

**Church – The Beginnings, Part 30**  
**Famine and the Cooperation of Churches**  
Acts 11:27-30 | 05/21/2017  
NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP  
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**<sup>27</sup> In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup> One of them, named Agabus, stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine throughout the Roman world. This took place during the reign of Claudius. <sup>29</sup> Each of the disciples, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers and sisters who lived in Judea. <sup>30</sup> They did this, sending it to the elders by means of Barnabas and Saul.**

A Group of Prophets travelled from Jerusalem to Antioch ... to the church in Antioch. Why there? Why did they travel all the way up to Antioch? It seems that God's Spirit led them to be there.

This was going to be the first challenge that the church of Antioch would face... raising funds to store away for a future famine – that was NOT occurring at that moment in time. It was like Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dream.

**Agabus** – we are introduced to him here, but we will read about him again, as we study in Acts 21 (Acts 21:10 to be specific). He may be the lead prophet of the church in Jerusalem, but that is speculation. In one of the gatherings for worship at Antioch – he stood up and prophesied **about a future**, very wide spread famine that would cover parts of the Roman Empire, especially in the land of Israel and the surrounding regions, etc.

**What about Prophets?** This applies to “New Testament” Prophets, as well (never modified) Deut. 18:15-22 (compare with Matt. 24:11, 2 Peter 2 and Jude 1)

<sup>15</sup>“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. <sup>16</sup>This is what you requested from the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, ‘Let us not continue to hear the voice of the LORD our God or see this great fire any longer, so that we will not die!’ <sup>17</sup>Then the LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well. <sup>18</sup>I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. <sup>19</sup>I will hold accountable whoever does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name. <sup>20</sup>But the prophet who presumes to speak a message in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods—that prophet must die.’ <sup>21</sup>You may say to yourself, ‘How can we recognize a message the LORD has not spoken?’ <sup>22</sup>When a prophet speaks in the LORD's name, and the message does not come true or is not fulfilled, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.

Notice the focus of support to be sent to Judea (the region of Judea)

To read more about the history research of this, please go to  
<http://bit.ly/Acts11FamineRelief>

**Overview:**

1. The Famine would not take place for a few years into the future.  
They believed this prophecy and made immediate plans on how to help.  
They were going to delivered the funds to the elders of the churches in Judea by the

hand of Barnabas and Saul (Paul). [according to their ability – ref. 2 Cor. 8 & 9]

2. The Gentile churches would be the ones who would help the Famine Victims in Judea, the churches of Judea (47 A.D. and later – multi-year event – in various places)
3. More churches would be planted in the Gentile World through the church in Antioch. **Antioch would be God's New Launching Pad** for the Gospel to the Gentiles  
Those future churches would also help out with the famine victims in Judea.  
Collaboration and Cooperation (Acts 13 and onward)

**COLLABORATIVE RELIEF** → Let's look at some passages in the Epistles of Paul that reference this ... and see how this all ties together. Many of the passages that are used to guilt folks into "TITHING" are actually related to this one time cooperative, collaborative fundraising event for the famine victims in Judea - that Agabus predicted by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 11:28)

#### **Romans 15:25-28:**

Right now I am traveling to Jerusalem to serve the saints, <sup>26</sup> because **Macedonia and Achaia** were pleased to **make a contribution** for the poor among the saints in **Jerusalem**. <sup>27</sup> Yes, they were pleased, and indeed are **indebted** to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their [i.e. the Jews'] spiritual benefits, then they are obligated to minister to them in **material needs**. <sup>28</sup> So when I have **finished** this and **safely delivered the funds** to them, I will visit you on my way to Spain.

#### **1 Corinthians 16:1-4:**

Now about **the collection for the saints**: Do the same as I instructed the Galatian churches. <sup>2</sup> On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and save in keeping with how he is prospering, so that **no collections** will need to be made when I come. <sup>3</sup> When I arrive, I will send with letters those you recommend to **carry your gift to Jerusalem**. <sup>4</sup> If it is suitable for me to go as well, they will travel with me.

#### **2 Corinthians 8 (the whole chapter)**

(Here are some snippets)

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about **the grace of God** that was given to the churches of Macedonia [e.g.: Philippi is one of those churches]: <sup>2</sup> During a severe trial brought about by affliction, their **abundant joy** and their **extreme poverty** overflowed in a wealth of **generosity** on their part. <sup>3</sup> I can testify that, according to their ability and even **beyond their ability**, of their own accord, <sup>4</sup> they begged us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in **the ministry to the saints**, <sup>5</sup> and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us by God's will. <sup>6</sup> So we urged Titus that just as he had begun, so he should also **COMPLETE** among you **this act of grace** [i.e. "this act of giving"]. (8:1-6)

<sup>13</sup> It is not that there should be relief for others and hardship for you, but it is a question of equality. <sup>14</sup> At the present time **your surplus** is available for their need, so that their abundance may in turn meet your need, in order that there may be equality. <sup>15</sup> As it is written: **The person who had much did not have too much, and the person who had little did not have too little.** (8:13-15)

<sup>24</sup> Therefore, **show them proof** before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you. (8:24) [using the tactic of Jewish Guilt – to get them to finish sending in their pledge that they promised the famine victims in Jerusalem]

## 2 Corinthians 9:1-5

Now concerning the ministry to the saints, it is unnecessary for me to write to you. <sup>2</sup> For I know your eagerness, and I **boast** about you to the Macedonians: “Achaia has been ready since last year,” and your zeal has stirred up most of them. <sup>3</sup> But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you in this matter would not prove empty, and so that you would be ready just as I said. <sup>4</sup> Otherwise, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we, not to mention you, would be put to shame in that situation. <sup>5</sup> Therefore I considered it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance the generous gift you promised, so that it will be ready as a gift and not as an extortion.  
[again Paul is using persuasive Jewish Guilt on them to fulfill their pledge, their gift of money]

## Galatians 2:9-10

<sup>9</sup> When James, Cephas [i.e. Peter], and John—those recognized as pillars—acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to **me and Barnabas**, agreeing that **we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised**. <sup>10</sup> They asked only **that we would remember the poor**, which I had made every effort to do. Thus, as more and more churches were planted by Barnabas, Saul ... Saul who was later known more and more as Paul – more church planted via Paul and Silas, Timothy, Titus, etc. (a church planting team of more than 16 partners) ... as more churches were planted, they also joined up to help with the Famine Victims.

From the Patterns of Examples of the Book of Acts and from the Doctrine Teaching of the Epistles (Romans thru Jude) we can come to the following conclusion:

**There are ONLY Two Main activities in which local churches VOLUNTARILY collaborated and cooperated with each other about (as recorded in the Bible):**

### 1. Missions – Spreading the Gospel and Church Planting. Priority #1

We see that the church of Jerusalem through Peter and John, Philip, and the folks who were scattered because of Stephen’s Martyrdom – helped to facilitate the planting of multitudes of churches within Judea, Samaria, and all the way up to Antioch.

The church of Jerusalem sent people to help Antioch regarding her establishment by sending leadership resources (Barnabas, then Saul, then other teachers and prophets – ref. Acts 13:1)

They were all cooperative and collaborative for the Mission of the Gospel of Christ.

We will find out from Acts 13 onward of how God used the church of Antioch to continue this collaboration and cooperation for the spread of the Gospel to more and more Gentiles.

So it is, today, that **New LIFE Fellowship** must voluntarily **collaborate and cooperate with other churches** in regards to **International Missions to the Ends of the Earth**, partnering with other churches and with missionaries to accomplish what God wants us to do for Missions. **What Unreached People Group are we going to Adopt?**

### 2. Relief – Famine, Disaster and Persecution Relief – Feeding, Helping and Protecting.

We see this from the Gentile churches helping the famine victims in Judea.

We must understand, that it is first focused on helping the church. Then it is to help those not of the church (outside of Christ). This is the pattern and the doctrine.

(we saw all the scriptures that related to the fundraising for the Judean famine victims earlier – here are couple passages that help us by **Principle**)

**Galatians 6:9-10** - <sup>9</sup> Let us not get tired of **doing good**, for we will reap at the proper time if we don’t give up. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, as we have **opportunity**, let us **work for the**

**good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.**

**Hebrews 13:2** - Don't neglect to **show hospitality**, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it.

**1 Timothy 6:17-19**

Instruct those **who are rich in the present age** not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, **but on God**, who richly provides us with all things to **enjoy**. <sup>18</sup> Instruct them to **do what is good**, to be **rich in good works**, to be **generous and willing to share**, <sup>19</sup> storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of what is **truly life**. (ref.: **Matthew 6:19-21**)

As New LIFE Fellowship, how can we be used by God to:

1. Reach an Unreached People Group  
- **AND** -
2. Help the Persecuted Church?