

Wages Paid the Levitical Priesthood; The 3 Tithing Taxes Imposed on the Israelites by the Mosaic Law, Numb 18:21; Deut 14:22-23, 28-29; The Law's Requirements for Aliens; The Lord's Directives to His Disciples before & after the Israelite's Rejection of Jesus as Messiah, Mt 10:5-6, 9-10; Lk 22:35-36

1 Corinthians 9:13 - Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?

Paul first points out that wages for the priesthood are a part of the Mosaic Law. This is referred to in the Old Testament as a tithe: **מַעֲשֵׂר** *ma'aser*, meaning a tenth or ten percent. There were three categories of this form of taxation:

1) Logistics for the Levitical priesthood:

The Levites did not obtain like the rest of the tribes any inheritance in the land of Canaan. They received tithes due to Jehovah from the fruits of the fields, from the flocks and herds (Leviticus 27:30-33; comp. Numbers 18:21-24), of the first fruits (Exodus 23:19; Leviticus 2:14; 23:17), of the firstborn (Exodus 13:12; Leviticus 27:26; Numbers 18:15; Deuteronomy 15:19); as well as certain portions of the sacrificial offerings of the people (Numbers 18:8-11, 19).¹

Numbers 18:21 - "To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of the meeting [**the tabernacle**]."

2) Provision for observance of the tabernacle and temple sacrifices and feast days:

The second tithe was offered as a yearly obligation directly to God (not to the Levites or priests) at the central sanctuary in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 12:6, 11, 17; 14:22-27), and it was consumed by the worshipers in a communal meal in which the Levites were also included as special guests (Deuteronomy 14:27).²

Deuteronomy 14:22 - "You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year.

v. 23 - "You shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always."

3) Charity for the Levites and the disadvantaged:

¹ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 3d ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 657.

² Richard E. Averbeck, "מַעֲשֵׂר," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* gen. ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 2:1039.

The third tithe of the third year in the cycle was to be deposited in the local town for the support of the landless Levite and others who were economically disadvantaged [the poor, aliens, orphans, and widows]. The third year tithe fell in the third and sixth years of the sabbatical (seven year) cycle, the seventh year being the year in which no tithe was required because the land was to lie fallow.³

Deuteronomy 14:28 - "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town.

v. 29 - "The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do."

Notice that the Levites including the priesthood were beneficiaries of each of these tithes. They owned no real property and thus were unable to produce an income.

It is worthy of our attention to note the inclusion of "aliens" among recipients of the third-year tithe. An understanding of the biblical policies related to these people gives insight into how the issue of aliens should be addressed in twenty-first-century America:

Foreigner: one living in a country of which he is not a native, i.e., in the Jewish sense, a Gentile.

Privileges. When the Israelites went up out of Egypt a large, mixed multitude of foreigners accompanied them, and were not rejected by them. Among the Israelites there were at all times individuals of other (heathen) peoples. To such were granted toleration and several privileges, in return for which compliance with the following regulations was insisted upon. They were required, for example, not to blaspheme the name of Jehovah (Leviticus 24:16); not to indulge in idolatrous worship (Lev. 20:2); not to do any work on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10); not to eat unleavened bread during the Passover (Exodus 12:19). Under such circumstances the law accorded to foreigners not only protection and toleration, but equal civil rights with the Israelites. They could even acquire fixed property, lands (Lev. 25:47), and offer sacrifices to the Lord (Numbers 15:15, 26, 29).⁴

Notice that the alien, or Gentile, had to be willing to assimilate into the culture of Israel in order to enjoy equal civil rights with the Jews. If not willing to assimilate then they did not enjoy the same privileges as those who did.

The culture of the United States is founded on establishment principles that were adopted from biblical standards related to the military, domestic relations, property, economics, charity, and laws related to crime and punishment.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 376.

Nations that grant civil rights to aliens without first requiring assimilation must eventually face a clash of cultures. This is manifest by either social unrest through conflict of visions or the segregation of the various cultures into small and often hostile groups.

The human-viewpoint solution is the imposition of totalitarian tactics by government whose multicultural ideology created the problem in the first place.

This section on tithing documents Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 9:13, "Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple?" The tithes were the salary paid by the people to the Levitical priesthood.

Not only is this true for the Israelites it is also true of the heathen priests who serve at the altars of the cultic religions: "... and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?"

With this established, Paul certifies in verse 14 that his decision to forego a salary in Corinth does not set a precedent:

1 Corinthians 9:14 - So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. (NASB)

The biblical absolute is established by the phrase "the Lord directed," the aorist active indicative of **διατάσσω, diatassō**:

In the New Testament the word is used without emphasis in Luke's writings in the sense "to order, command." With reference to the acts of earthly rulers it means "to issue an edict." In Acts 7:44 the reference is to God's specific instruction for the making of the tent of revelation (Exodus 25:40) by Moses. The σκηνή [skēnē: tent] has its origin in God's directions. Paul with his ὁ κύριος διέταξεν: *ho Kurios dietaxen* ["the Lord directed" (NASB)] in 1 Corinthians 9:14 is referring to one of the special orders of Jesus in His address on sending out the disciples, Matthew 10:10 ["the worker is worthy of his support" (NASB)]; Luke 10:7 ["the laborer is worthy of his wages" (NASB)].⁵

The references to Matthew and Luke refer to the Lord's instructions to the original twelve disciples who were to direct their message to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Matthew 10:5-15 contains the Lord's initial instructions to the twelve and is filled with imperative moods of what to do and what not to do. What they are told not to do as they travel around is to depend on the grace provisions of those who positively respond to the proclamation that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand":

Matthew 10:9 - "Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts,

v. 10 - or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support.

⁵ Gerhard Delling, "τάσσω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 8:34-35.

This final phrase in Matthew is virtually identical to the parallel passage in Luke 10:7. Whereas Matthew reports that “the worker is worthy of his support,” Luke states that “the worker is worthy of his wages.

These two authors are describing the same event and simply choose synonymous words to indicate that their logistics will be provided by those who respond to the gospel.

The Lord’s negative commandment in Matthew 10:9 pertains to those things that one would normally carry along for personal needs.

The verse begins with the negative conjunction of prohibition **μή, mē**, translated “not,” followed by the second person plural aorist middle subjunctive of the verb **κτάομαι, ktaomai**, translated, “do acquire”; together forming the negative command, “Do not acquire.”

The subjunctive mood of *kataomai* is called the “prohibitive subjunctive”:

It is used to forbid the occurrence of an action. The structure is usually μή plus the aorist subjunctive, typically in the second person. (In fact, nowhere in the New Testament is the second person aorist imperative used after μή. If one wanted to express prohibition in the second person, the subjunctive was always the mood of choice.) Its force is equivalent to an imperative after μή; hence, it should be translated Do not rather than You should not.⁶

The prohibition of supplying their own necessities is followed by the rationale for doing so in verse 10, “... for the worker is worthy of his support.”

The targets of this missionary effort are “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” – Jews only; no Gentiles or Samaritans:

Matthew 10:5 - These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans;

v. 6 - but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

The message is of the kingdom, the millennial reign of the Messiah. Had Israel as a nation responded to the message then His evangelists would have received logistical grace support from the people.

This circumstance is what we have described in the past as Plan A:

Had Israel responded positively to the gospel of the kingdom, Plan A would probably have seen the Lord executed by the Romans for the crime of fomenting a rebellion against Caesar. Following resurrection He would have ascended into heaven and returned seven years later to set up the kingdom.⁷

This did not occur because of the national blindness of Israel. Although the Lord gives the Jews a real opportunity to recognize Him as Messiah, they did not and as a result the mystery of the church was initiated as Plan B:

⁶ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Zondervan, 1996), 469.

⁷ See visual: “The Kingdom of Heaven: Plans A & B,” (St. Charles, MO: Joe Griffin Media Ministries, 2008).

Plan B is what actually occurred. The Lord was crucified by the Romans because of Jewish insistence. He was resurrected and then ascended into heaven. But His establishment of the kingdom is being delayed by the mystery dispensation of the Church.⁸

When the Lord made the switch then His instructions to his disciples were changed as is revealed in:

Luke 22:35 - And Jesus said to them, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing."

v. 36 - And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one."

This is apparently a contradiction from the Lord's earlier instruction in Luke 10:4, "Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way."

The circumstance in Luke 10:4 and Matthew 10:9-10 occurred during the early stage of the Incarnation when the kingdom message was about a living Messiah who was ready and willing to establish His earthly kingdom.

Luke 22 is a quite different context. Things are about to change. Jesus anticipates the nearness of his death. He knows that He will be identified with transgressors as is prophesied by Isaiah in Isaiah 53:12.

If He is identified with the lawless then his disciples will also be so identified. The pre-Cross message of hope for the heathen is now replaced by hostility toward those who proclaim the gospel of a new dispensation while representing a man who did not fulfill His promise of the kingdom.

The disciples are now going to have to provide their own logistics as they go out into the devil's world with a gospel of grace. Previously they were preaching the kingdom to which some, but not enough, of the heathen responded.

Now the situation is different. The Lord will soon no longer be with them; he will be crucified, resurrected, and ascended into heaven. In turn, the disciples must soon confront a population hostile to their message.

Evangelists are to demonstrate grace and are not to require logistical support from unbelievers. As souls are won and churches established, they will then be able to draw a salary from the churches.

An evangelist should never ask for money, much less take it, from an unbeliever. This is another reason why evangelists need to function under the aegis of a local church where they may be supported by its congregation as well as free-will contributions from remote believers who support his ministry.

⁸ Ibid.