give to God. Addressing this confusion concerning the giving of offerings or tithes, this section will shed light on general giving in the New Testament, and the stewardship of giving.

General Giving in the New Testament

Throughout the New Testament, the topic of giving is addressed, but from a different perspective than is highlighted throughout Jesus' ministry. As discussed in previous section of this thesis, there were three separate tithes that Israel was required to give to the priesthood. For this discussion, this thesis has been focusing on the first tithe, the Levites' tithe, which sets the basis for the pastoral sustenance argument in this paper. However, the New Testament does not reinstitute the Old Testament laws concerning tithing. As highlighted earlier in Matthew 10:5–15, Jesus instructs his disciples to “take along nothing for the journey,” or better said, not to worry about their sustenance. This instruction is both an expression of the urgency of the mission but also corresponds to the support of those serving God in the Old Testament. Conversely, unlike the Old Testament percentage attached to the tithe, the New Testament encourages voluntary and generous giving out of love and appreciation of God’s mercies and grace through Christ.

As highlighted throughout Jesus’ ministry, giving is based on faith expressed in love for God and accompanied by worship. The widow’s offering commended in Mark 12:43 was one offering given in faith and love by one that trusted God to provide for her personal need.

As Israel was instructed to care for the Levites and priests in the Old Testament, the New Testament also delegates similar care and responsibility for the disciples to those houses to which they were sent (Matt 10:5–15; Luke 10:4–10). The disciple’s sustenance was parallel to the Old Testament principles of sustenance (Levites’ tithe) but not on the Old Testament means

of salvation through the sacrificial system. Rather, it was built on the New Testament means of grace-giving generously and voluntarily through the Spirit. Jesus' ministry records numerous voluntary supporters, especially women (Luke 8:2, 3) who generously gave to support his ministry. Matthew 27:55–56 and Mark 15:40 record women who accompanied Jesus during his ministry, passion, and resurrection, while Luke gives detailed information and prominence to their generous support of his ministry. Highlighting that these women financially and voluntarily supported his ministry (Luke 8:3b).

Giving: in the Ministry of the Apostles

Early believers gave generously for the support of the church and the apostles through the working of the Holy Spirit above and beyond Old Testament standard. They gave generously by faith, withholding nothing (Acts 2:45–47). The New Testament model of giving requires everything inviting believers to trust God for their daily sustenance as Jesus teaches about the accumulation of wealth, worries about provision for sustenance (Psa 147:9, Mark 10:17–31, Matt 6:8–13; 19–34). Speaking of early believer's exceptional willingness to give to the apostles and fellow believers on the basis of the New Testament formula, Luke records:

... Those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ..There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need (Acts 4:32–35).

The church's exemplary giving mentioned above ignites the New Testament's formula of giving led by the Holy Spirit for the support of the apostle's ministry. The generosity of Dorcas in Acts 9:36–39 strengthened the faith of believers and attracts many to the Christian faith in Joppa. Providing the need of the apostle as mentioned in Matthew 10:9–10, Simon the tanner willingly hosted the apostle Peter for some time while in Joppa. Also supporting the apostles and the

church was Cornelius (Acts 10:1–6). The apostle Paul also received unheard of support for the gospel, several external and internal supports for his missionary functions. Lydia was one of those prominent sponsors who willingly begged Paul, Timothy and Silas to stay at her home (Acts 16:15). Also to name a few of other individuals who willingly hosted and supported their ministry: Jason, Aquila Titus Justus, Philip, Mnason of Cyprus and Gaius (Acts 16:15; 17:4–5; 18:1–3, 7; 21:7–9, 21:15–16, Rom 16:23). All of the aforementioned, out of their love for the gospel willingly supported the apostles along with the churches of Galatia, and Philippi.

Although the Corinthians did not specifically support Paul due to the relinquishing of his right, they, however, supported others who preached the gospel to them and also contributed to the Jerusalem relief project (2 Cor 8:1–6). Also the churches of Philippi and Macedonia (2 Cor 11:7–9) specifically sponsored the apostles' mission to take the gospel to the others (Phil 4:15–16).

Overall, although the New Testament designates no percentage of one's income that should be set aside as offering to God, the apostle Paul invites the Corinthian saying, "Each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come" (1 Cor 16:2). This collection that the apostle speaks of in this text is intended to meet the needs of the Jerusalem saint. At the same time, Paul calls to the Corinthians to set aside something as they prosper should also address the expectation of the minister's sustenance as he reaffirms that "those who proclaim the gospel get their living from the gospel" (1 Cor 3:14).

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

Previous chapters have discussed the importance of the Priests' and Levites' sustenance under the Old Testament law of the tithes and offerings. The New Testament also addresses the sustenance of the apostles, pastors, and teachers of the church under a similar principle of tithes and offerings, but on the basis of faith. The importance of the priesthood's, apostles' and pastors' sustenance was one that neither the people of Israel nor the early church could abolish. Pastors' and ministers' sustenance has always been the church's responsibility. Sadly, this responsibility has not been at the heart of the ELCL due to the fact that the church has not been able to make the appropriate hermeneutical and exegetical interpretation of the Levites' tithe as a biblical principle applicable to the church for the sustenance of pastors. Moreover, founding missionaries of Lutheran Mission in Liberia, today known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia, saw early members' living conditions as a reflection of poverty.¹ Therefore, they thought that new indigenous Christians had nothing to offer to God. This is one of the major contributing factors to ELCL's poor giving record, which therefore affects the support of pastors, mission, and evangelism in Liberia today.

Now that the church is headed by its own leaders and pastors, the sustenance of these local pastors remains an issue of contention that this chapter seeks to address. Through a stewardship

¹ Early missionaries leaving the West for work in Africa often made a quick conclusion that has affected the society and still affect it today including the churches. Most missionaries concluded that since Africans were not living with electricity, pipe bound water, or roads, they were poor. These conclusions were right but not always true, judging from the African perspective and standard of wealth at the time. Much of Africa in the early 18th century had wealth in minerals, properties, and other agricultural investments which could adequately support the work of the church (i.e., in the early history of Liberia, town chiefs/commissioners were not given government checks monthly but they were fully sustained by their citizens. Farmers were required to apportion part of their harvest for the sustenance of the town chiefs and officials. In addition, citizens took upon themselves to collectively make farms for the town chief. Thus, the early missionaries' conclusions were not helpful in relation to the church's sustenance.

Committee proposed in this paper, this researcher believes that the national leadership of the ELCL will teach a church which has a poor record of pastoral sustenance to become a sustainable church that proclaims the gospel.

A Proposal on What Needs to be done about Tithing

“Tell me and I will forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I will learn.”²

Although there is a controversy as to who the author is, yet the above saying is one that is truly practical and applicable to life situation. From the synopsis of early missionaries’ work with the church in Liberia, the aforesaid statement is applicable to the ELCL with regards to pastoral sustenance. As mentioned earlier, indeed, members of the church have not been totally involved in the support and sustenance of the church because they have not been taught to see the tithe as a biblical principle for the sustenance of pastors, mission, and evangelism. They have always seen and understood the tithe either as negative or of little importance. Because of such an inadequate understanding of the tithe, many jump to the New Testament teaching of generous giving to justify why they give less to the support of pastors and the church's mission in the name of voluntary giving. Such misconception of the tithe has for many years impeded the growth of the church and still does today. Pastors fear to address this issue due to limited knowledge on biblical interpretation regarding the tithe. Also the national leadership’s silence on the issue of pastoral sustenance is affecting the growth and mission of most local congregations, and the national leadership as well.

Furthermore, using the so-called term “generous giving”, churches has adopted a series of programs and fundraiser rallies which are not in conformity with the true teachings of generous

² Attributed to Benjamin Franklin.

giving in the New Testament. The multiplicity of fundraising programs often drives members away if they are unable to financially support a series of such programs or rallies. This chapter, then, proposes that the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia adapt the Levites' tithing as a biblical and fundamental principle for generous giving for the sustenance of pastors, mission, and evangelism.

Based on the recent experience of the ELCL, members tend to support greater cost voluntarily when the purpose is explained, discussed, and unanimously agreed upon. Members often underwrite projects which taxation would either not accomplish or take longer to accomplish. While the motive or impetus for such generosity may vary, yet members voluntarily support the work of the church when the church's leadership is accountable for member's financial contribution to various projects or initiatives.

Against all of the above variables, this researcher perceives the tithe, not as the limit of Christian giving but as a point of reference for Christian giving and also a reminder to trust in the Giver rather than the gifts. What is important here is that, the "tithe"- regardless the amount or percentage is not the main point. Instead, it was a regular, systemic way of providing support. That being said, this thesis will further propose that the ELCL should organize a stewardship and trustee committee which will hold seminars to instruct the church's leadership. On a national or local level, the Church's leadership will be taught how to manage its God-given resources for the benefit of pastoral sustenance, mission, and evangelism.

The ELCL has done and is doing a great work in teaching justification, sanctification, the Means of Grace, and the distinction of Law and Gospel, among others important aspect of Christianity. As part of its mission, the ELCL is to also teach, preach, and live out its stewardship function beginning at the national level through seminars, workshops, and Bibles

studies, which has a trickle-down teaching effect on every local congregation and member of the ELCL.

This researcher believes that the fundamental issue to address within the ELCL in relation to pastoral sustenance is the structuring of an annual budget that will explain the financing and operation of the church and its mission. Addressing the question of an annual budget, the Church of England states:

The budget consists of two parts —an estimate of receipts and an estimate of expenditure. Moreover, the parish finance should not be based on appeals for the need of the church, but upon the recognition of the personal duty to allocate for the work of his church a worthy proportion of the income with which God has entrusted each one of us as an act of worship in obedience, in gratitude, and in love.³

Sadly, due to most local congregations' inability to craft an annual budget and adequately teach members their stewardship responsibility and calling, many congregations find it impossible to sustain its pastor. As a consequence, most pastors have become like beggars living at the mercy of members' good will when in fact pastoral sustenance, mission, and evangelism should be the prerogative of the entire congregation. This situation has placed pastors into the dilemma that the apostle Paul warns believers about when he says, “But if anyone does not provide for his relative, especially for the members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”(1Tim 5:8). Certainly, this family need that the apostle Paul speaks of involves both biological and spiritual family in Christ as mentioned in Romans 12:10, 1Thess 4:9, cf. 1Pet 1:22, Heb 13:1. Moreover, the church's failure to sustain its pastor, minister, who serves the family in Christ with the Means of Grace, puts the church in the apostle's description stated above. Although the lack of pastoral support in the ELCL has not reached such a point,

³ Church of England, *The Christian Stewardship of Money*. (London: Published for the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England by the Church Information Office, 1959), 40–41.

most pastors have had to concentrate more on finding substances outside their call than investing their time and attention to the church.

Establishing a church budget and planning process would enable each local congregation to adequately teach generous giving and the management of its many gifts, especially financial treasure. This researcher also believes that the setting up of such a stewardship committee is modeled after Acts 6:1–7,⁴ thus allowing the pastor to concentrate on his call to serve the church through Word and Sacrament. The oversight responsibility of this committee would help the church identify its needs and mission in light of God's plan. It is necessary to neutralize the negative power and influence of money, which deprives the church of carrying out its mission. Therefore, Janet T Jamieson and Philip D. Jamieson assert that, “one of the main tools for disarming the power of money within a church is the budget. When a unified church budget is agreed upon by all members of the church, the special- interest mentality can begin to evaporate.”⁵

Teaching the Church to Organize an Annual Budget

In Acts the apostles brought the need for a stewardship committee to the church’s attention. Luke writes, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:2–4). Without any doubt, the apostles realized how the church’s

⁴ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:3–4).

⁵ Janet T Jamieson, and Philip D. Jamieson, *Ministry and Money, A Practical Guide for Pastors*. (Kentucky: Westminster, 2009), 102.

disregard of a stewardship committee would slow down the proclamation of the gospel and the mission of the church.

In spite of the economic hardship in Liberia, there have always been and still remain generous givers in the church who have voluntarily given and still give of their time, talent, and treasures for the support of the church. But with the proper organization, accountability, and management, the church will be able to make appropriate use of these gifts and will also encourage more generous givers who desire to support the church and pastor. For instance, if various departments (men, women and youth) within each local congregation of the ELCL would contribute towards the church's budget, such contribution would be a helpful way to address pastoral sustenance, mission and evangelism. All the same, with the enactment of Heyd's proposed stewardship committee, the church's annual budget will measure its financial goals and manage its limited resources to address support needed to carry out its mission through Word and Sacrament.

Although the New Testament does not specify a percentage to give as the Old Testament required, it teaches and encourages various kinds of giving that should meet the need of the church for its material sustenance and mission support. Accordingly, with the needs of the church specified and spelled out in an annual budget, the church would order its needs to encourage generous or voluntary giving beyond its member's regular offering or, tithe.

Leaving giving open-ended in the church may or may not lead members to give in proportion to or beyond their means to meet the urgent need of the church. Some people would rather support a cause or voluntarily take on responsibilities that are beyond their regular offering or tithe, while others tend to give less than expected when the needs of the church are not explicitly spelled out.

Dealing with this hypothetical issue (open-ended giving) in relation to the budget, Dean Hoge, Patrick McNamara, and Charles Zech in a survey point out that the distinction between *budget* and *faith giving* should be addressed. In their survey, these scholars note the unbalanced situation that confronts the church when it focuses on one of the two (either budget or faith giving). They write:

Should the budget be formulated prior to a stewardship campaign and displayed ... the campaign becomes budget-driven and is patched toward meeting the budget. Whereas, should the campaign emphasize stewardship theology and giving out of thankfulness, while keeping the budget hidden? The latter is called *Faith Giving*.⁶

In contrast to the survey mentioned above, pastors did not unanimously agree on better giving strategy but argued each separately. Although it is probable to agree with the conclusion that “fundraising versus stewardship is a matter of faith,”⁷ as far as this research is concerned both *budgetary* and *faith giving*⁸ are necessary and applicable for the church. One is practical while the other is theoretically theological. The fact remains that Christians are to offer their gift of prayer, praise and thanksgiving to God in worship but at the same time they are called to give financially to the needs of the church. To be a faithful steward, the church is accountable to its members with regards to whatever gifts it receives; it is also, to make known its needs, so as to encourage generous giving for the pastor’s sustenance, missions and evangelism.

The church will then need to address its various needs by teaching how (not what) to give cheerfully or willingly in light of God's word. The budgetary system serves as an impetus to

⁶ Dean Hoge, Patrick McNamara, and Charles Zech, *Plain Talk about Churches and Money*, (Bethesda: Alban, 1997), 103–5.

⁷ Hoge, McNamara, and Zech, *Plain Talk about Churches and Money*, 103–5.

⁸ Giving a greater understanding of Budgetary /Mission and faith giving Dr. Andrew Bartelt an Old Testament professor at the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis say, “Today, leaders have to be accountable, transparent, with the stewardship of offerings. But we [Believers] don’t give to ‘The Budget’ (and withhold if we don’t like how the money is used); we give because that is what we do.” Andrew Bartelt, comment October 1, 2016 (08:09 p.m. ET) on “Tithing, A Biblical principle for the Sustenance of Pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia”.

inspirational and voluntary giving within the church.

Planning for Stewardship

It was said that “if you fail to plan, you plan, to fail.”⁹ Truly, this saying confirms the scripture, which says, “You desire and do not have, so you murder... You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions” (James 4:2–3). Such is the financial dilemma with which the church has been faced for decades. The mission of the ELCL has been struggling with the issue of sustenance because the church has talked much about giving, but has not taught or planned much for giving. The church’s continued fear to address the issue of sustenance because of its inadequate hermeneutical knowledge to preach and teach on giving amidst prevailing economic difficulties is stalling the growth and mission of the ELCL.

It is this researcher hope that the national leadership, which includes the Bishops and all his officials, establish a stewardship committee that would conduct seminars and workshops among pastors, lay leaders, and church workers on the biblical basis for financial support of the mission of the church and its pastors through bible studies, sermons, confirmation, classes and the like.

To summarize, while the fact remains that the pastor is the head shepherd of the congregation, he is not greater than the church but is duly called to lead and serve the body of Christ through God's gift to the church in Word and Sacrament. Therefore, it is right for the church to have a stewardship committee (other laity) who are willing to offer their resources of time and talent management for the stewardship organization and management of the church's resources for pastoral sustenance and mission of the church. The crafting of the church's budget

⁹ Benjamin Franklin, <http://www.sanate.govartandhistory/art/artifac>(Accessed June 24,2016).

system will guard the church, as it aims to meeting the church's operational needs based on voluntary, cheerful, and proportionate giving of tithes and offerings.

Adherence to the aforesaid proposal confirms the early church's principle of stewardship which allows the pastors sufficient time to concentrate on the service of the Word and Sacrament. At the same time, the church would function as a living body with various parts serving in the administrative and managerial capacities all for the growth of the body of Christ.

CHAPTER FOUR
A BIBLE STUDY ON TITHING

OUTLINE

Topic: Tithing a Biblical Principle for Pastor's Sustenance

Text: Num 18:21–32

- Introduction
- Brief Outline
- The Purpose of the Tithe, Priest and Levites in the Old Testament
- The Priesthood in the New Testament
- Application and Implication
- Questions for Reflection
- Summary

Introduction

This bible study will concentrate on teachings that will specifically address the issue of pastoral or ministerial sustenance. Details of Num 18:21–32 have already been discussed in Chapter Two. To summarize, J. Cliff Christopher and Herbert Mather notes that “God invited the early Hebrews into a close personal relationship. Out of gratitude the people looked for an appropriate way to affirm that relationship. The tithe was a culturally known act that was big enough to be significant. It was risky. It was sacrificial.”¹ Indeed the church is call to live such

¹ J. Clif Christopher, and Herbert Mather. *Holy Smoke! Whatever Happened to Tithing?* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1999), 8.

risky and sacrificial life through giving their tithe and offering for the support of pastor, mission and evangelism. It is against such backdrop that this chapter will discuss why this thesis argues for tithing as a biblical principle for the sustenance of pastors of the ELCL today.

Brief Outline of the Text:

Duties of the Priest, Num 18:22–23

Aaron and sons, of the tribe of Levi had been given a sacred duty to serve before Yahweh in the tent of meeting, offering sacrifices for and on behalf of Israel. Thus, His exemption from all regular duties gave him sufficient time to focus on his call before the Lord. Grounded on such commitment and dedication to his services in the tent of meeting, the Lord made provision for the priest so as to save him the agony of toiling and laboring for his sustenance before or after his duties. Since chapter two provides details concerning priesthood, this section will elucidate on how the Levites tithe is to be seen in the ELCL from a gospel perspective as opposed to the law.

No Inheritance Num 18:20, 24

Yahweh denies the tribe of Levi a share of the land (Joshua 13–24) because he had already appropriated the entire tithe in the land for the Levites and the Priest as their possession (v. 21). The tribute for both the priest and the Levites were Yahweh's responsibility; thus, they needed not to worry about their sustenance but trust Yahweh to provide for their daily needs through the collection of the tithe from the rest of the tribes, as mentioned in Num 18:8, 11, 19, 27, 30.

Although all Priests were Levites, not all Levites were Priests. Since the Levites were not equal to the priest, they were instructed to pay a tithe from the tithes they received from Israel. The Levites tithe to the priest was to be taken out from the tithe they received before consuming

their portion. The collection of the tithe in Numbers 18:28–29 was the High priest's portion of inheritance for his services rendered in the tent of meeting.

The Purpose of the Tithe to the Priest and Levites in the Old Testament

In Chapters One and Two, various kinds of tithes were discussed. Consequently, the tithe mentioned in Numbers 18:28–29 falls under the “Levite or First Tithe”² which specifically addresses the sustenance of Aaron, the High Priest assisted by his sons, the Levites who served in the tent of meeting for an on behalf of the people of Israel. Although the Old Testament sacrificial function of the priest has been fulfilled in Christ, nevertheless, the pastor (equal member of the priesthood) is called to the apostolic office to deliver the Means of Grace through Word and Sacrament. In similar dedication as the Old Testament priest, the pastor is called, although not to offer sacrifices for and on behalf of the body of Christ, but to rather impart Christ’s gifts through word and sacrament. Consequently, as will be taken up in detail below, the New Testament emphasizes the importance of sustenance for pastors, teachers, and elders, parallel to principles of the Levites’ tithe (Num 18:21–32).

The Function of the Priesthood in the New Testament

The death of Christ has fulfilled the sacrificial function of the priesthood in the New Testament inviting all without obstacle or hindrance to “confidently draw near to the throne of Grace ...to receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need” (Heb 4:16). Because of Christ’s fulfillment, through our baptism, believers are given the right and admission into this new priesthood. Concerning such the apostle Peter says, “A living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious...to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices

² Quiggle, *Why Christian Should Not Tithe*, 14.

acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession”(1 Pet 2:4–9). Be that as it may, this admission considers all believers “a royal priesthood” but leaders are still necessary to coordinate the order of sacrifices and the dispensing of gifts that Christ has freely given to this priesthood. Similarly, Paul says, “And He himself gave the apostles, and the prophets, and the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers, for the bringing of the saint to completion for the ministry, for building up of the body of Christ”³ (Eph 4:11–12). Winger concludes that “the ministers are therefore not to be regarded as officers created by the church at her own good pleasure, but are gifts to her, appointed and given by God himself.”⁴ Indisputably, the pastoral office is not intended to offer sacrifices for sin, since Christ has fulfilled God’s sacrificial requirement. However, just as the Priests and Levites were called to coordinate the ritual life of Israel through their services, in like manner, the disciples and Pastors or ministers of the church today have been called to teach and serve God's people through the Means of Grace which Christ has provided. Therefore, means of sustenance for Pastoral or ministerial duties has to be addressed similarly as that of the Old Testament Levites’ tithe.

Application and Implication

Do We Need to Tithe⁵ Today?

The answer is both “No” and “Yes”. If the Levites’ tithe is intended to serve ceremonial or sacrificial purpose for the forgiveness of sins or to attain God's grace or blessing, then the answer

³ Thomas Winger, *Ephesians*, (St. Louis: Concordia, 2015), 424.

⁴ Winger, *Ephesians*, 424.

⁵ The “Levites’ tithe” keeps coming up in the New Testament discussion of this research to describe the Old Testament principles of collection for the sustenance of the priesthood. This research uses the tithe not as a "Law" but for the lack of a better name to describe the Old Testament principle of giving for the sustenance of the priest.

is, “No.” Such purpose is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament (Eph 2:8–9, Rom 4:6). However, if the tithe is for the sustenance of pastors serving the church through the sharing of spiritual blessings with God's people, then yes, the tithe is necessary today. Believers are expected to give tithes and offerings not out of compulsion but in appreciation to God through the sharing of their material blessing as the scriptures command (Gal 6:6, Rom 15:27, 1 Cor 9:11).

Therefore, the tithe discussed throughout this research is to be seen as a commitment to offering to God a regular, systematic and structure portion of one's gifts for the support of pastor, mission, and evangelism. Tithing should be seen as a spiritual exercise that calls Christians to trust and reverence God with the first fruits of God's gifts of treasure or harvest. When God supplies more, the Christian offers back more. And when he supplies less the Christian also offers less as Christ says, “ Everyone to whom much is given, of him much will be require...”(Luke 12:48).

Although 1 Corinthians 16:2 is not a prescriptive text for the sustenance of pastors, neither was the apostle writing for the benefit of pastors. Instead, the careful breakdown of the collection mentioned is a helpful way to address the issue of sustenance for pastors and fellow believers today. On that note, 1 Corinthians 16:2 highlights the following ways for the church to give: first, the church is call to give sacrificially as a royal priesthood by offering the sacrifice of treasure willingly and faithfully. Second, she is to give proportionately as she prospers in treasure. Third, she is to give systematically following a pattern (i.e., monthly, weekly, daily, or annually). Lastly, Paul calls everyone who is a part of this priesthood to take a step of faith as a Christian steward, not out of compulsion but out of gratitude to God and for the sustenance of the preacher, elder, and teacher of the gospel.

Questions for Reflection

- i. What is the church's (the priesthood) responsibility to the pastor?
- ii. How can the people of God best carry out their role, including the responsibility to fill the office of pastor and ensure pastoral meditation of the means of grace among them?

Without a doubt, the pastor is the spiritual shepherd of the flocks of which Christ is the chief shepherd (1 Pet .5:4). He is pastor-spiritual shepherd duly⁶ called to serve God's people the means of grace through Word and Sacrament. In addition, he serves as the chief executive or administrator of the congregation. The pastor's inseparable connection from the priesthood of all believers leads to the church's (priesthood of believer) responsibility to its pastor. Matthew Harrison writes:

The clergy (pastor) cannot be essentially higher than the laity, he can be clothed with no other than this [pastor]... he is dignified by the Lord and his congregation to be placed as the householder, guard, watchman and governor in the divine heavenly household of grace. Furthermore, He is God's co-worker among equally entitled and equally splendid brothers whom the Lord has equipped with the necessary gifts.⁷

Since the pastor cannot carry out both spiritual and administrative responsibilities alone, in light of scripture (i.e., as Aaron was assisted by the Levites Num 18:1–32, Moses assisted by Aaron Ex 4:10–12; Seven men appointed to assist the apostles Acts.6:1–7) he is assisted and supported by lay leaders who support him and the body of Christ spiritually and administratively, “to equipping of the saint for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11–15).

⁶ Confutation (pt. I art. XIV): “It ought to be understood that a person is ‘duly called’ who is called in accordance with the form of law and ecclesiastical sanctions and decree observed everywhere throughout the world up until now.” Cf *The Book of Concord* Kolb/Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 222.

⁷ Matthew C. Harrison, *At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era of Unity and Growth*, (Fort Wayne, IN: Lutheran Legacy, 2009), 363.

To answer the question: how the church can sustain its pastor? Taito A. Kantonen says, “Christians are partner and co-laborers together with God. The Christian chief concern in life is the coming of the kingdom to him, his brethren, and to all men everywhere.”⁸ Undeniably, this sets the goals in the context of carrying out the congregation’s ministry and responsibilities within the kingdom; not just “supporting the pastor,” but also dedication that requires believer’s gift of time, talent, and treasure all for pastor’s sustenance, mission and evangelism.

Summary

The office of the pastor is not supreme over the rest of the body of Christ; rather, it is an office instituted by Christ to serve the entire body through the ministry of the Word which proclaims Christ’s forgiveness bought with his precious blood. Above all, this pastoral office exists to deliver these gifts to the body of believers, while the church in return is responsible for providing for the physical needs of the pastor as part of its called responsibility. The apostle Paul says, “For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought to also be of service to them in material blessings” (Rom 15:27). With the pronouns “they” he refers to the church Macedonia and Achaia, while the pronoun “them” refers back to the saint in Jerusalem. The apostle thought here is a projection of the apostolic right to sustenance argued in 1 Cor 9:11 and also Gal 6:6. The church's response to the sustenance of its pastor, teacher, and those shepherding over her is a response to Jesus teaching in the gospel when he gave a synopsis of the last day. He says "whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives the righteous person will receive a righteous person’s

⁸ Kantonen, *The Theology For Christian Stewardship*, 13.

reward... (Matt 10:40–42)

Indeed, Christ, through the gospel, calls every believer to be caring and generous to one another, and especially to the apostles, teachers and those laboring in the gospel. This care and generosity for the prophet, apostle, teacher and those laboring in the gospel confirms the Old Testament's principles of the priesthood sustenance which is applicable for the church today. Moreover, Christ points out the reward associated with the prophet or righteous person upon believers with such a caring and generous spirit.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The motivation of this researcher to discuss the problem of pastoral sustenance within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia is not to enrich pastors; rather it is a problem that affects the growth and mission of the ELCL. The sustenance of the pastor that has been discussed throughout this paper is seen both in the Old Testament principles of sustenance through the tithe (Num 18:32, Lev 27:30–33, Deut 12:4–7, 14:22–27; 28–29) and in the New Testament reaffirming sustenance when it says, “those who serve the gospel are to get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor 9:14, cf. Matt 10:10). Thus, this research has put forward a case that tithing is a biblical principle through which the church has been taught to sustain the priesthood, apostles, and pastors.

Currently in Liberia, it is even more necessary to teach New Testament generous giving to congregations for the sustenance of pastors because of the urgent financial needs of the ELCL’s pastors. Recognizing an urgent need also at his time, the apostle Paul says, “Let he who is taught the word share with the one who teaches in all good things” (Gal 6:6; cf. Rom 15:27, 1 Cor 9:11). This researcher has also argued that the tithe discussed in this paper is not the second or third tithes mentioned in Leviticus,¹ but the first tithe, which was intended for the support of the priests and Levites (Lev 27:30–33, Num 18:20–32).

This thesis has also maintained that adherence to tithe which has been contended is not a ceremonial fulfillment or return to of the law. Rather, this tithe would follow the New Testament

¹ See Chapter one, page 8–10.

prescription for generous and voluntary giving for the sustenance of pastors just as the first, or Levites' tithe adequately addresses the need of the priests in the Old Testament. In the same way, beyond the New Testament, the tithe should address the need for pastoral sustenance (i.e., the Old Testament requires 10%, or 20%, but the New Testament requires everything²).

As members, incorporated into the priesthood bought with the blood of Christ, we now live by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, who has restore us to the heavenly Father. All that we do in our giving recognizes God's ownership of all that we have and our role as faithful steward of all that he has entrusted to us. Hence, by giving a tithe of our first fruit for the sustenance of pastors, we are by faith giving everything Christ requires of us (Luke 14:33).

This researcher agrees that "Christian giving is not based on tithing."³ However, it is not correct to add that "the Old Testament is not a model, pattern or example for Christian giving."⁴ In contrast, this researcher maintains that such an assertion contradicts the New Testament's teaching on giving (Gal 6:6), which is parallel to the Old Testament principle of the tithe. The sustenance of the commissioned disciple is a furtherance of Israel's responsibility to care for the priest and Levites. In view of that, Christ says, "And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart" (Matt 10:11). The instruction, "stay there until you depart" suggest that the disciples' sustenance was a right and not a privilege. Christ affirms this right earlier when he says, "for the laborer deserves his food (Matt 10:10b, cf. 1 Tim 5:18, 1 Cor 9:4, 7-14)

This researcher considers that, even though the death of Christ has fulfilled and completed

² In Jesus' teaching to his disciples he says, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24).

³ Quiggle, *Why Christians Should Not Tithe*, 91.

⁴ Quiggle, *Why Christians Should Not Tithe*, 91.

the sacrificial function of the priesthood, admittedly, this fulfillment has not annulled the need for pastoral or ministerial sustenance; rather, the ideal of the priesthood has been modified, by including all believers in this priesthood. Thus, the purpose of the tithe and offering has been transformed from atonement sacrifices to the sacrifices of thanksgiving, praise, and worship to God, as best described in Romans 12:1–3. Schreiner summed it up this way:

The pastoral ministry in continuity in certain respects with the Old Testament priesthood is evident in the many functions both have in common. Both consist of men who are called into the office, (pastors, however not by birth); both need to meet certain qualifications and restrictions; both receive their living from people's contributions; both have concern for people in distress and sickness; both lead public worship, both administer "sacrifices" of praise and thanksgiving; both administer "sacraments"; both deal with confession and absolution...lead sanctified lives; pray for themselves and people under their care...teach and preach the word of God publicly; and both bless in God's name and place God's name upon people.⁵

Truly, all the aforesaid similarities give genuine explanations as to why the sustenance of pastors today may be addressed on the principles of the Levite's tithe, which confidently builds the foundation for New Testament giving and stewardship.

An African proverb says, "Wherever the goat is tied, there it is fed." This saying affirms scripture (Matt 10:10) and is applicable to pastors of the ELCL. This proverb best explains the dilemma pastor faces due to the lack of sustenance. That is, pastors are called to congregations without their needs being met. This leaves most pastors with no alternatives but work outside their calling to provide for their families. Thus limiting or granting no time for the ministry, which affects the growth of the ELCL. However, it is this researcher's assumption that when the ELCL takes up its God-given responsibility to cater to the needs of its pastor, teachers, and minister who are serving the church, the ELCL will grow spiritually, numerically and financially. For instance, with little or no sustenance, pastors have been committed to serving God's people

⁵ Thomas R Schreiner, *Galatians*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 227.

the Means of Grace. Although slowly nevertheless, the church is growing. It is unthinkable to fathom how much and fast the ELCL will grow when pastors are sustained. This researcher is of the conviction that attending to pastors' sustenance would empower them to carry out ministry efficiently. In other words, it will provide office hours for the church, time to nourish God's people in the Word through: preaching, teaching Bible studies, counselling, prayer and visiting members or the community. Based on this sustenance, pastors will have less worry about, house rent, kids' tuition, and food for their family. With the implementation of the proposal suggested in Chapter Three, all of the aforementioned is possible.

To sum up, Richard Wolfram says, "Tithing is definite and concrete— and it recognizes a biblical principle."⁶ Certainly, the tithe is a biblical principle that sets a standard which challenges believers to trust God, the Giver, rather than the gift. It invites all believers to cheerfully and willingly offer to God their first and best fruit or income in worship, for the support of the gospel in any form, whether supporting pastors, funding mission opportunities, or making continued evangelism possible. Tithe giving "honors God because his portion is set aside first. Moreover, it is a systematic form of giving so other things do not tend to squeeze out God's portion. It serves as a definite and regular reminder of God's ownership and Christian stewardship."⁷ Indeed, understanding this standard basics of the tithes in the Old Testament allows the church to grasp and appreciate the New Testament generous giving which finds its ultimate promise and fulfillment in Christ (2 Cor 1:20). Since God has freely given to all believers his Gift of grace by which we are save through faith in Christ Jesus, in thanksgiving we then bring our tithes and offering into the house of the Lord that there may be meat for the

⁶ Richard Wolfram, Bible Study: "Tithes and Offerings," Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Stewardship Resources. Accessed July 17, 2016, <https://www.lcms.org/stewardship/resources#theology-of-stewardship>.

⁷ Wolfram, *Bible Study: Tithes and offerings*, 4.

preacher, teacher or minister and for the propagation of the gospel.

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