

principles of fellowship

fellowship as taught
in **the scriptures**

brother matt davies

introductory reading:
1 corinthians 12:12+



a **personal** history



- ✧ **autonomy** is wrong
- ✧ **guilt by association** is real
- ✧ **block “disfellowship”** is right

imagine!

- ✦ You were not brought-up in/brought into a Christadelphian “fellowship”
- ✦ You were alone in your decision making
- ✦ There was no history
- ✦ What would you learn about fellowship simply by looking at **the scriptures...**



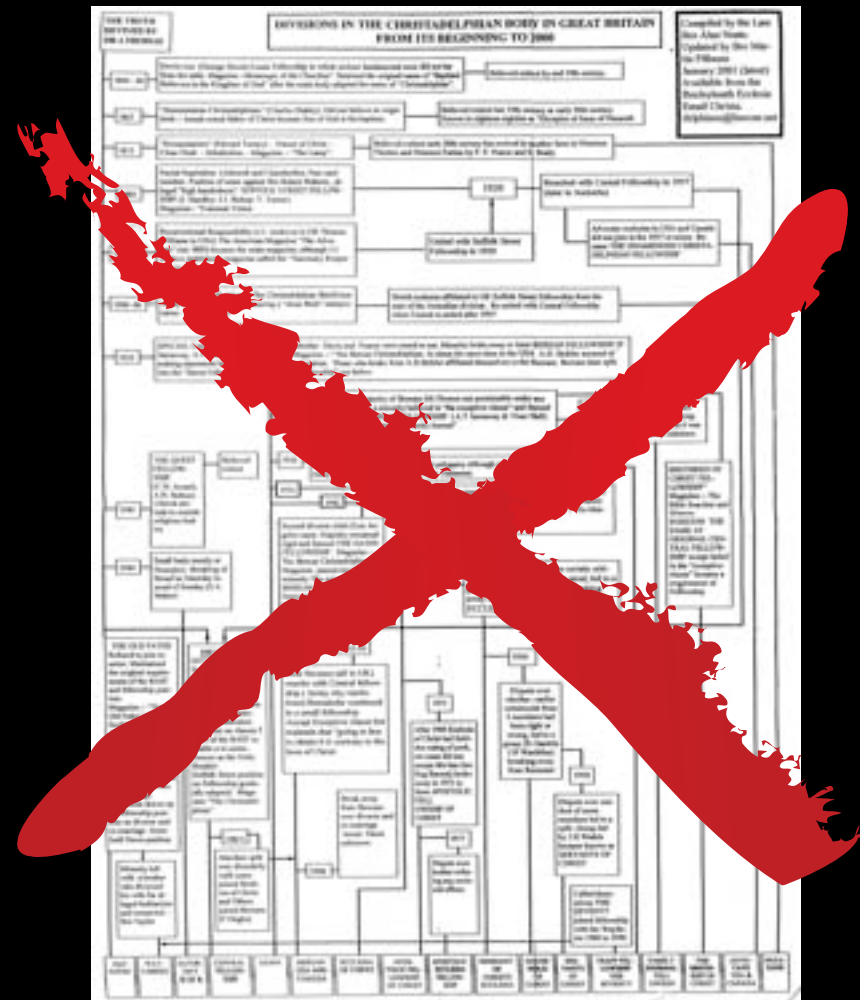
What does **THE BIBLE** really teach?



other sources



The pioneer
problem



The classic
Christadelphian
“history” lesson

the word “fellowship”



What it means

- 👁️ “a common sharing”



What it doesn't mean

- 👁️ A group of people
- 👁️ A legal statement

What should we have a
‘common sharing’ in?

what brings us to “fellowship”?

- ✦ 1 Corinthians 4:15 - “in Christ” through the gospel
- ✦ Mark 16:15-16 - The gospel + baptism
- ✦ 2 Peter 1:3-4 - The promises
- ✦ Ephesians 2:11-13 - Promises of Israel = God’s household
- ✦ Philippians 1:4-5+27 - Fellowship in the gospel

a common sharing

fellowship in the gospel

faithfuls of old



Abraham



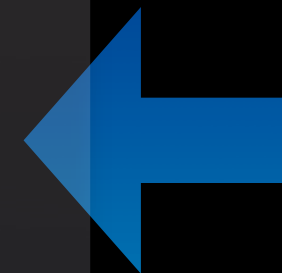
Isaac



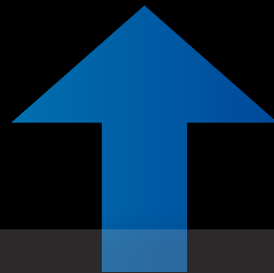
Jacob



David
etc...

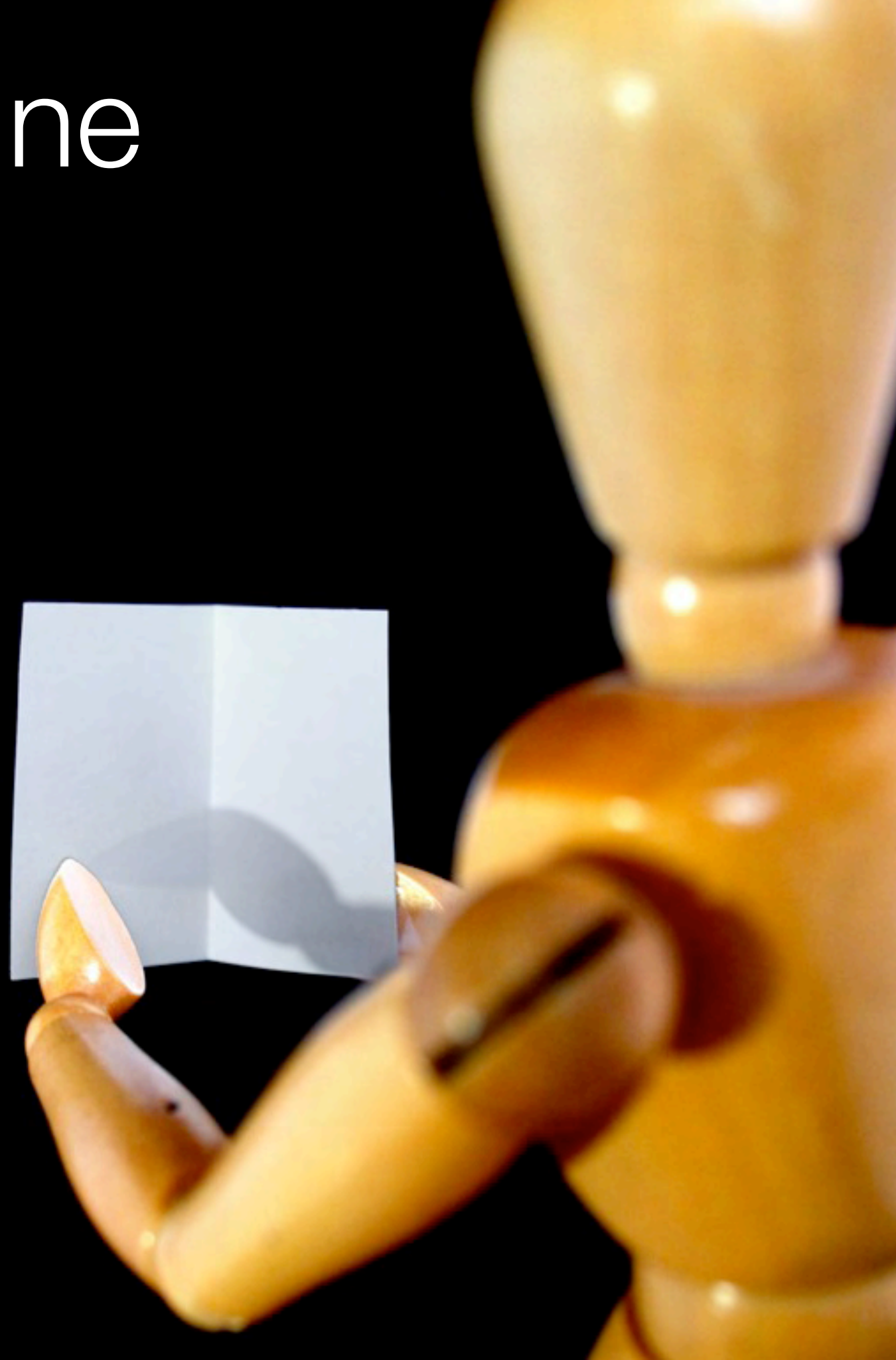


ME!



apostles doctrine = **gospel**

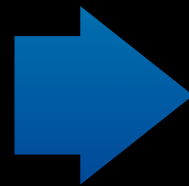
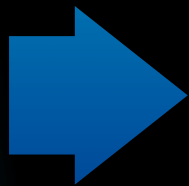
- ✦ 1 John 1:3-4
the things declared
(gospel) = fellowship
- ✦ Acts 2:41-42
word received =
the apostles doctrine =
fellowship



the **simplicity**



Knowledge of
the Gospel
“Simplicity
in Christ”



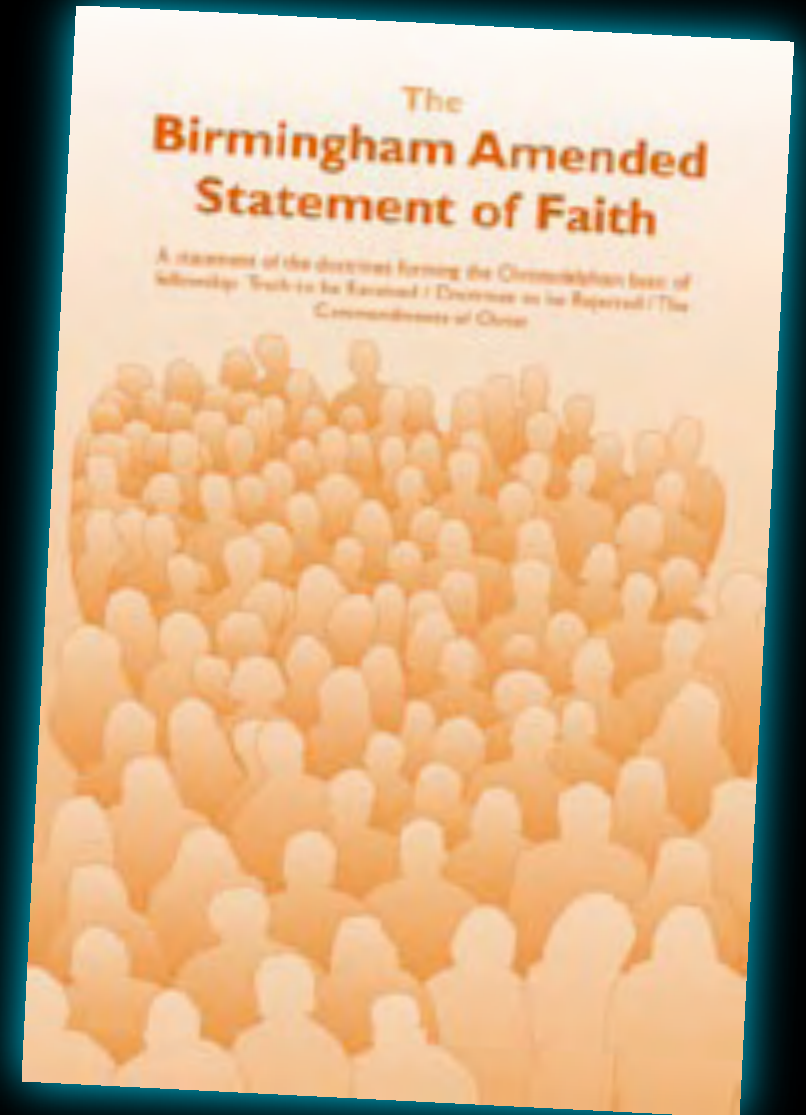

Baptism



Enter
“into” Christ
Fellowship
(Common
sharing) with
God & Christ
in **the gospel**

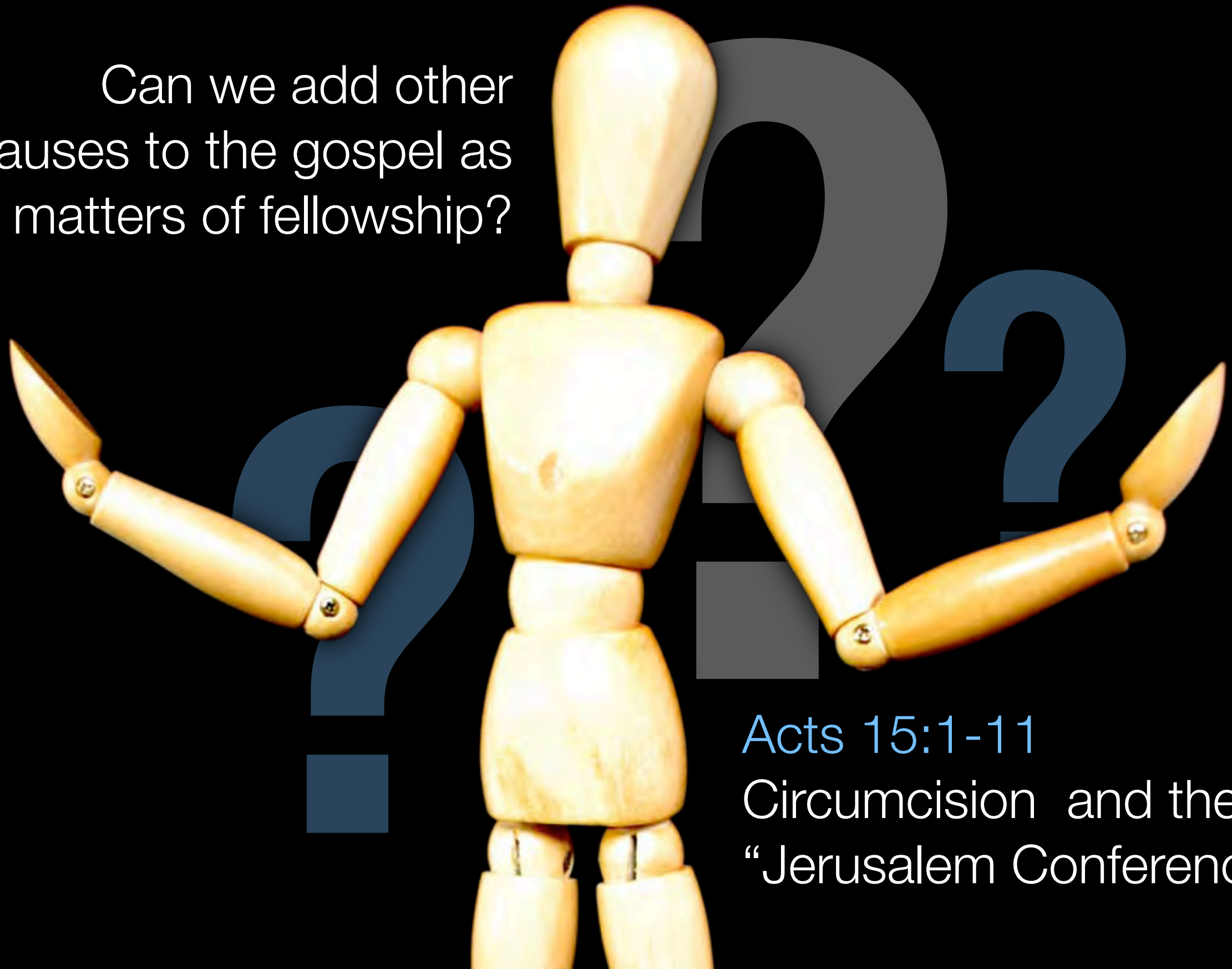
the BASF

- ✦ **Doctrines to be accepted** - things concerning Jesus Christ and Kingdom of God - the gospel!
- ✦ **Doctrines to be rejected** - partial inspiration, trinity, clean flesh, immortal soul, etc
- ✦ Anybody who doesn't believe in the BASF doesn't have a "common sharing" with us..



adding conditions

Can we add other clauses to the gospel as matters of fellowship?



Acts 15:1-11

Circumcision and the
“Jerusalem Conference”

separation from unbelievers

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for **what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?** and what communion hath light with darkness?... Wherefore come out from among them, and **be ye separate...**” **2 Corinthians 6:14+17**

“(Paul)... spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, **he departed from them, and separated the disciples...**” **Acts 19:8-9**





the house of God

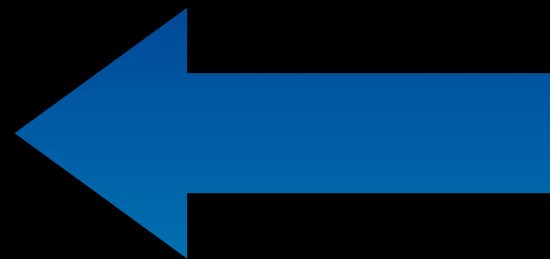
fellowship
with others

the **one** body / “in Christ”



- ✦ Ephesians 1:23 + 3:6 + 4:4-6
what it means to be in the one body
- ✦ 1 Corinthians 1:12-13
is Christ divided?
- ✦ 1 Corinthians 12:12-22+24-25
the members of the body
- ✦ Romans 12:4-5
members “one of another”
- ✦ Matt 10:40
we all represent Christ!

ecclesial life



ecclesial life



ecclesial life



ecclesial autonomy

Revelation 3:7-10

Philadelphia ecclesia - not guilty for another ecclesia's error. Not asked to sort the other's problems out / split off.

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

Paul **allows ecclesia** to make the decision on the erroneous walk of it's member.



doctrine vs practice

Matter of Doctrine

(erroneous belief)



- ✦ No longer believe saving truths
(no common sharing at all)
- ✦ Responsibility to the whole “body of Christ”
- ✦ Cannot accept compromise
(unanimous)

Matter of Practice

(erroneous walk)



- ✦ Influence spreading
(Not guilt)
- ✦ Each eccleasia has their own responsibility to their own members
- ✦ Majority decision
(possibility for dis-satisfied minority)

guarding **the door**

Example of how to deal with **doctrinal error**

- ✦ 2 John 7-9
if some come with
clean flesh ideas...
- ✦ 2 John 10-11
Error to be
stopped at the
ecclesial door.



doctrine vs practice

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Matter of Practice

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admonish them as brethren

Example of how to deal with
erroneous walk

- ✦ 2 Thessalonians 3:6-7 + 11-12
- ✦ CONTEXT - brethren not working for a living.
- ✦ Withdraw (avoid)
not dis-fellowship!
- ✦ 2 Thessalonians 3:14+15
They are still Brethren!
E.g. still “in Christ” and have fellowship
in the Gospel...



reasons for “withdrawal”

Why “avoid” erroneous walk?

- ✦ 1 Corinthians 5:5,
2 Thessalonians 3:14
Individuals sake
- ✦ 1 Corinthians 5:7,
Galatians 5:9
Influence Spreading
- ✦ 1 Corinthians 5:11-13,
2 Thessalonians 3:6
We are commanded to!



What it means

👁️ “avoid”



It doesn't mean

👁️ “dis-fellowship”

what if your ecclesia doesn't agree?

Choices:

- ✦ Leave & join new ecclesia
(1 Cor 10:13-14 "flee")
- ✦ Stay & contend
(Rev 2:24 "none other burden")



guilt by association / **block disfellowship**

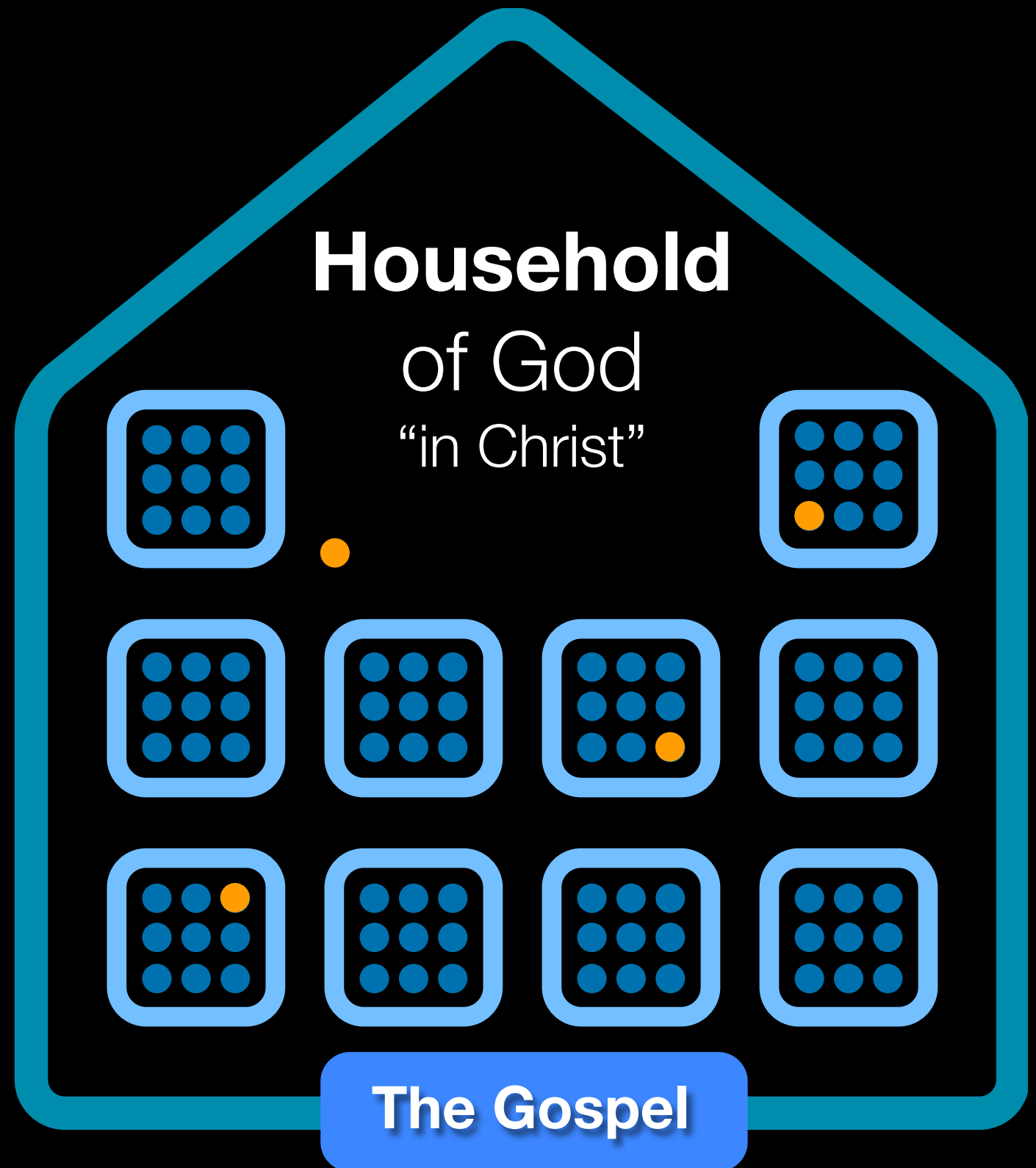
- ✧ Revelation 3:18+20+24-25
Thyatira - clearly not guilt by association!
- ✧ Revelation 3:1+4-5
Sardis - clearly not guilt by association!
- ✧ 3 John 10-11
Follow not that which is evil
- ✧ 1 Corinthians 11:29
"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself"
Personal responsibility in the breaking of bread
- ✧ Romans 14:12
"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
Personal accountability

guilt by association / **block disfellowship**

Tips for tricky verses:

- ✦ **Context**, context context!
- ✦ Israel are the **ecclesia in the wilderness**
(Acts 7:38)
- ✦ Israel are under a **national covenant**
(Exodus 24:3+7)
*acceptance before God based
upon national obedience*

overview



commandments of christ



- ✦ **Very important** to uphold
- ✦ Faith brings us into the body but it is only a **personal perseverance** in the upholding of the commands that will, in **Gods mercy**, bring acceptability at the judgment seat.

James 2:26

“faith without works is dead”

1 John 2:4

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar”

Matthew 28:20

“Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”

John 15:14

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

further study

👁 **True Principles & Uncertain Details**

(The danger of going too far in demands on fellow believers)

The Christadelphian 1898 / Vol 35 / page 182

Bro Robert Roberts

👁 **A guide to the Formation & Conduct of Ecclesias**

Bro Robert Roberts

👁 **Anastasis - Preface**

Bro John Thomas

👁 **Fellowship in the Truth**

The Christadelphian 1870 / Vol.7 / page 16

Bro John Thomas

conclusion

- ✦ **Recognise our “fellowship”** is on the basis of being “in” Christ - e.g. the gospel
- ✦ **Maintain ecclesial integrity** by guarding the ecclesial door against doctrinal error
- ✦ **Avoid company in cases of an erroneous walk** so as to help the individual and not to allow the influence to spread
- ✦ Try to **follow the commands**



principles of fellowship

fellowship as taught
in **the scriptures**

