

The Levites and Retirement

Selected Studies in Aging – How Did Characters in the Bible Finish in Life?

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"Don't Let Me Drown in Shallow Water" (Crawford Loritts)

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"
Robert Browning – "Rabbi Ben Ezra"

The Levites and Retirement

Retirement is relatively recent – 1889 Germany's Chancellor Bismark's set age 65 as the time to pay benefits to older survivors – life expectancy then was 55.

1935 US signed into law the Social Security Act – so "retirement" is less than a century old. The word "retirement" itself means to withdraw – retreat – a military word – now, to withdraw from the work force (life expectancy then was 61.7 – today it is 79.1).

· Learning about Retirement in the Scriptures

Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "This is what applies to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall enter to perform service in the work of the tent of meeting. But at the age of fifty years they shall retire from service in the work and not work any more. They may, however, assist their brothers in the tent of meeting, to keep an obligation, but they themselves shall do no work. Thus you shall deal with the Levites concerning their obligations (Numbers 8.23-26).

(See also Numbers 4.23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47 which use 30 years as the beginning point of Levitical service).

· So what did the Levites do then at age 50?



