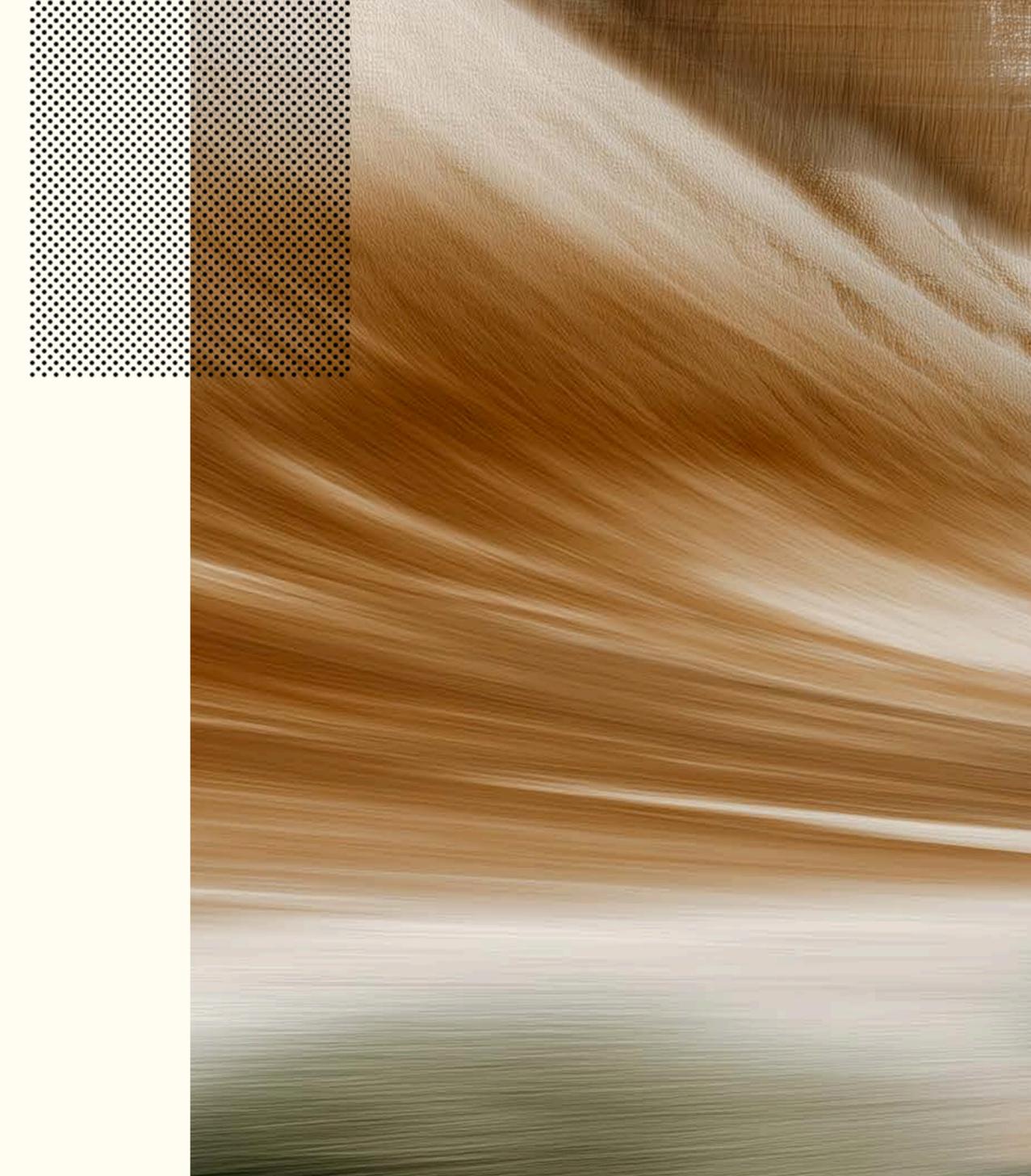


Acts.

Men's Retreat

RENOVATION OF THE HEART

April 17-19 | New Life Ranch



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Shall we now share the Roman name with slaves and foreigners? We are debasing the blood of our ancestors when we make outsiders equal to us.

- TACITUS, ANNALS





The Jerusalem Council

THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT



The Jerusalem Council

THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT



↳ **THE CASE**

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”

ACTS 15:1 NIV

↳ THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. ¹⁰ This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the **sign of the covenant** between me and you.

GENESIS 17:9-11 NIV



↳ THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be **my treasured possession**. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a **kingdom of priests** and a **holy nation**.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

EXODUS 19:5-6 NIV



↳ THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”

ACTS 15:1 NIV



↳ **THE CASE**

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.

ACTS 15:2 NIV



The Jerusalem Council

THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT



THE CASE

→ THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

ACTS 15:5 NIV

Pharisees' Argument

If Gentiles are not circumcised, then they **are not accepted** as part of God's covenant family.



THE CASE

→ THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

The apostles and elders met to consider this question.⁷ After much discussion...

ACTS 15:6-7A NIV



THE CASE

→ THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷ After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.

ACTS 15:6-7 NIV



THE CASE

→ THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.⁹ He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

ACTS 15:8-9 NIV

Pharisees' Argument

If Gentiles are not circumcised, then they **are not accepted** as part of God's covenant family.

Peter's Argument

If Gentiles are filled with God's Spirit, then it necessarily means that they **are accepted** as part of God's covenant family.



The Jerusalem Council

THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT



THE CASE

THE TRIAL

→ THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

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.

ACTS 15:12 NIV



The Jerusalem Council

THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT



THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

→ THE VERDICT

When they finished, James spoke up.

ACTS 15:13A NIV



THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

→ THE VERDICT

When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me.

¹⁴ Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. ¹⁵ The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written...

ACTS 15:13-15 NIV

THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

→ THE VERDICT

“ ‘After this I will return
and rebuild David’s fallen tent.

Its ruins I will rebuild,

and I will restore it,

¹⁷ that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,
even all the Gentiles who bear my name,

says the Lord, who does these things’ —

¹⁸ things known from long ago.

ACTS 15:16-18 NIV

AMOS 9; HOSEA 3;
JEREMIAH 12; ISAIAH 49



THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

→ THE VERDICT

“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.²¹ For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

ACTS 15:19-21 NIV



The Jerusalem Council

THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT



The Jerusalem Council

THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

So what?

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I believe that in all our lives at certain periods, and in many of our lives at all periods between infancy and extreme old age, one of the most dominant elements is the desire to be inside the local Ring and the terror of being left outside. Often the desire conceals itself so well that we hardly recognize the pleasures of fruition. We tell ourselves and our spouses that it is a hardship to stay late at the office or the school on some bit of important extra work which they have been let in for because only we and the two others are the only people left in the place who really know how things are run. But it is not quite true. It is a terrible bore...ah, but how much more terrible if you were left out! It is tiring and unhealthy to lose your Saturday afternoons: but to have them free because you don't matter, that is much worse.

- C.S. LEWIS, THE INNER RING

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It is one of the factors which go to make up the world as we know it—this whole pell-mell of struggle, competition, confusion, graft, disappointment and advertisement...Unless you take measures to prevent it, this desire is going to be one of the chief motives of your life...The quest of the Inner Ring will break your hearts unless you break it...As long as you are governed by that desire you will never get what you want...Until you conquer the fear of being an outsider, an outsider you will remain.

- C.S. LEWIS, THE INNER RING



THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

→ SO WHAT?

God, who knows the heart, showed that he **accepted** them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.

ACTS 15:8 NIV



THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

→ SO WHAT?

He did not discriminate between us and them, for he **purified** their hearts by faith.

ACTS 15:9 NIV



THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

→ SO WHAT?

“We believe it is through the **grace of our Lord Jesus** that we are saved,
just as they are.”

ACTS 15:11 NIV



THE CASE

THE TRIAL

THE EVIDENCE

THE VERDICT

→ SO WHAT?

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 PETER 2:9-10 NIV



Reflection Questions

What is God saying to you?

What is God asking you to do?