

Welcome to the Worship Celebration of

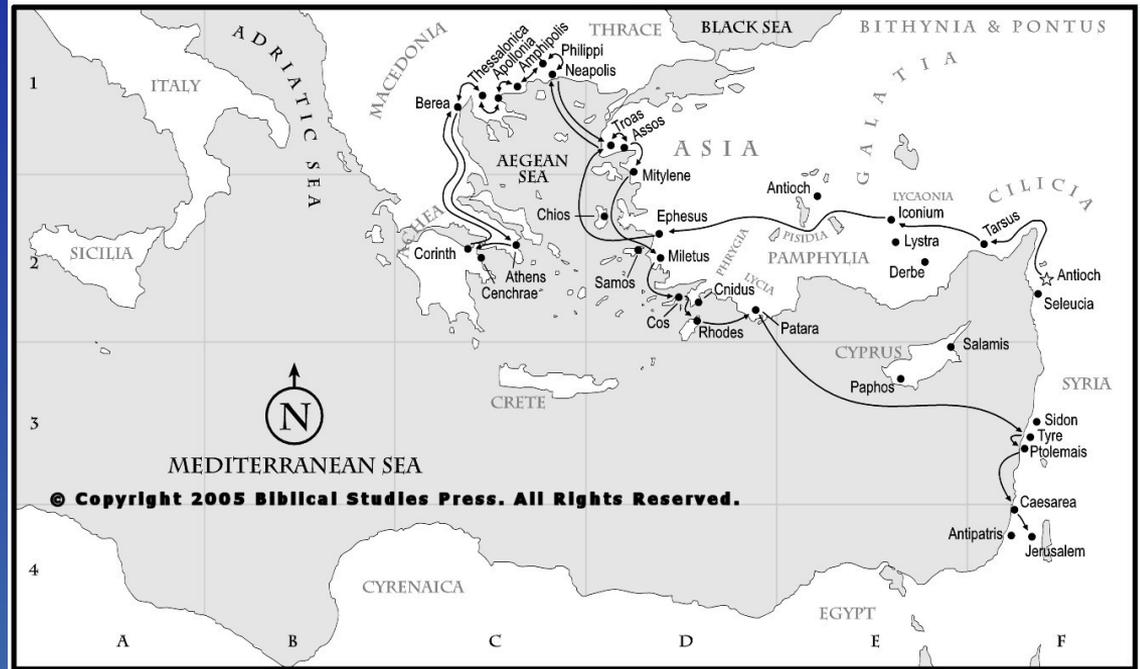


SIMPLY BIBLICAL | FAMILY INTEGRATED

Church – The Beginnings, Part 30

Famine and the Cooperation of Churches

Acts 11:27-30



Famine and the Cooperation of Churches

Acts 11:27-30

27 In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. **28** 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. **29** Each of the disciples, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers and sisters who lived in Judea. **30** They did this, sending it to the elders by means of Barnabas and Saul.

Observations:

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.

Notice the focus of support to be sent to Judea (the region of Judea) → thus the first part of this multi-year famine would begin in the region of Judea and up into Syria, etc.

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

¹⁵“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. ¹⁶This 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!’ ¹⁷Then the LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well. ¹⁸I 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. ¹⁹I will hold accountable whoever does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name. ²⁰But 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.’ ²¹You may say to yourself, ‘How can we recognize a message the LORD has **not spoken?’ ²²When 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.****

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).**
[each according to his 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**
(WHEN? Famine around 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 become 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 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: (Paul writing to the church in Rome)

Right now I am traveling to Jerusalem to serve the saints, ²⁶ because Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ So when I have finished this and safely delivered the funds to them, I will visit you on my way to Spain.

COLLABORATIVE RELIEF – For the brethren in Judea

1 Corinthians 16:1-4:

Now about the collection for the saints: Do the same as I instructed the Galatian churches. ² 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. ³ When I arrive, I will send with letters those you recommend to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it is suitable for me to go as well, they will travel with me.

COLLABORATIVE RELIEF – For the brethren in Judea

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]: ² During a severe trial brought about by affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ I can testify that, according to their ability and even beyond their ability, of their own accord, ⁴ they begged us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints, ⁵ and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us by God's will. ⁶ 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)

COLLABORATIVE RELIEF – For the brethren in Judea

2 Corinthians 8 (the whole chapter)

(Here are some snippets)

¹³ It is not that there should be relief for others and hardship for you, but it is a question of equality. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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)

²⁴ Therefore, show them proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you. (8:24)

[Paul was using the tactic of Jewish Guilt – to get them to finish sending in their pledge that they promised the famine victims in Jerusalem]

COLLABORATIVE RELIEF – For the brethren in Judea

2 Corinthians 9:1-5

Now concerning the ministry to the saints, it is unnecessary for me to write to you. ² 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. ³ 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. ⁴ Otherwise, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we, not to mention you, would be put to shame in that situation. ⁵ 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]

COLLABORATIVE RELIEF – For the brethren in Judea

Galatians 2:9-10

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ They asked only that we would remember the poor, which I had made every effort to do.

COLLABORATIVE RELIEF – For the brethren in Judea

Thus, as more and more churches were planted by Barnabas, Saul ... Paul and Silas, Timothy, Titus, etc. those new churches also joined 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):

There are ONLY Two Main activities in which local churches VOLUNTARILY collaborated and cooperated with each other about:

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 (ref. Acts 13:1)

From Acts 13 onward 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 we must voluntarily collaborate & cooperate with other churches in regards to International Missions to the Ends of the Earth. What Unreached People Group are we going to Adopt?

There are ONLY Two Main activities in which local churches VOLUNTARILY collaborated and cooperated with each other about:

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 was first focused on helping the church (the saints, the brethren). Then it was concerned for those not of the church. This is the pattern and the doctrine. (here are few passages that help us by Principle)

Galatians 6:9-10 - ⁹ Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up. ¹⁰ 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.

There are ONLY Two Main activities in which local churches VOLUNTARILY collaborated and cooperated with each other about:

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

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. ¹⁸ Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share, ¹⁹ 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)

THEREFORE ...

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

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

**Please Pray about how we can be a part of these
two area of ministry**