



Removing Barriers

Acts 15

About *Resurrection Hope: Build on the Right Foundation*

If you were raised on a version of Christianity with the Bible as your foundation to faith, only to have it undermined by academia or the realities of life, maybe it's time to change your mind about Jesus. "If you gave up your faith because of something in the Bible, maybe you gave up unnecessarily," said Martin Hawley, senior pastor. "Maybe it's time to seriously consider the version of Christianity that relies on a better foundation." This series points to a fresh hope based on a solid, unshakeable foundation for your faith.

Bottom Line:

We should remove every unnecessary barrier to the person and message of Jesus. It's **for** the world. People should feel the message is **for** them. The gospel is an invitation for **everyone**. That should be clear.

Introduction:

When we received our first Bible or heard our first Bible lesson, nobody told us it was arranged around three covenants.

I was told it's God's word. It is. I was told it's all true. I believe that it is. I was told not to say anything on it. I didn't. But nobody told me there were three sections written in a specific ancient context addressed to three different parties.

Individual – Abraham

Nation – Israel

Nations – All Who Would Believe

Today, we're going to talk about one of the most important and largely ignored narratives in the New Testament.

Review:

In part one, The Foundation of Christianity, we discovered the foundation of faith for the early church was an event, not a book. The event was the resurrection of Jesus.

The resurrection was the centerpiece of the apostles' preaching, beliefs, confidence, and boldness.

In the second part, we discussed how Christianity retained a Jewish flavor. After all, the first Christians were Jewish. They had a very difficult time not mixing and matching covenants.

With the help of the apostle Paul, they broke that habit.

Struggle:

Jewish believers back in Jerusalem heard about it, and they sent missionaries to Antioch, to the Gentiles, with their message:

*Keeping the law of Moses is
a condition for salvation and inclusion.*

Acts 15:1, “Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: ‘Unless you are **circumcised**, according to the custom taught by **Moses**, you cannot be saved.’”

This was salvation by surgery.

Truth:

(Read: Acts 15)

The implication of this important and historical church meeting was the following:

Jesus was not an **and**.
Jesus was the **fulfillment of**.
The old was **complete** in Christ.
The old was **finished**.

There was no mixing, no matching, no blending. It was Jesus.

Jesus’ law is far less complicated yet far more demanding than Moses.

Church leaders **unhitched** the **church** from the worldview, value system, and regulations of the **Jewish Scriptures**.

*Warren Wiersbe puts it this way:
"Israel is set aside but not cast away."*

Twenty years after the resurrection, the church finally parted ways with **Judaism**.

The Jewish Scriptures are the back story for the main story.

Jesus' new covenant stands on its own two nail-scarred resurrection feet.

Conclusion:

Why is this important?

Many have lost faith or lost faith in the Bible because of something in the Old Testament in particular. Once they could no longer accept the true-ness of the entire Bible, they found their Sunday school faith to be indefensible.

The **Bible** did not create **Christianity**.

The **resurrection** of Jesus created Christianity.

Peter, James, and Paul elected to unhitch their Christian faith from Judaism. We must as well. Why? James said it best...

Acts 15:19, "it is my judgment, therefore, that we should **not make it difficult** for the Gentiles who are turning to God."

We shouldn't either. The faith of the next generation may depend on it. Your neighbor's faith may depend on it. Someday, your faith may depend on it as well.

Next Steps:

- Memorize Acts 15:19
- Christian – Focus on the Gospel. Why did you trust Christ?
- Non-Christian – Repent of your sins. Place your faith in Jesus alone.
- Everyone – Unhitch Christianity from Judaism.
- Join Us for the Start of Enormous Church next Weekend.

Enormous Church:

What comes to mind when you hear the word "church"? In the first century, people didn't think building, rows, pews, robes, hymnals, bands, or liturgy because they

had none of that. Join us for the start of *Enormous Church: How Church is Supposed to Be* next Saturday night at 5:00, Sunday morning at 9:00 or 11:00, or online anytime.