

**ACTS:**  
**A HISTORY BOOK**  
*Living* **IN YOU.**

Part 18

Growing Church; Building  
Tension

Acts 15:1 - 35



1<sup>st</sup> visit – *The Third Year Visit*  
AD 37

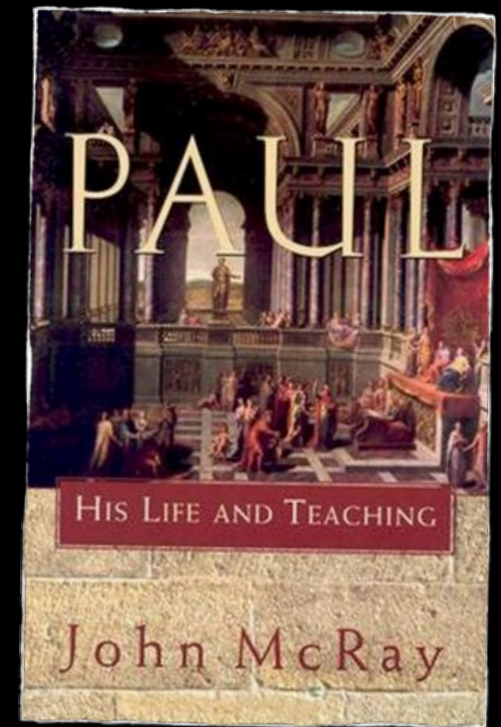
<sup>18</sup> Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days. <sup>19</sup> I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. (NIV)

Galatians 1:16 – 18

“Paul and Peter had much to discuss. Undoubtedly, Paul would have wanted Peter to take him to the places where Jesus had spoken and worked—places such as the Garden of Gethsemane, the upper room, the home of Lazarus, the pools of Siloam and Bethesda, and especially Calvary. He would have wanted an explanation of all Peter knew of the life and ministry of Jesus, about which Paul knew little.

Paul surely would have shown Peter where he had participated in the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and Peter would have shown Paul where he three times had denied that he even knew Jesus. Yes, they would have had many things to discuss, some of which they were ashamed of.

They spent fifteen days together recounting joys and sorrows.”



1<sup>st</sup> visit – *The Third Year Visit*  
AD 37

2<sup>nd</sup> visit – The Famine Visit  
AD 46 or 47



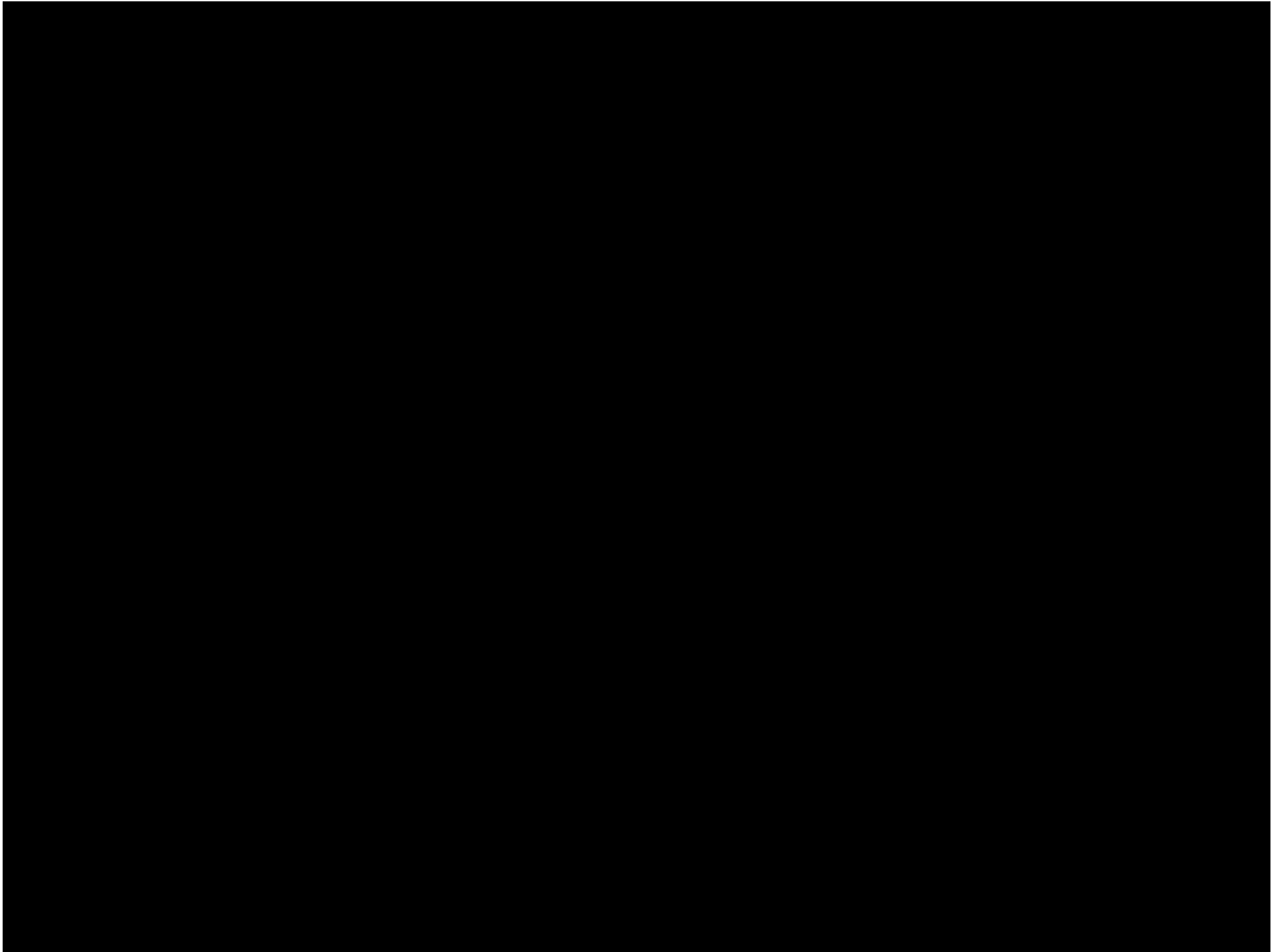


1<sup>st</sup> visit – *The Third Year Visit*

“I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles.” (NIV)

Galatians 2:2

3rd visit – The Fourteenth Year Visit  
AD 47



<sup>11</sup> When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup> For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.

<sup>13</sup> The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. (NIV)

Galatians 2:11 – 13

## THE APOSTLE PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY



“Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

Galatians 2:2 NIV





1<sup>st</sup> visit – *The Third Year Visit*  
AD 37

“What is the content of the faith that will put us in right standing with God?”

3<sup>rd</sup> visit – Table fellowship visit

AD 47

4<sup>th</sup> visit – The Jerusalem Conference  
AD 49

Ephesians 2:11 - 18

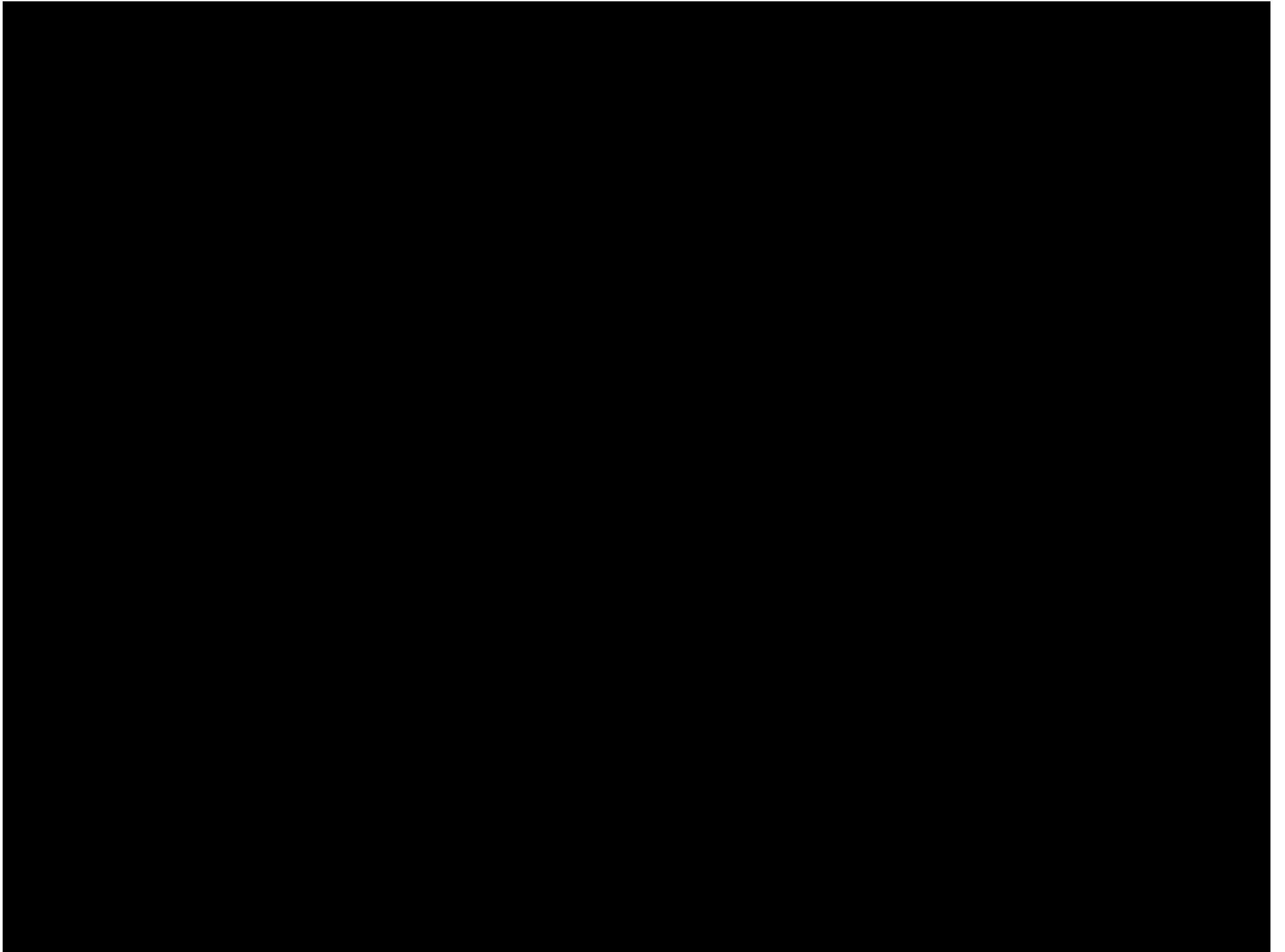
<sup>11</sup> Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands) — <sup>12</sup> remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

Ephesians 2:11 - 18

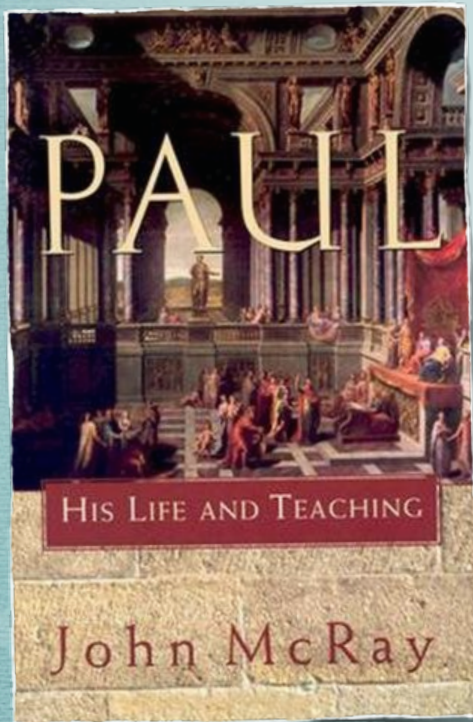
<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup> by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations.

Ephesians 2:11 - 18

His purpose was to create in himself one new people out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. <sup>17</sup> He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.



An Antioch segment by represented  
by Paul and Barnabas.

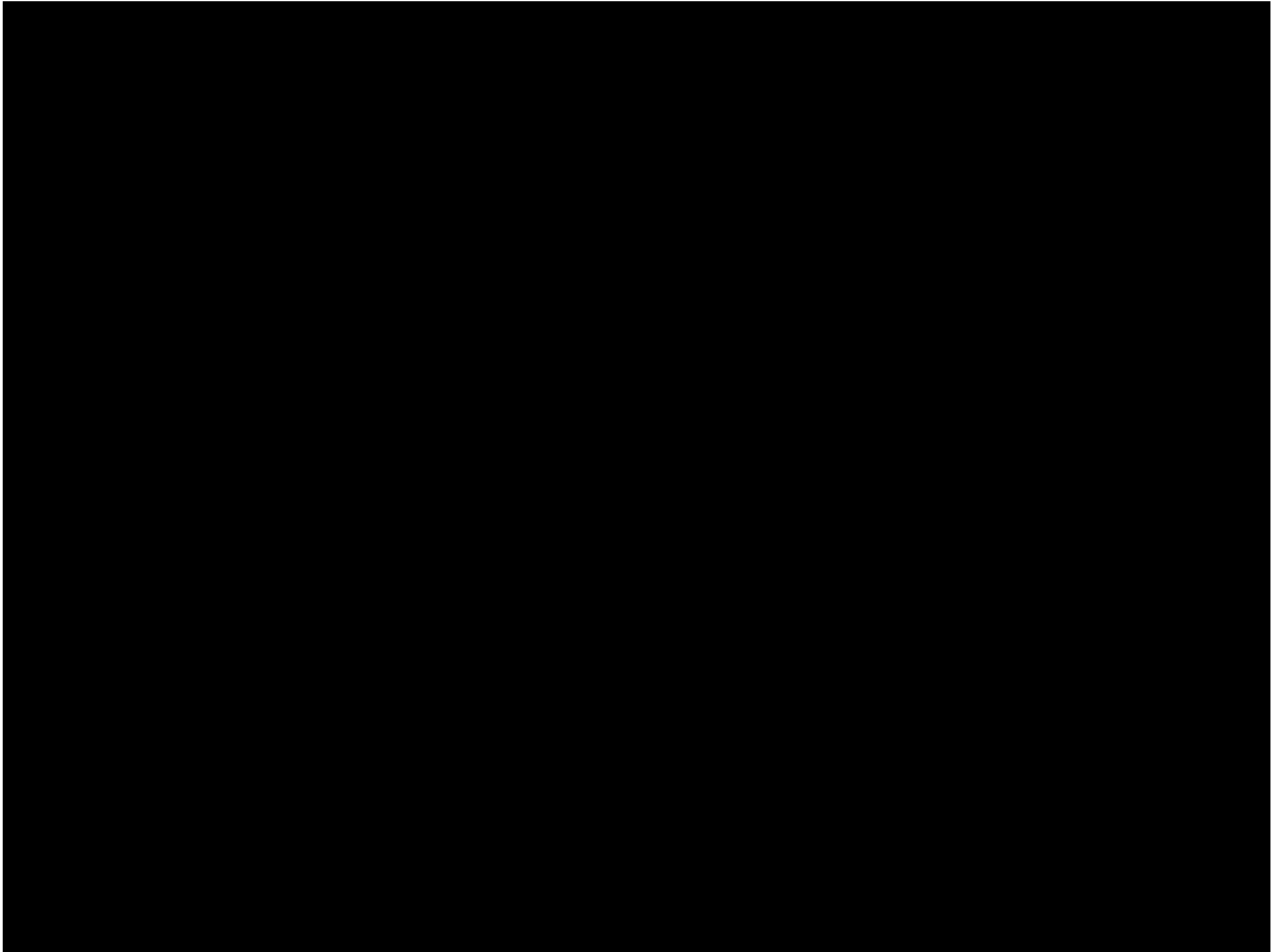


A segment in Jerusalem, led by  
James, the brother of Jesus.

A segment led by Peter that met  
in the house of Mary, the  
mother of John Mark, also in  
Jerusalem.

“The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.” (Acts 15:5)

“. . . putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear?” (Acts 15:10)





Acts 15:28 - 29

<sup>28</sup> “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden on you than these few requirements: <sup>29</sup>

You must abstain from eating *food offered to idols*, from *consuming blood* or the *meat of strangled animals*, and from *sexual immorality*. If you do this, you will do well. Farewell.” (NLT)

# Lessons we can glean from Acts 15

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1. The superiority of love over law

## 1 Corinthians 8

<sup>1</sup> Now about food sacrificed to idols:  
We know that “We all possess  
knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up  
while love builds up. <sup>2</sup> Those who  
think they know something do not yet  
know as they ought to know. <sup>3</sup> But  
whoever loves God is known by God.

1 Corinthians 8

<sup>4</sup> So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.” <sup>5</sup> For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), <sup>6</sup> yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

## 1 Corinthians 8

<sup>7</sup> But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. <sup>8</sup> But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

## 1 Corinthians 8

<sup>9</sup> Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup> For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup> So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge.

1 Corinthians 8

Love limited liberty

<sup>12</sup> When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

Romans 14:19 - 21

## Love limited liberty

<sup>19</sup> Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. <sup>20</sup> Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. <sup>21</sup> It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.



1 Corinthians 6:12 & 13

## Love limited liberty

<sup>12</sup> “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. <sup>13</sup> “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

1 Corinthians 10:23 & 24

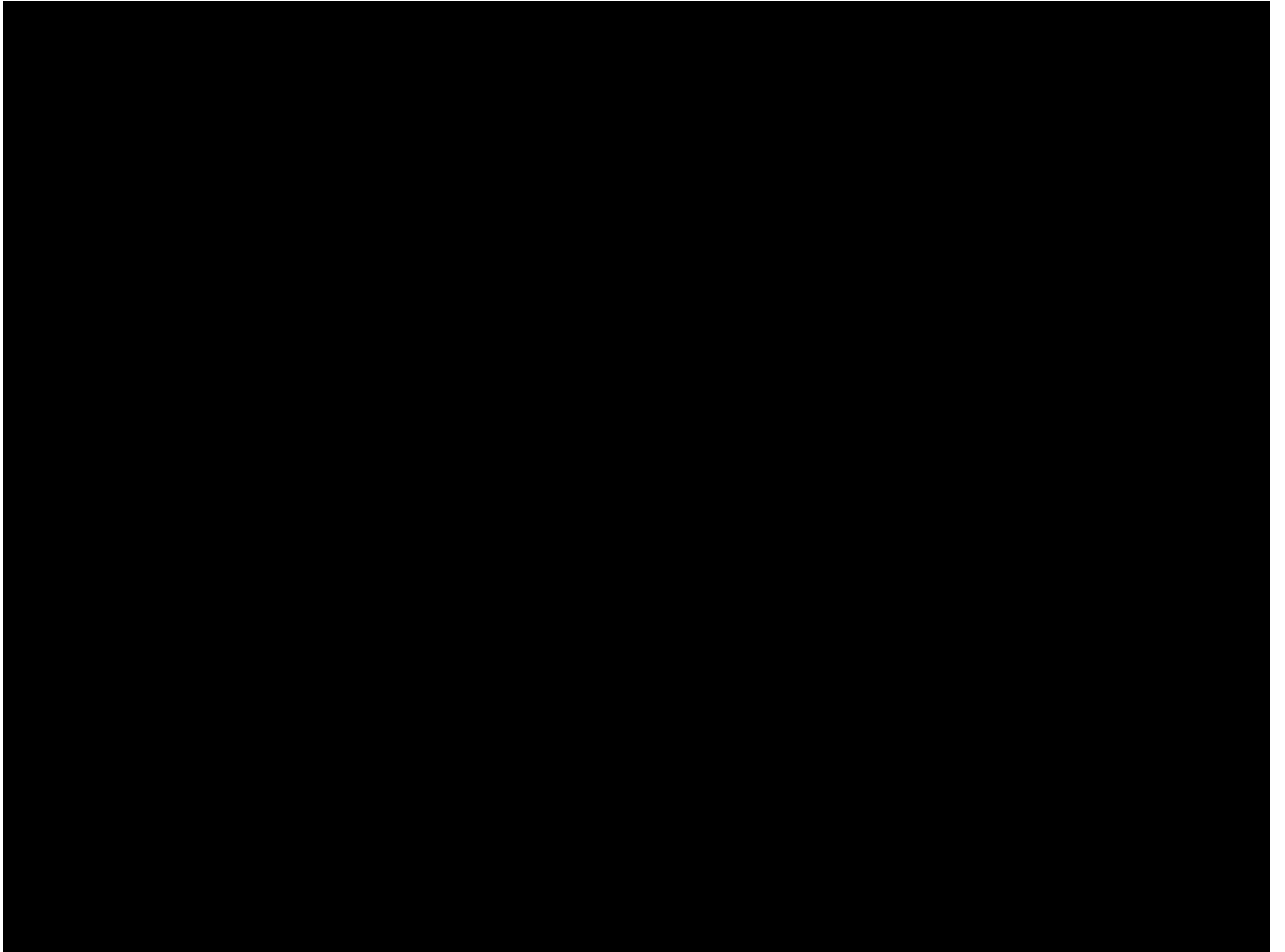
*Love limited liberty*

<sup>23</sup> “All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. <sup>24</sup> Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

1 Corinthians 10:31 - 33

*Love limited liberty*

<sup>31</sup> So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. <sup>32</sup> Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God — <sup>33</sup> even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.



## Lessons we can glean from Acts 15

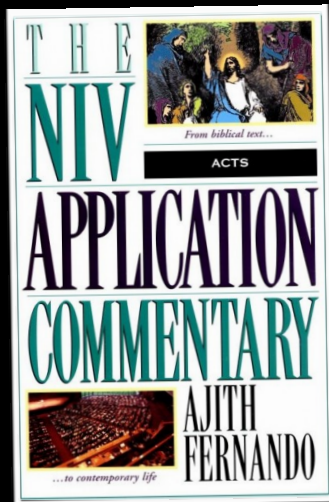
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1. The superiority of love over law
2. The superiority of Scripture

<sup>12</sup> The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. <sup>13</sup> When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. <sup>14</sup> Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. <sup>15</sup> The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written . . .

Acts 15:12 - 15

“If such experiences do not contradict Scripture and if they can be seen as applications of principles taught in the Bible, then we can accept them as legitimate; but we must not insist on them for everyone. This has often happened in the church, that people had a particular experience that enriched their lives and did not seem to contradict Scripture.



While it was legitimate for those who had this experience, it would have been wrong for them to insist on everyone having the same experience.”







## Lessons we can glean from Acts 15

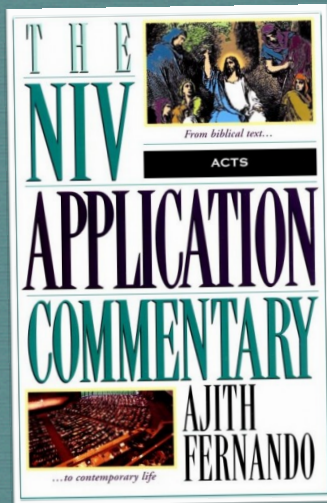
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1. The superiority of love over law
2. The superiority of Scripture

Scripture is *always* our *only* standard for faith and practice.

# Lessons we can glean from Acts 15

1. The superiority of love over law
2. The superiority of Scripture
3. The necessity of standing for truth



In Christianity there is the awful and necessary intolerance of truth. Christianity is a religion of revelation. We believe that God has spoken a definite and eternal Word to humanity. Any teaching contrary to that Word within the church must be opposed with utmost urgency.

## Lessons we can glean from Acts 15

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1. The superiority of love over law
2. The superiority of Scripture
3. The necessity of standing for truth

Two principles:

We can argue for truth *without insulting people* with whom we disagree.

We need to be careful that we are arguing for things about which *the Bible is clear and unambiguous.*

# Lessons we can glean from Acts 15

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1. The superiority of love over law
2. The superiority of Scripture
3. The necessity of standing for truth
4. The necessity of humility

Peter was older than Paul

Peter was one of the *first* disciples called by Jesus and was with him during his entire public ministry.

Peter was the disciple to whom Jesus said: “upon *you* will I build my church.”

Peter was the *first* one to eat with Gentiles and accept them into the church.

