

Wealth and possessions according to Acts 11–28

Handout available on the SBLAAR app

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Antioch I 1:28-30; 12:25

- existing relationship between Antioch and Jerusalem believers
- Agabus announces λιμὸν μεγάλην v 28
- response
 - group: τῶν...μαθητῶν...ᾤρισαν v 29
 - individual: ἕκαστος...καθὼς εὐπορεῖτό τις v 29;
cf. 2 Cor 8:1-4
- security and distribution v 30

Antioch 11:28-30; 12:25

- food crises in the ancient world
 - on average every 3.3 years AD 300–600
 - result from crop failures
 - result in grain price increasing and civil disorder
 - Tacitus: “the excessive price of grain all but ended in rioting and large demands were made for several days in the theatre with a freedom not usually employed towards the sovereign” *Ann.* 6.13 (Jackson, LCL)

Antioch I 1:28-30; 12:25

- food crises in the ancient world
 - on average every 3.3 years AD 300–600
 - result from crop failures
 - result in grain price increasing and civil disorder
 - *curator annonae*

Antioch I 1:28-30; 12:25

- no public subscription list
- community to community giving
- ethnically diverse community giving to ethnically monochrome community
- cf. Izates' gift τοῖς πρώτοις τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν
“to leaders of the Jerusalemites”
Josephus, *Ant.* 20.2.5 §53 (Feldman, LCL)

Paul's Miletus speech 20:33-35

- detached from possessions v 33
 - ἀργυρίου ἢ χρυσίου ἢ ἱματισμοῦ οὐδενὸς ἐπεθύμησα
“no-one’s silver or gold or clothing **have I coveted**”
 - οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις “you shall not **covet**”
Exod 20:17 LXX
 - Dio Chrysostom: “posting themselves at street-corners, in alleyways, and at temple-gates, pass round the hat and play upon the credulity of lads and sailors and crowds of that sort” Or. 32.9
(Crosby, LCL)

Paul's Miletus speech 20:33-35

- detached from possessions v 33
- financially independent v 34
 - κοπιῶντας v 35 + αἱ χεῖρες αὐταὶ v 34
cf. ἡργάζετο 18:3

Paul's Miletus speech 20:33-35

- detached from possessions v 33
- financially independent v 34
- a model for imitation v 35
 - πάντα ὑπέδειξα ὑμῖν
- a Jesus-saying v 35
 - μακάριόν ἐστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν

Hospitality

- volume of references in Acts 11–28

Hospitality: lexemes

- ξεν– word group “hospitality”, etc.
- φιланθρωπία “kindness”
- φιλόφρων “friendly”
- ἀσπάζομαι “greet, welcome”
- εἰς τὸν οἶκον + verb εἰσέρχομαι, ἀνάγω
“enter into the house”
- μένω, ἐπιμένω “stay”
- καταλύω “lodge”
- ὑποδέχομαι, ἀναδέχομαι “entertain as guest”
- προπέμπω “send on the way”

Hospitality: cultural script

- stranger approaches
- host recognises stranger and offers hospitality
- host offers...
- host questions stranger after meal
- guest may reveal he is guest-friend or host may request such a relationship
- host invites guest into home and provides bed
- host gives gifts and provisions for onward journey, and often accompanies guest

Hospitality

- volume of references in Acts 11–28
- Greek lexemes
- cultural script
- hospitality (or not) an index of piety
 - Zeus/Jupiter as “god of the strangers”, “god of hospitality”
 - Acts: fictive kinship language
 - Acts: gentile hospitality emblematic of reception of the gospel, e.g. Lydia 16:14-15

Hospitality

- volume of references in Acts 11–28
- Greek lexemes
- cultural script
- hospitality (or not) an index of piety
- echo of Israel called to hospitality because YHWH rescued them from being aliens
 - e.g. “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, **for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.**” Lev 19:33-34

The gospel damaging wealth

- Philippi 16:16-24

- Ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ κύριοι αὐτῆς ὅτι ἐξῆλθεν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν

“When her owners saw that their hope of profit was gone” (v 20)

The gospel damaging wealth

- Philippi 16:16-24
- Ephesus
 - burning magic books 19:18-19
 - the silversmiths 19:23-41
 - οὐκ ὀλίγην ἐργασίαν v 24
 - “all of Asia” v 26; “the whole of Asia and the inhabited world” v 27

The gospel damaging wealth

- Philippi 16:16-24
- Ephesus 19:18-19, 23-41
- Felix 24:26
 - δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος v 25
 - bribery: Albinus in Josephus *Ant.*20.9.5 §215
 - *Lex Iulia de Repetundis* 59 BC

A coherent view?

- “the earth is the Lord’s” Ps 24:1
- Jubilee legislation Lev 25:10, 13, 15, etc.
- provision for widows, orphans and resident aliens
Deut 24:21-22
- Paul’s example rooted in Jesus-saying
Acts 20:35; cf. 2 Cor 8:9
- not hoarding surplus—generosity to cross
boundaries

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