

Acts 11:27-30, 12:24-25
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Overview

From 11:19 through ch. 15, the structure of the book is dominated by Antioch.

1. 11:19-26, Founding of the Church; also gets Barnabas and Saul together.
2. 12-15, Three Characteristics of the Church, each bracketed by the departure and return of Barnabas and Paul:
 - a) 12, a Loving church
 - b) 13-14, a Missionary church
 - c) 15, a Disciplined churchObjective: a case study for the things the church should do.
3. 11:27-12:25
 - a) The brackets, as in the other three cases, are B&S leaving and then returning to Antioch. This trip is an errand of mercy to the poor believers in Jerusalem.
 - b) The intermediate material is only loosely related to the brackets, and forms an extensive chiasm describing ongoing persecution in Jerusalem, now from King Herod himself. Deal with this next week.
 - c) We have earlier seen how a local church cares for needy folk in its own midst (ch. 5a, 6). Now we have a study on how to care for those more remote. Focus on four stages in this event, which may guide us in similar situations today.
 - 1) 11:27-28, learning of the need
 - 2) 11:29, the pattern of individual participation
 - 3) 11:30, executing the transfer
 - 4) 12:25, completion of the mission

A. 11:27-28, Learning of the need

1. 27, Itinerant prophets
 - a) Continuation of the activity by which Barnabas came
 - b) Later, the pattern which Paul followed in revisiting his churches. Two functions of the evangelist:
 - 1) planting a church in the first place;
 - 2) revisiting and encouraging them from time to time.
 - c) Cf. 3 John 5-8.
 - d) Cf. our travels today. Should seek out other believers and encourage them; should welcome others here, as possible messengers from the Lord.
2. 28, the prophetic message. As in the OT, God occasionally gave prophets knowledge of the future. Cf. 21:10,11, this same man prophesies Paul's arrest. A particular characteristic of the prophetic gift.

B. 11:29, Planning

(Before the famine actually struck)

1. "The disciples." God's purpose is that believers should care for believers, and not rely on unbelievers.
2. "according to his ability." The expression is only here in the NT; in the LXX, only in Lev. 25, the law of the kinsman redeemer, describing one who is able to redeem himself (v.49) or his field (v.26) from bondage.
 - a) Meaning: the word thus has the flavor, "having sufficient resources to deliver s.o. from misfortune."
 - b) *Application*:
 - 1) Specifically, our responsibility to provide for one another in need.
 - 2) More generally, suggests the applicability of the OT law for guiding believers today in ethical matters.
3. "determined," a transitive verb, "to designate, set aside." Elsewhere describes a designated person or specified period of time. Here, object must be understood: they set something, sc. money, aside, so as to have it to send to the poorer brethren. This practice conforms to Paul's later instruction in 1 Cor. 16:1-4:

Acts 11:29
"every man according to
his ability"

1 Cor. 16:1-4
2, "as God hath prospered him"

"determined [money]"

2, "let every one of you lay
by him in store"

"to send relief unto the
brethren"

1, "concerning the collection
for the saints"

4. Thus four characteristics of giving emerge:
 - a) Who does it? Believers, not unbelievers.
 - b) Why do they do it? to relieve less fortunate brethren.
 - c) How much? as they are able; as God prospers them.
 - d) How? Individually "designated" or "lay by in store"; brought together for the specific purpose.

C. 11:30, Execution

(When the famine arrived)

1. Two further principles for giving:
 - a) Sent to the elders in Jerusalem, not directly to the needy saints. Recognized channels of orderly administration.
 - b) Two messengers, to avoid accusations of mishandling of funds. Cf. 2 Cor. 8:16-22 for the same principle in later financial actions.
2. This is the first mention of elders as recognized church leaders

in Acts. There were still apostles in Jerusalem, but now the elders lead the local assembly, in contrast with the wider ministry of the apostles to the church at large.

D. 12:25, Completion

12:25, Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch after having completed their mission to Jerusalem. The sending church deserves a report back, a pattern we will see several times over.

John Mark is introduced here in preparation for his participation in the first journey, in ch.13. Barnabas' nephew (Col. 4:10). Note how Barnabas picks up first Saul, then John Mark. He seeks out other believers and develops their gifts--a discipling ministry that is still of great value today.

Summary:

1. The value of fellowship across assemblies--exemplified both by the traveling prophets and by the gift from Antioch to Jerusalem.
2. Patterns for charity among believers: who does it, to whom, how, and how conveyed to avoid any appearance of evil.

Hymn:

Analysis

A. 11:19-26, A Fledgling Church [earlier message]

B. 11:27-12:25, A Loving Church

Sending relief to Jerusalem

Note chiasitic structure of the story. B&S sections are clearly external; Peter story may be introduced to set up John Mark, v.12. [center sections next message]

1. 11:27-30, Barnabas and Saul go to Jerusalem

a) 27)En tau/tais de\ tai^s h(me/rais kath^lqon a)po\
(Ierosolu/mwn profh^tai ei)s)Antio/xelian:

b) 28 a)nasta\s de\ ei(^s e)c au)tw^no)no/mati (/Agabos
e)sh/manen dia\ tou^ pneu/matos limo\n mega/lhn me/llein
e)/sesqai e)f' o(/lhn th\n oi)koume/nhn:
1) h(/tis e)ge/neto e)pi\ Klaudi/ou.

c) 29 tw^no) de\ maqhtw^no) kaqw\s eu)porei^to/ [Lev. 25:26,49; re.
ability of kinsman to redeem poorer relative] tis w(/risan
e(/kastos au)tw^no) ei)s diakoni/an pe/myai toi^s katoikou^sin
e)n th^|)Ioudai/a| a)delfoi^s:

d) 30 o(\ kai\ e)poi/hsan a)postei/lantes pro\s tou\s
presbute/rous dia\ xeiro\s Barnaba^ kai\ Sau/lou.

2. 12:1-23, Middle [next week]

a) 12:1-3, Herod's offenses

b) 4, Herod's Guards

c) 5, Peter and the church

d) 6-11, Peter's delivery (center of Chiasm)

e) 12-17, Peter and the Church

f) 18-19, Herod and the guards

g) 20-24, Judgment of Herod

3. 25, Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch

25 Barnaba^s de\ kai\ Sau^los u(pe/streyan

a) ei)s)Ierousalh\m plhrw/santes th\n diakoni/an,

b) sumparalabo/ntes)Iwa/nhn to\n e)piklhqe/nta Ma^rkon.

C. 13-14, A Missionary Church [later message]

D. 15, A Disciplined Church [later message]