

- There are several metaphors for the church that help us to understand our relationship with God and Jesus and the Spirit and with one another.

Kingdom & Citizens



- Colossians 1:13: He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
- Philippians 3:20: But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
- This pictures the church as a group of saved citizens under the rule of the King of kings.



- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.
- 1 Peter 2:5: you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- This pictures the church as a temple, we are the stones... living stones.... we are a dwelling place for God, we are holy.
- Jesus is the cornerstone, we line up with Him. He is the high priest, we are priests.



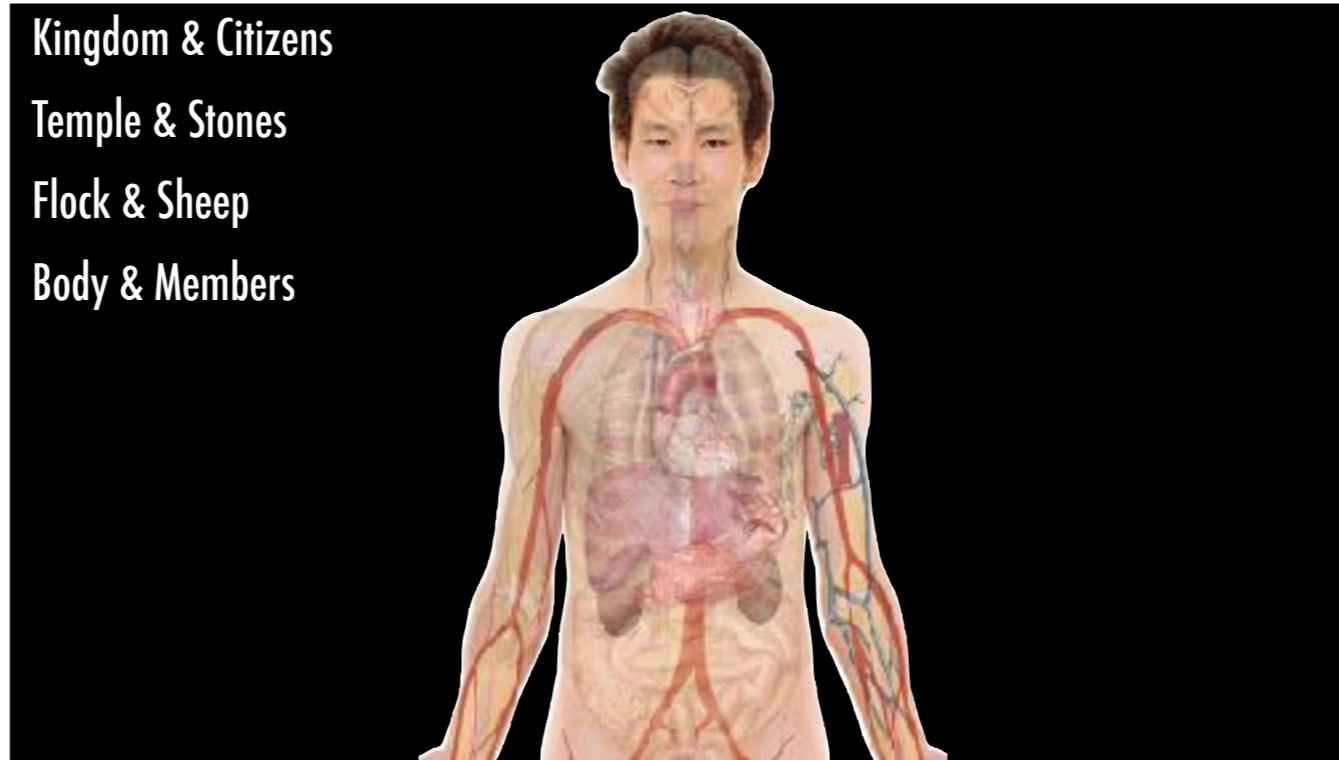
- John 10.16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.
- This pictures the church as a flock of sheep. Joined together under one shepherd, Jesus.
- We are owned, purchased, by Jesus; known by Him and we follow Him.

Kingdom & Citizens

Temple & Stones

Flock & Sheep

Body & Members



- Romans 12:4-5: For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-13: For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.
- This pictures the church as a body (Christ is the head), and we are many members.
- Demonstrates the unity of the body, the care we should have for each other. We are to work together in love to grow!

Kingdom & Citizens

Temple & Stones

Flock & Sheep

Body & Members

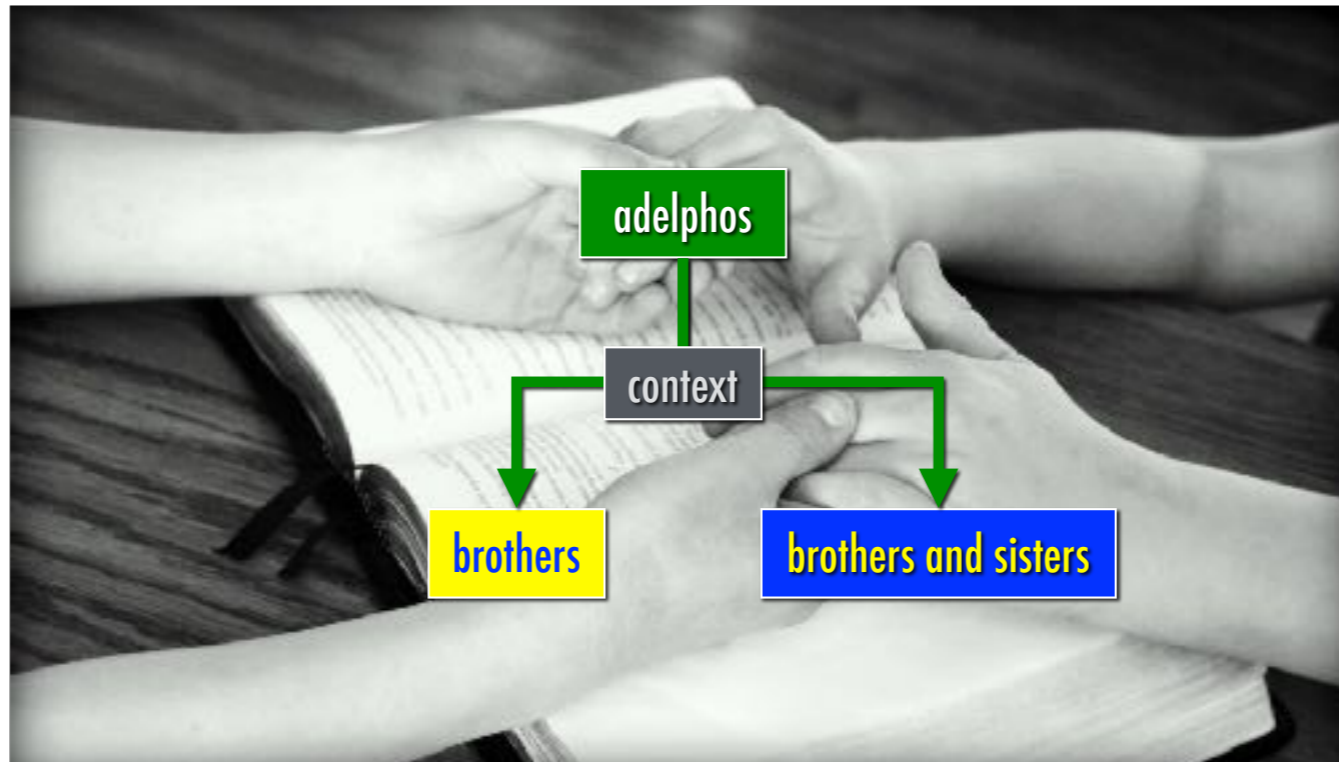
Household & Brothers



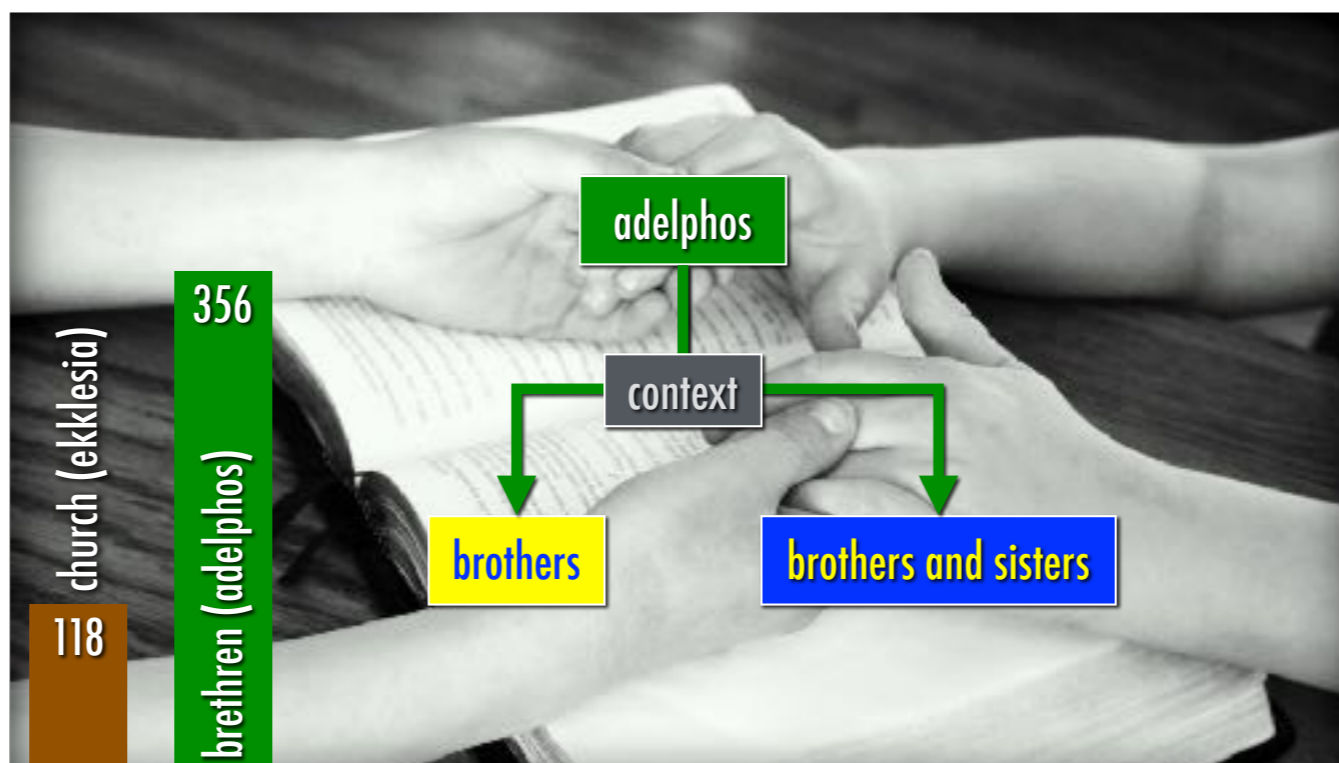
- Ephesians 2:19: So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
- Galatians 4:5-7: to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.
- Hebrews 2:11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,
- In this picture of the church, we are to see ourselves as a Family: God as our Father, Jesus our brother, we brothers and sisters adopted into this family.



- All of these are important and have merit.
- We need to know them, think about them, learn from them
- But in God's Word, the early saints used one of these more than any of the others.



- In the NT the greek word adelphos can be translated either “brothers” (males) or “brothers and sisters” (a group of males and females) depending on the context.
 - Normal way of using nouns with gender.



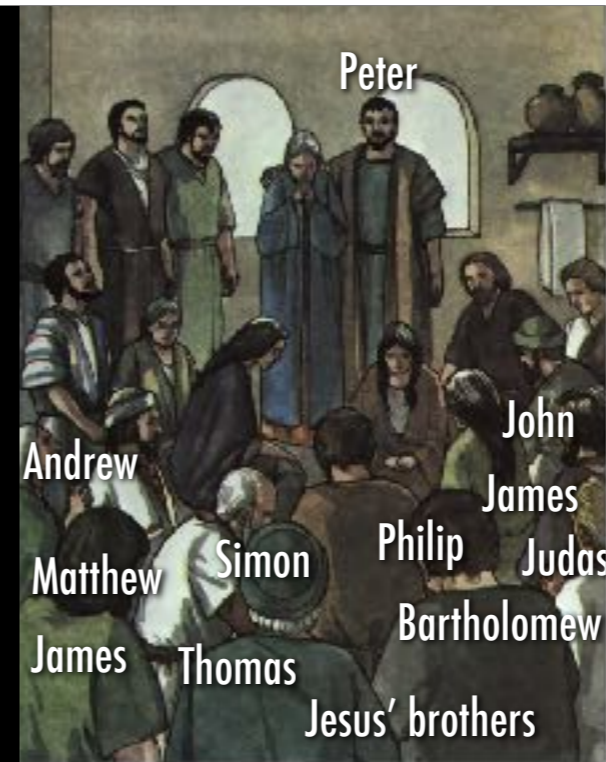
- The word we tend to use predominately is “church” (ekklesia)
 - Is used 118 times in the NT
- The word for brethren is used 356 times.
- This doesn’t mean that brethren is a better word, or more important concept than other terms.
 - It does mean it is a significant concept that we may have lost sight of, or even minimized for various reasons.
- The early saints mostly talked about themselves as family.
- It is the most used expression for a group of believers
 - Every NT book except 2 John and Jude
 - (Jude uses the term for being the brother of James)
 - Every author uses the term for a family of believers, except Jude.

Acts 1:12-16



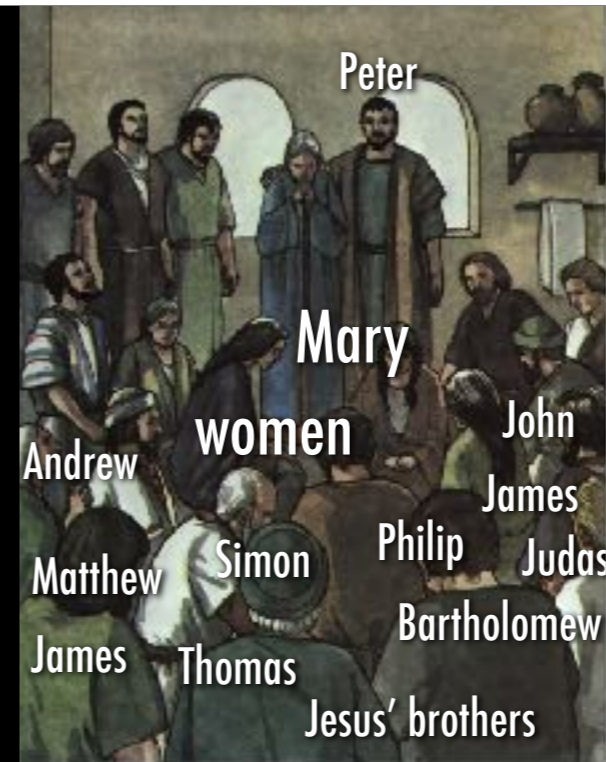
- Acts 1:12-14 (ESV) 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying

Acts 1:12-16



- Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.
- (ESV) Jesus, and his brothers.

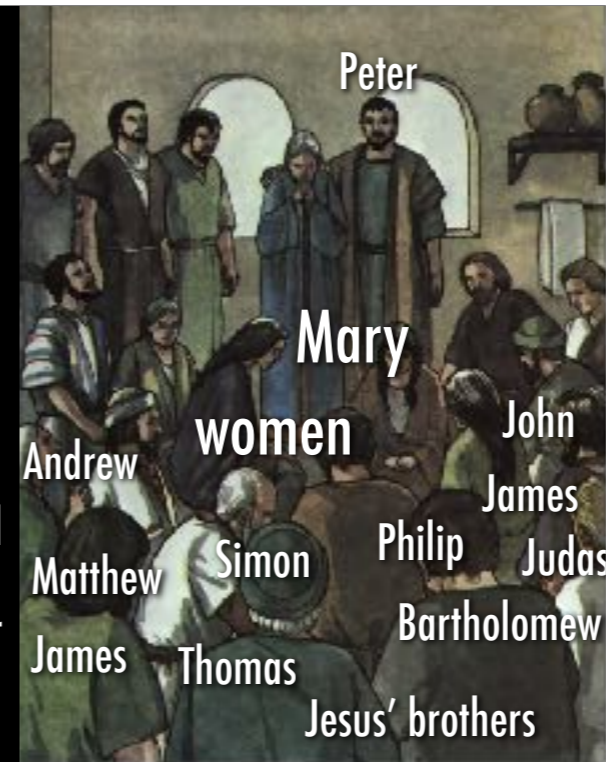
Acts 1:12-16



- together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus

Acts 1:12-16

one accord
together
the company of persons was in all about 120



- 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer
- together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.
- 15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120)

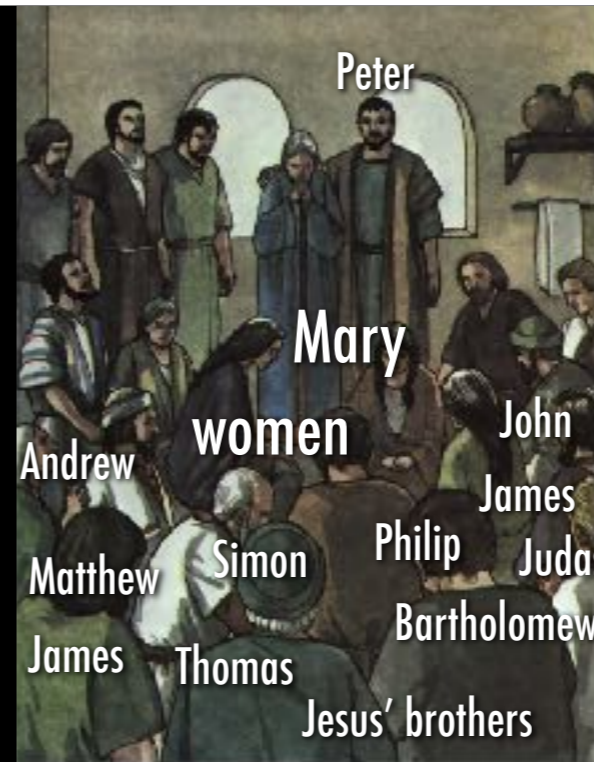
Acts 1:12-16

Peter stood up among the BROTHERS

one accord

together

the company of persons was in all about 120



- Acts 1:15-16 (ESV) 15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,

Acts 1:12-16

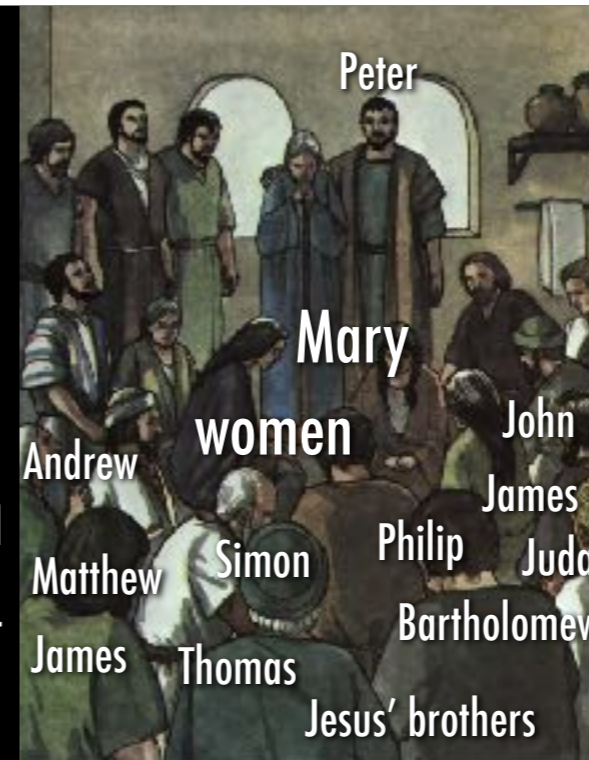
Peter stood up among the **BROTHERS**

BROTHERS, the Scripture had to be fulfilled

one accord

together

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- 16 “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

Acts 1:12-16

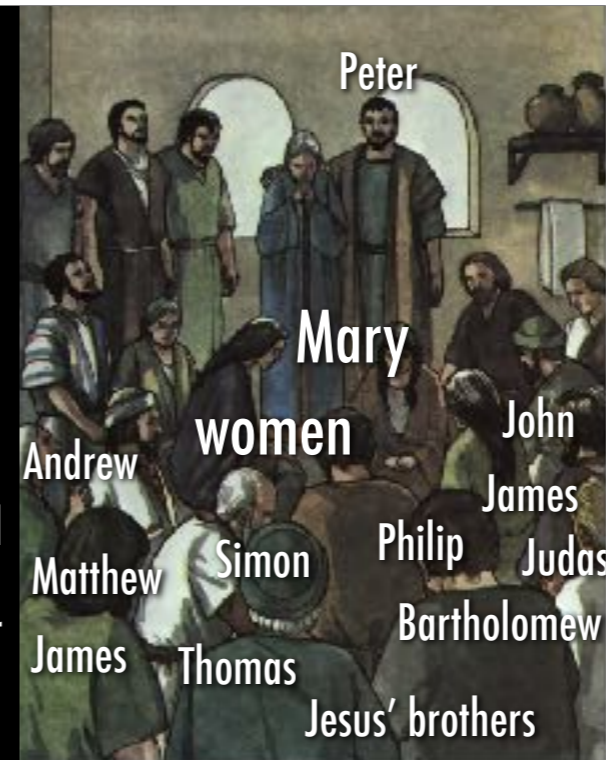
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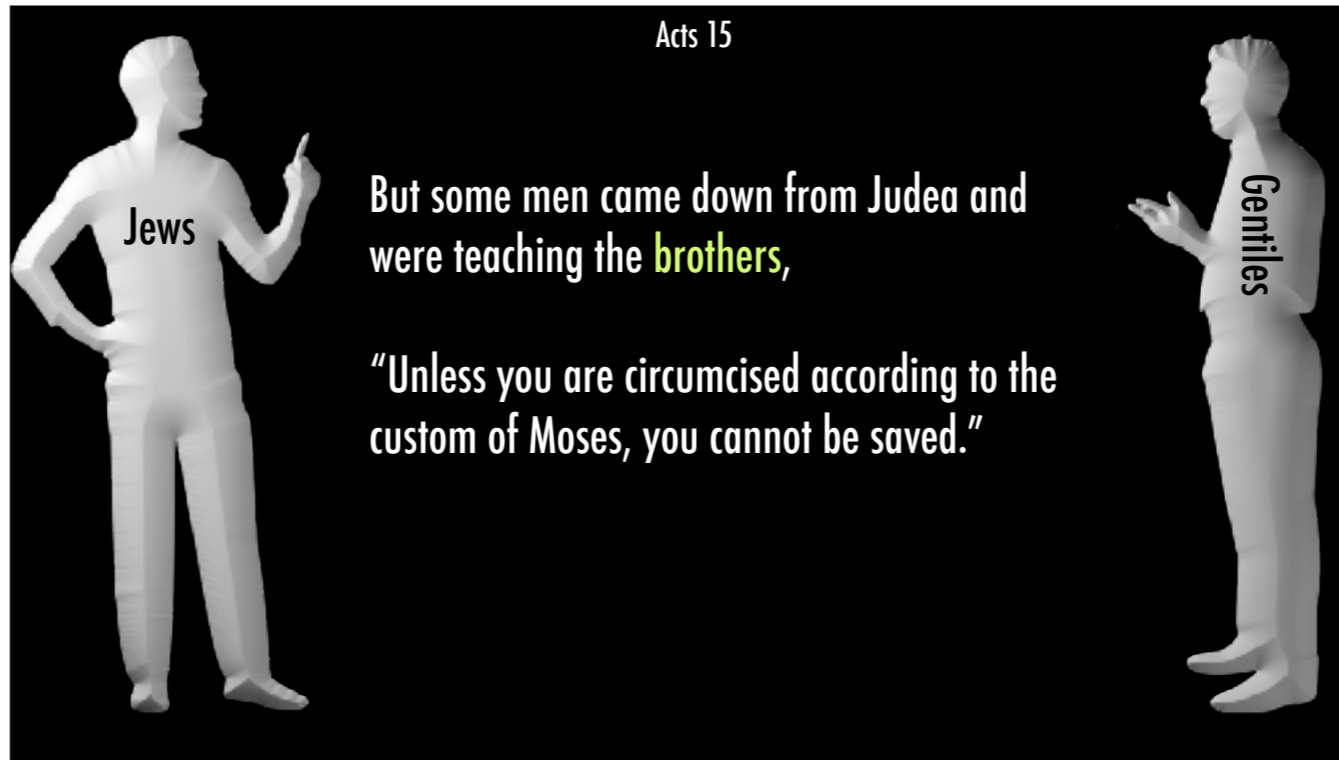
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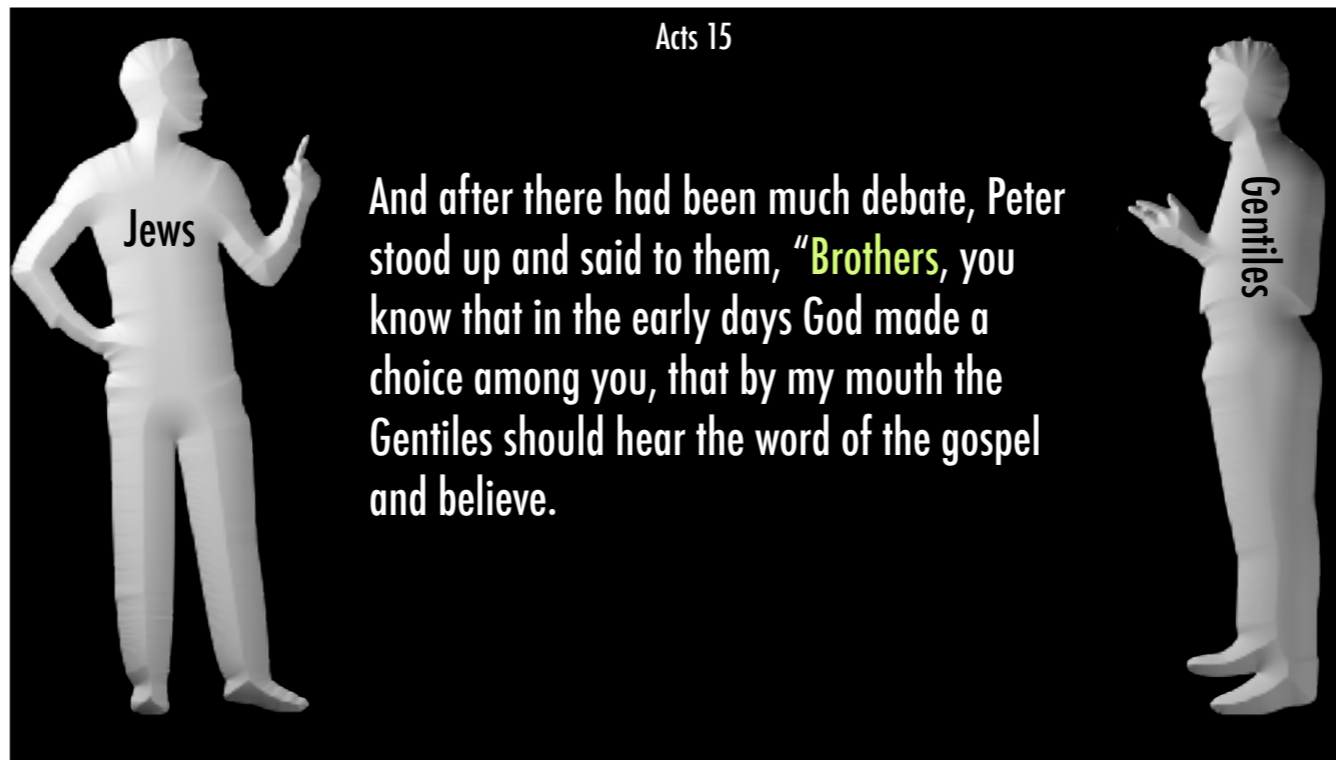
- When Luke speaks of this group of believers, he calls them brothers and sisters.
 - Practically, this language was common for the Jewish tribes to speak of each other as family.
 - Which was very true since they all descended from Abraham.
 - So it probably was very natural to carry it over into speaking of believers in Christ
- Interestingly Luke doesn't record the use of the word "church" until the fifth chapter.
 - Acts 5:11 And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.



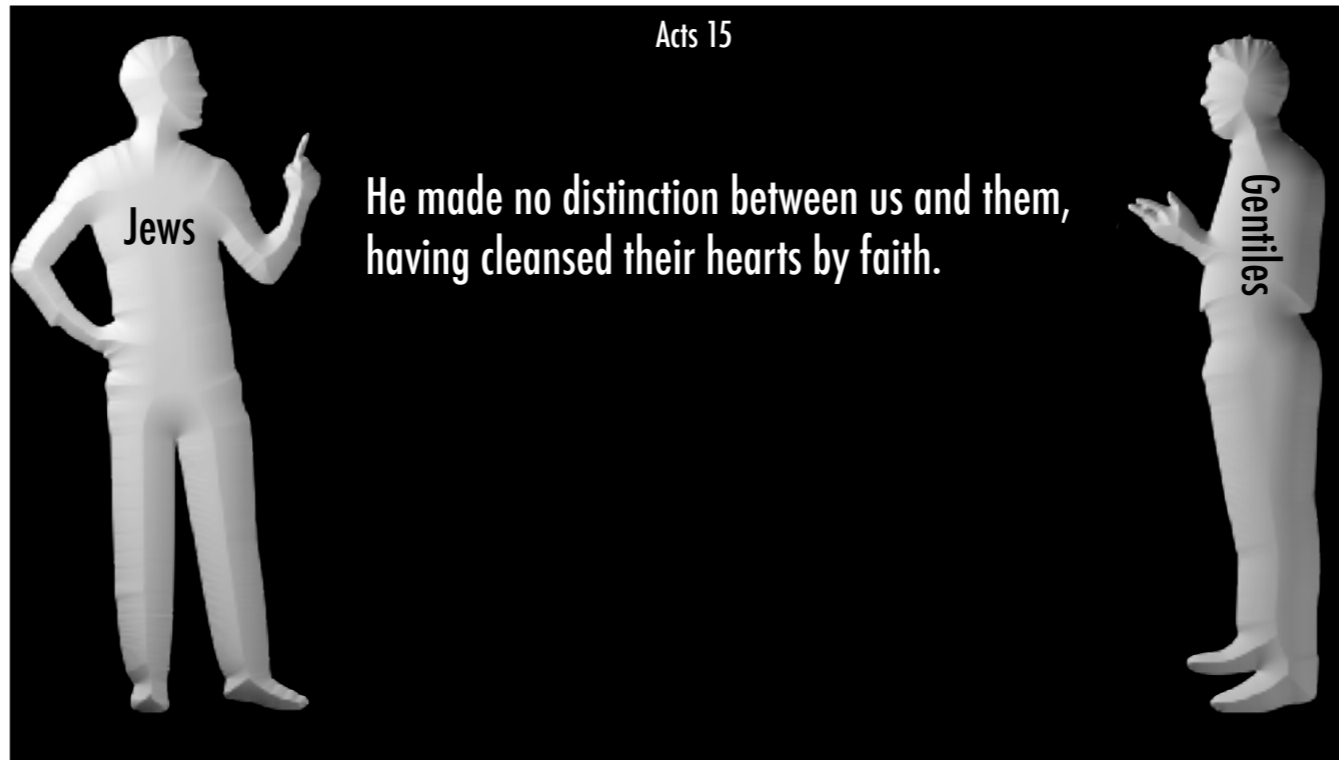
- Even more significant
- Acts 14:27 - 15:1 (ESV) 27 And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they remained no little time with the disciples. 1 But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”



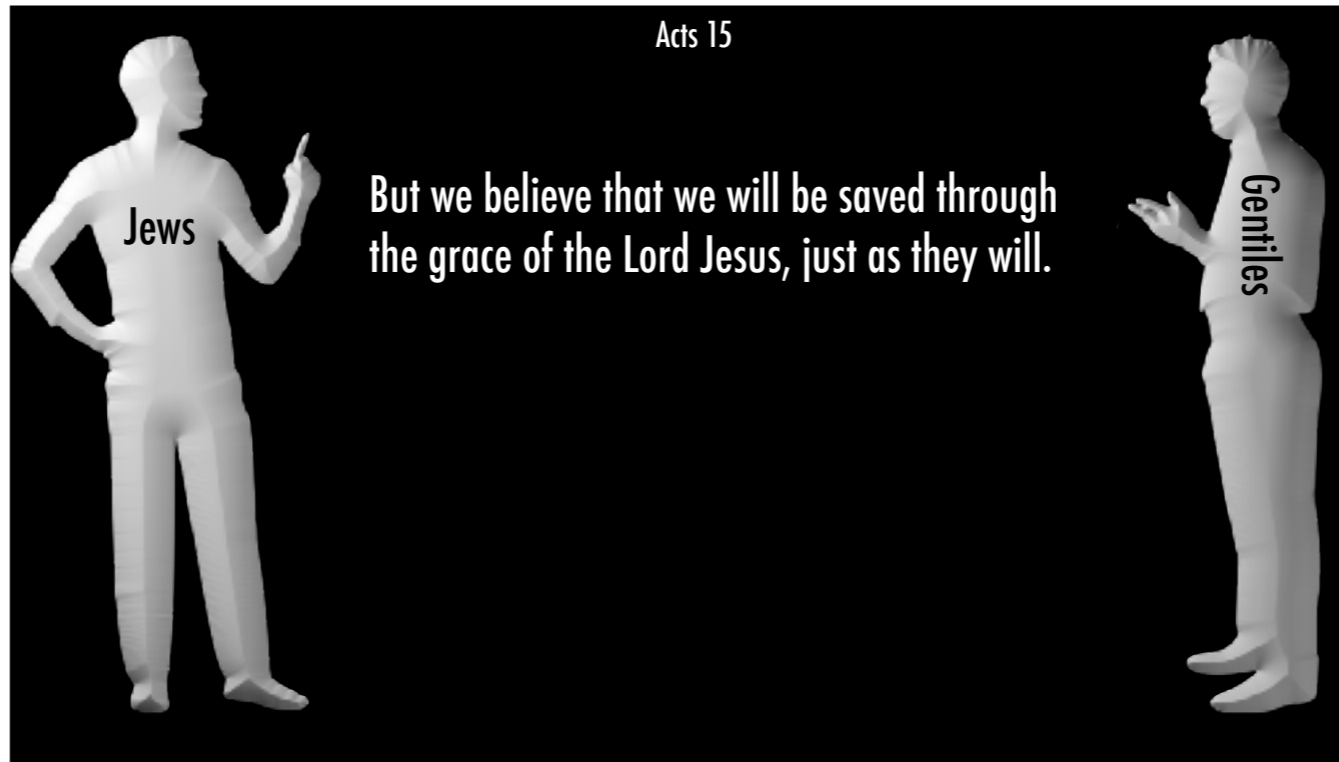
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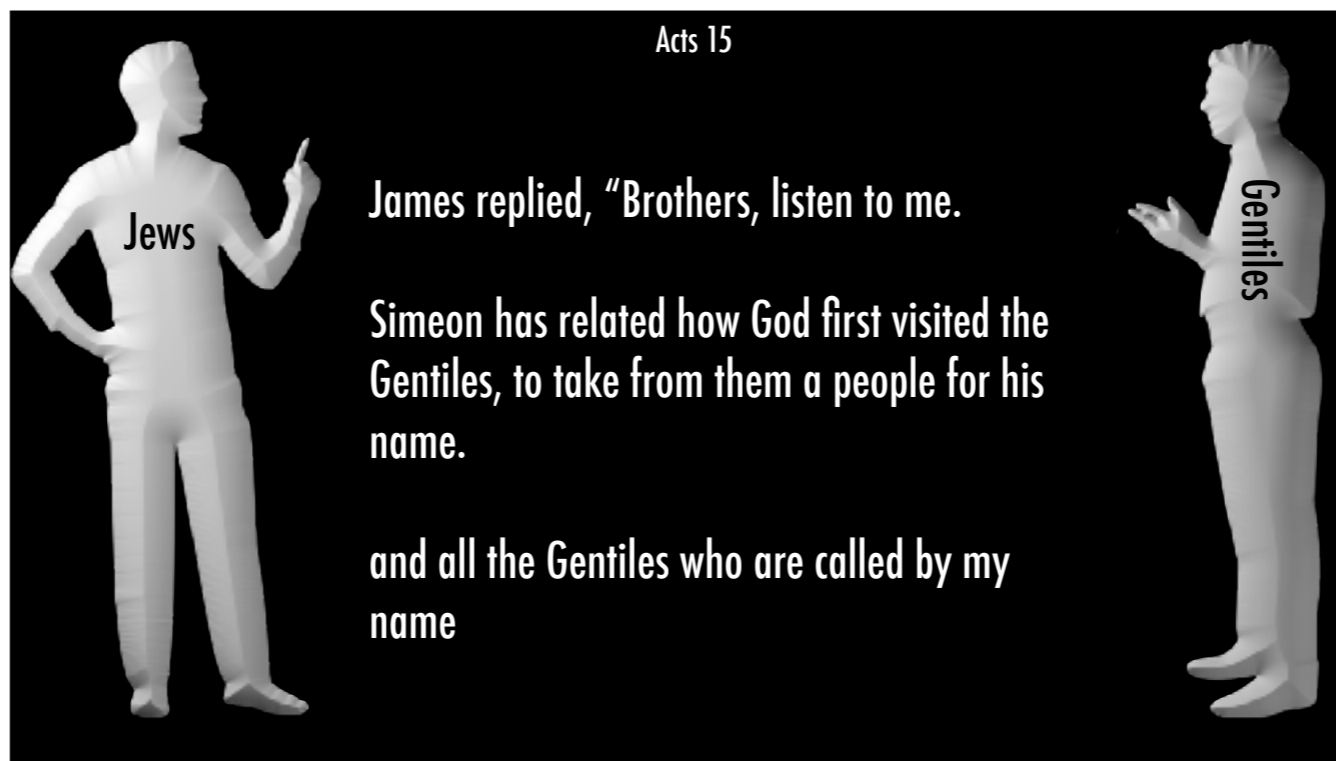
- Acts 15:6-11 (ESV) 6 The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. 7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.



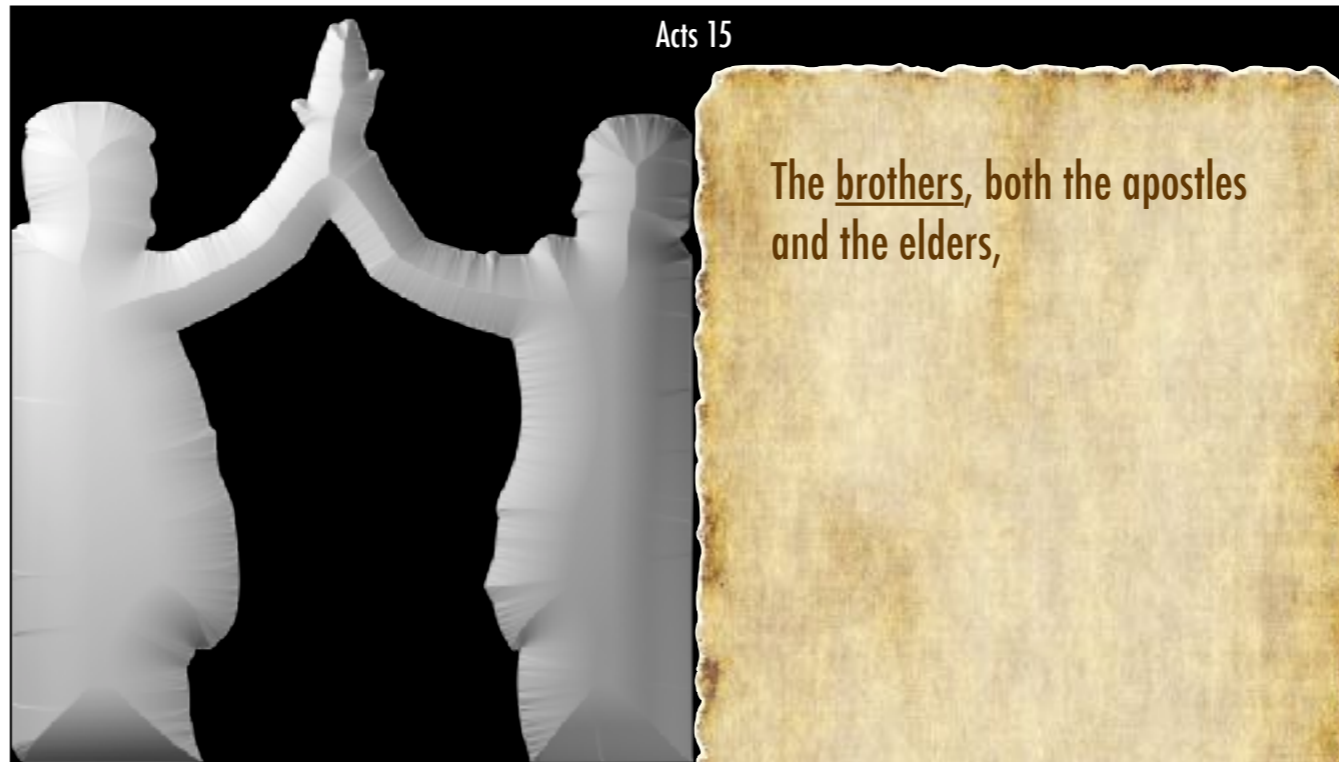
- 8 And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, 9 and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.



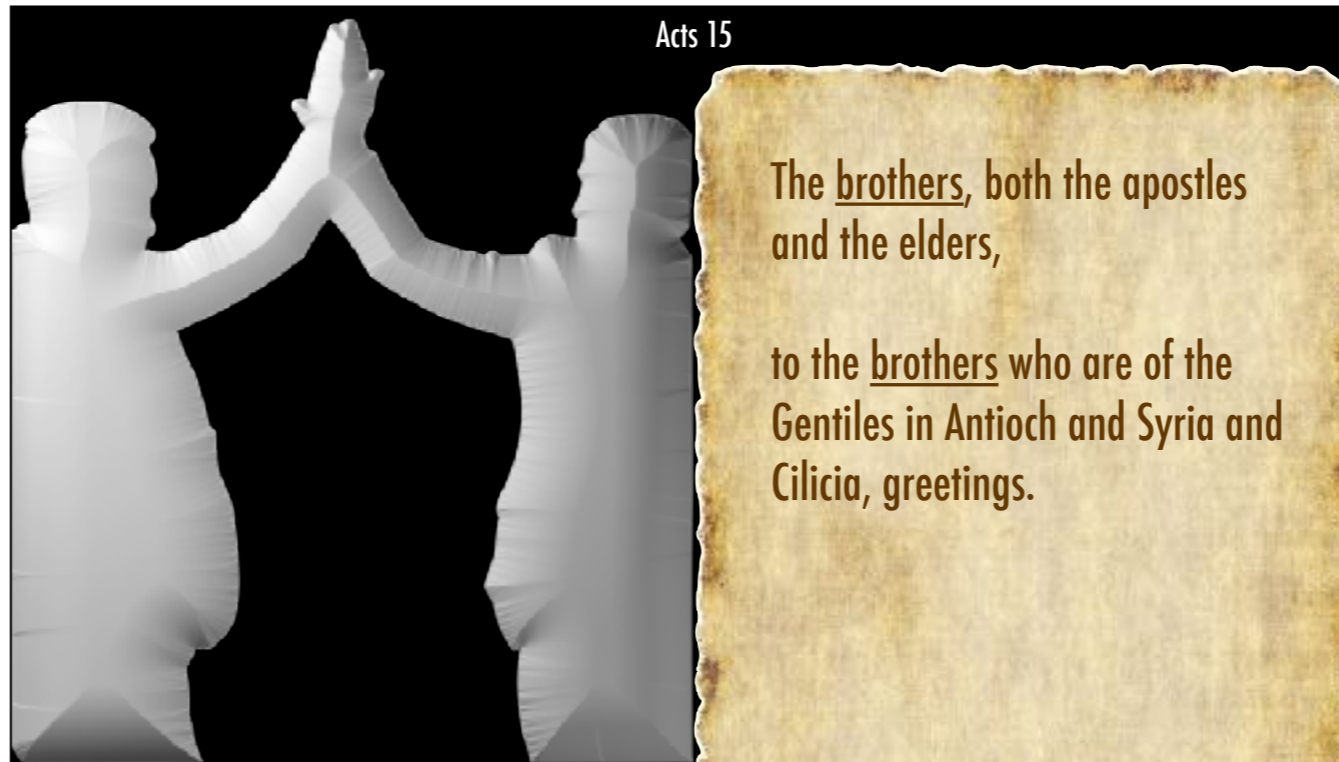
- 11 But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”



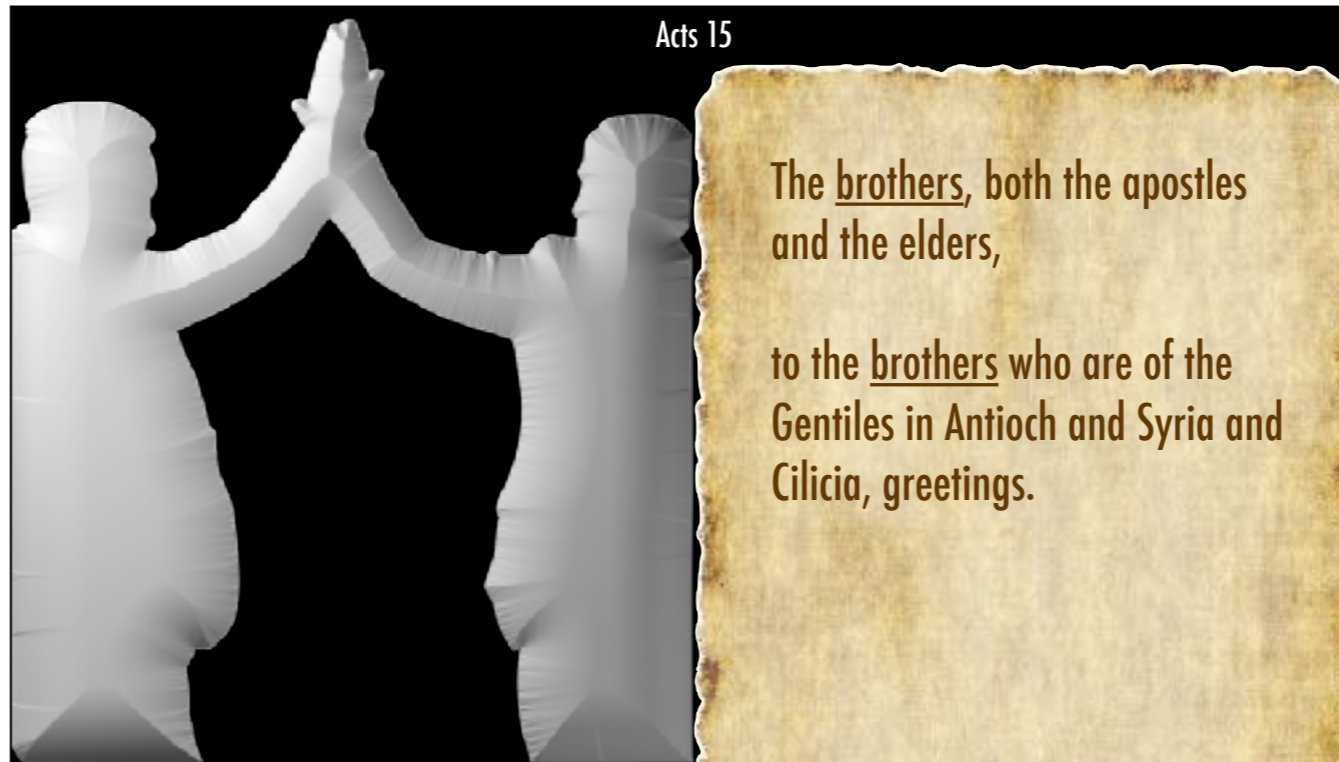
- Acts 15:13-15 (ESV) 13 After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,
 - 17 that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name,



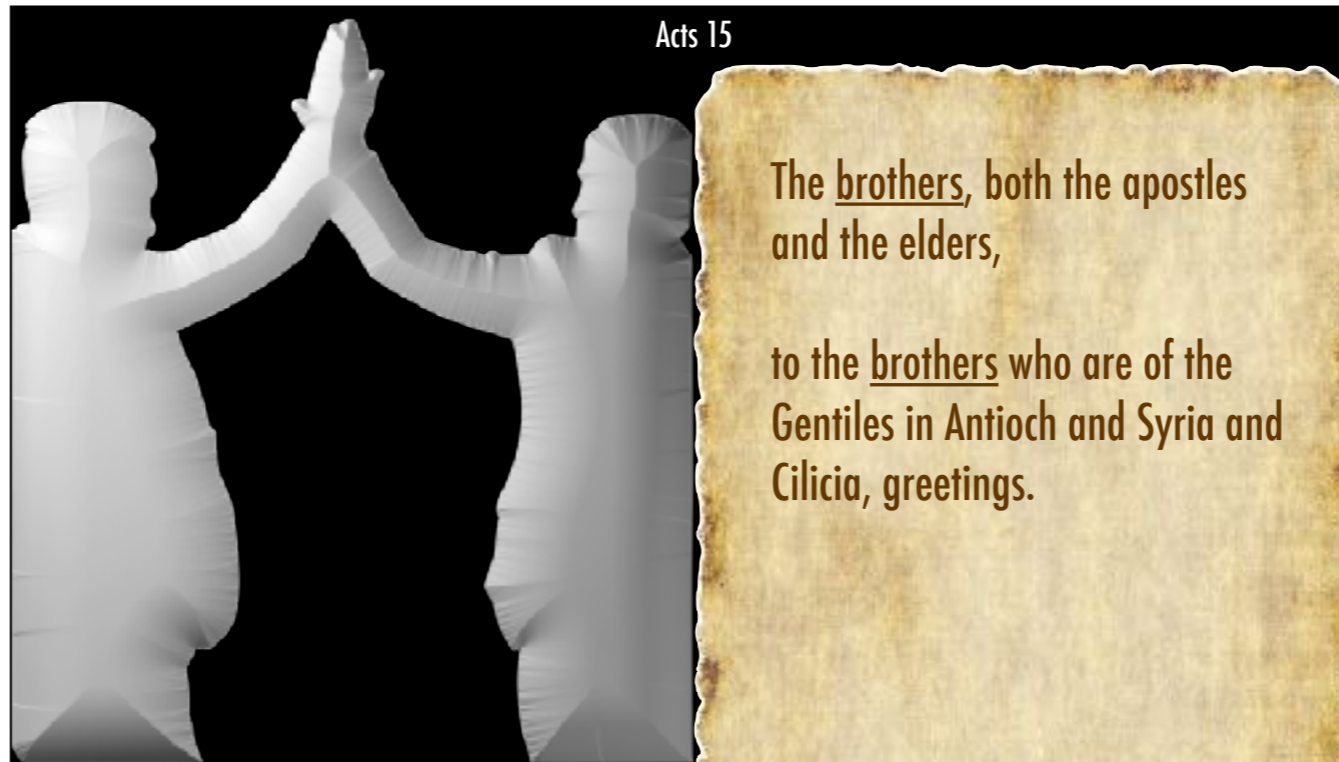
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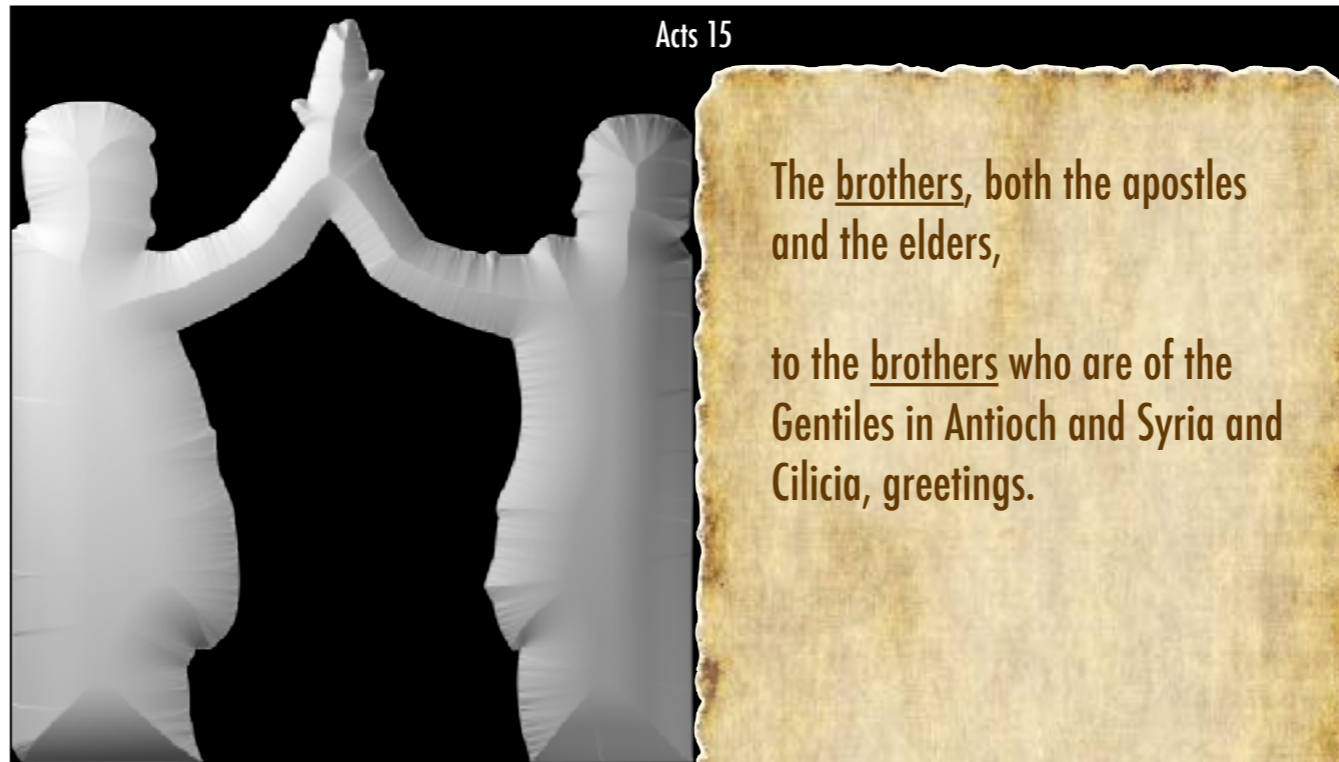
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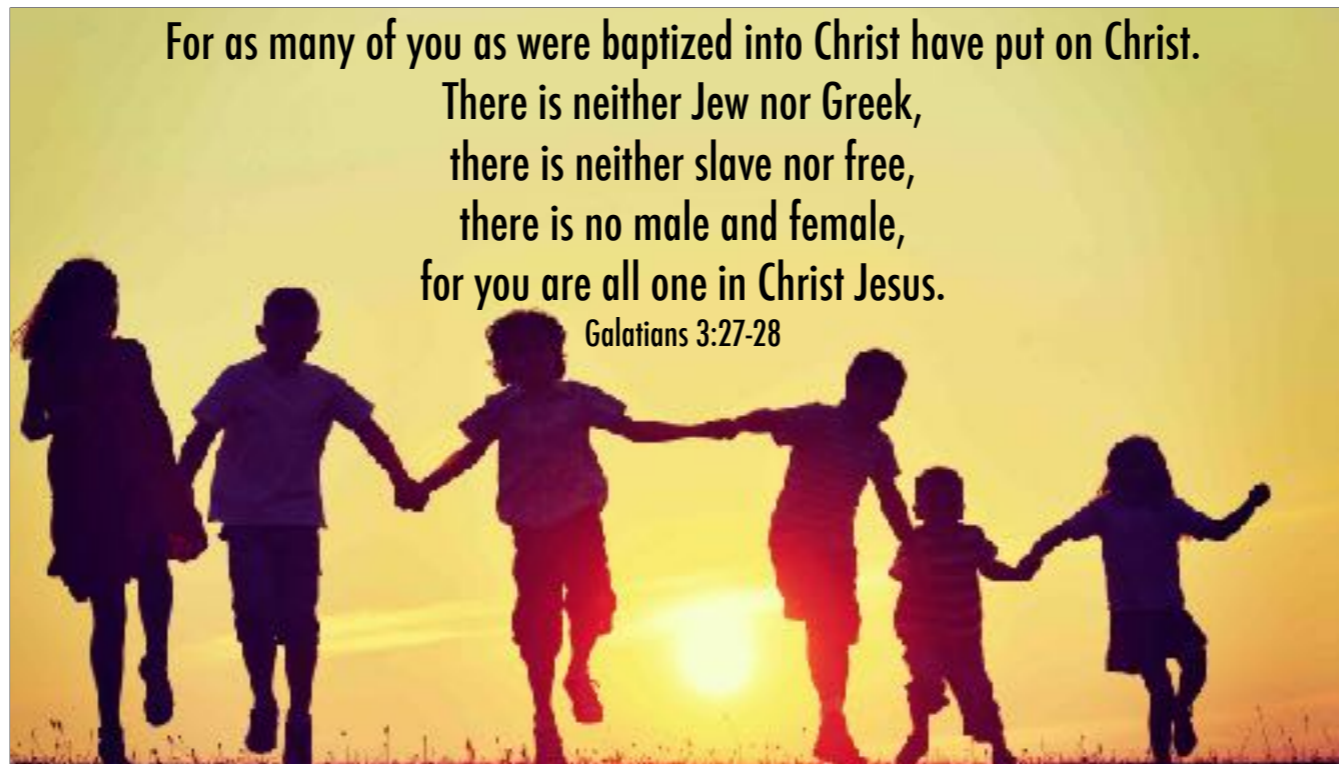
- Shocking ... probably both to many of the Jewish brethren and to the Gentile brethren
- Jewish believers are talking to Gentile believers
 - and calling them brothers and sisters
 - calling them family
- In the rest of this chapter Luke speaks of believers
 - church - 4
 - congregation - 1
 - brothers 10
- Siblings, brothers and sisters, is the term most often used for believers in the NT
-



- The early saints mostly talked about themselves as family.
 - heirs together with Christ
 - brothers and sisters of Christ
 - brothers and sisters of one another
- Urges us to reconsider how we think about each other and how we interact with one another.
 - Does it change how we think of our assemblies?
 - Does it change how we communicate?
 - Does it change how we teach, sing, worship?
- Galatians 3:27-28 (ESV) 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.



- This didn't solve all the problems between Jewish brothers and sisters and Gentile brothers and sisters
- Paul is writing of this consistently
 - Peter who first taught the Gentile Cornelius
 - Was also rebuked by Paul for separating himself from Gentile brothers and sisters when Jewish brothers and sisters entered a room
- Sibling relationships are fraught with difficulty
 - Requires vigilance, diligence, and patience



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We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

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Matthias is chosen

Acts 1:9, 12-26



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adelphos (brothers and sisters)

Acts 1 and 15

Synopsis: Of all the metaphors for believers, the one most often used in the NT is “adelphos” (siblings, brothers and sisters). After Jesus’ ascension the company who gathered in the upper room consisted of both men and women, and Peter calls all of them brethren. In Acts 15, both Jewish believers and Gentile believers are called brethren.

Parts of this lesson based on “Reclaiming the Church Family: A Solution to the Corporate-Church Crisis” by Matthew T. Kimbrough

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“Let all that you do be done with love.”