
WEALTH *and* POSSESSIONS according to ACTS 11–28

Why Acts 11–28?

- previous studies focus on early chapters, notably 2:42-47; 4:32-35, 36-37; 5:1-11; 6:1-7
- Acts 9–28 “contain very little about possessions” Luke T. Johnson, *Literary Function*, 29

The Antioch believers’ response to famine in Judaea 11:28-30; 12:25

- Agabus’ announcement v 28
- group response: fronted τῶν...μαθητῶν, plural ὤρισαν v 29
- individual response: ἕκαστος, καθὼς εὐπορεῖτό τις v 29; cf. 2 Cor 8:1-4
- delivery to *Judaeian* assemblies v 29
- secure delivery of the gift v 30
- cities appointing *curator annonae* (Greek ἀγορανόμος “market controller”, σιτομέτρης “one who measures and deals out corn”; cf. cognate verb Gen 47:12 LXX) in face of famine
- cf. Izates sending aid τοῖς πρώτοις τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν “to leaders of the Jerusalemites” Josephus, *Ant.* 20.2.5 §53

Paul’s handling of wealth in the Miletus speech 20:33-35

- detachment from possessions: ἐπιθυμέω v 33; cf. Exod 20:17 LXX; 1 Sam 12:3-5; Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 32.9
- financial independence v 34
- κοπιᾶω v 35; cf. ἐργάζομαι 18:3
- πάντα ὑπέδειξα ὑμῖν v 35
- τῶν ἀσθενούντων v 35; cf. Luke 4:40; 9:1-3; 10:8-9; Acts 4:8-10; 5:14-16; 9:37; 19:11-12
- Jesus-saying μακάριόν ἐστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν v 35; cf. Luke 12:13-21; 16:19-31

Hospitality

- previous work
 - Adolf von Harnack and Henry J. Cadbury: Luke’s interest in lodging
 - Christopher M. Hays, Andrew Arterbury, Joshua Jipp
- *volume of references to hospitality* 12:12-13; 16:15, 32-34; 17:5-7; 18:1-3, 7; 20:8, 36-38; 21:3-6, 7, 8-10, 10-12, 15-16; 27:3; 28:7, 17, 23, 30-31
- *Greek lexemes found in Graeco-Roman and Jewish hospitality scenes, many shared with Acts:* ξεν– word group: ξενία “hospitality”, ξενίζω “show hospitality, lodge” (10:6, 18, 23, 32; 28:7), ξενοδοχέω “show hospitality”, φιλοξενία “hospitality”; φιλανθρωπία “kindness” (28:2); φιλόφρων “friendly” (cf. 28:7 adverb); ἀσπάζομαι “greet, welcome” (21:7); εἰς τὸν οἶκον + suitable verb, e.g. εἰσέρχομαι “enter”, ἀνάγω “bring” (11:12; 16:15, 34; 21:8); μένω, ἐπιμένω “stay” (9:43; 16:15; 18:3, 20; 21:4, 7, 10; 28:12, 14, 16); καταλύω “lodge” (Luke 9:12; 19:7); ὑποδέχομαι, ἀναδέχομαι “entertain as guest” (17:7; 28:7, 30); προπέμπω “send on the way” (15:3; 20:38; 21:5)

- A “cultural script” for hospitality (Jipp)
 - stranger approaches—missionaries often seek out fellow-believers 21:4, 7; 28:13-14
 - host recognises stranger’s presence and offers hospitality 16:15, 29b; 28:17, 23
 - host offers place, food, drink, water to bathe or wash, clothes, entertainment 20:7, 11
 - host questions stranger after meal (generally not in Jewish and Christian sources)
 - guest may reveal he is a guest-friend or host may request such a relationship 16:15
 - host invites guest into home and provides bed 16:15, 40
 - host gives gifts and provisions for onward journey, often accompanying 28:10; 20:36-38; 21:3-7, 16
- hospitality (or unhospitality) an *index of piety*: link to Zeus/Jupiter “god of the strangers”, “god of hospitality”, e.g. Homer, *Od.* 6.207-8; 9.271; 14.283-87; 2 Macc 6:2; Aeschylus, *Ag.* 60-62; cf. Philo, *Abr.* 60, 114-18
 - Acts: fictive kinship language e.g. 15:36; 16:40; 17:6, 10, 14; 18:18; 21:7; 28:14, 15
 - Acts: gentile hospitality emblematic of reception of the gospel 16:14-15, 29-34; cf. rejection 17:5-7
- *echo of Israel* being called to hospitality because YHWH rescued them from being aliens Exod 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:33-34; Deut 23:7; 26:5-11; cf. Luke 12:48

The gospel damaging wealth

- Philippi 16:16-24
 - Ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ κύριοι (cf. κύριος vv 15, 31) αὐτῆς ὅτι ἐξῆλθεν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν v 20
 - owners present issue as anti-Jewish vv 20-21
- Ephesus 19:18-20, 23-28
 - sale of magic books vv 18-19 worth 50,000 silver coins (137 years of work!)
 - riot provoked by silversmiths vv 23-41: οὐκ ὀλίγην ἐργασίαν v 24—Demetrius presents issue as anti-Artemis
- Felix 24:26
 - Paul speaking about δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος v 25
 - Felix repeatedly (πυκνότερον v 26) hoping for a bribe; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 20.9.5 §215; *J.W.* 2.14.1 §272

A coherent view?

- possessions as held in trust Ps 24:1; cf. Jubilee Lev 25:10, 13, 15, etc.
- provision for widow, orphan and resident alien e.g. Deut 24:21-22
- christological grounding 20:35; cf. 2 Cor 8:9
- not hoarding—contrast Luke 12:16-21; cf. Amos 4:1-3

Some key sources

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