

MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

Written by Ted Swartz

Characters: Barkos, Cyrus, Bildad

Scripture text: Acts 15: 1-21

Props: table, four chairs, large book or scroll

Length: 7.5 minutes

(The scene opens with three men and one woman (Bildad) seated around a table. They have been in heated arguments for a while. They are in mid-dialogue...)

JAMES: We're at a crossroads friends. So many people joining. The way we welcome them is important.

CYRUS: As long as they follow the rules.

BARKOS: Do you or do you not want this new church to grow?

CYRUS: Of course, but we have to be able to control requirements. We have to have law.

BILDAD: That's just it—we're beyond law.

CYRUS: I don't think that's a good thing.

BARKOS: It's a great thing!

JAMES: Can we just stop! I believe we can come to an agreement with a semblance of reasonable discourse.

BILDAD: Are we going to stop for lunch?

CYRUS: How can you think about lunch?

BILDAD: How can you not think about lunch?

BARKOS: Exactly how did you come to be on this council?

BILDAD: How did you come to be on this council?

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BARKOS: How did she come to be on this council?

BILDAD: The same way you got to be on the council!!

JAMES: (*Bangs the gavel.*) Can we come to order again? (*They do so.*) Thank you. I'd like to remind us—the reason we are here—the astounding news concerning the growth of the church in Syria and Antioch.

BARKOS: Gentiles.

JAMES: Yes, Gentiles. With growth there are ... complications. What we do here has implications far beyond us. Cyrus, as the eldest here, I believe you had the floor.

CYRUS: I accept this Jesus, I do. I believe, I want the church to grow, but we can't just toss everything else out.

JAMES: No, not "tossing" everything. I think ... (*A look around the group.*) ... We can agree on ... not everything. (*All nod.*)

CYRUS: This is still a Jewish movement, Jewish leadership, why shouldn't we hold to Jewish practice?

BARKOS: Are the Gentiles to be brought into the Israelite family?

JAMES: That is the question.

CYRUS: If they come in, they get the Law of Moses. ... Every family has rules.

BILDAD: Personally I'm not a big fan of Leviticus.

BARKOS: That IS the law.

JAMES: What specifically don't you like?

BILDAD: Pus. There's a whole lot of pus.

JAMES: Pus?

BILDAD: Don't think we need to discuss pus.

BARKOS: So for you, the entire Law of Moses comes down to pus?

CYRUS: There are worse things than pus.

BILDAD: Do we have to keep saying it?

BARKOS: *(Directly at BILDAD.)* What? Pus?

JAMES: Fine.

BARKOS: I'll make a note. *(Writes.)* New movement, Messiah, good news —no pus.

CYRUS: It's the Law of Moses that holds us separate—it lets us know who we are. Without it I don't know who I am.

BARKOS: I know who you are. You're a follower of Jesus.

CYRUS: I don't know if that's enough.

BILDAD: It's enough.

CYRUS: And what about the primary symbol of the new covenant ... you know, the one starting with Abraham? You know ... the ah...

BARKOS: What?

CYRUS: I'm just saying—we can't just disregard ... the ... primary symbol ... of the ... new...

BILDAD: Are you guys talking about circumcision? I am married, you know. Three children, all boys.

JAMES: I think we have to question it.

CYRUS: What?! Are you suggesting we just stop requiring circumcision?! It's the primary symbol...

BARKOS: Enough with the primary already!

JAMES: It's just up for discussion.

CYRUS: Why don't we just do away with the Law of Moses?!

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BILDAD: We could do that?

JAMES: No—look, we don't want to make following Jesus a burden.

CYRUS: How can obedience to God be a burden?

JAMES: God's not the burden.

BARKOS: He's the burden. (*Points to CYRUS.*)

JAMES: Stop ... Cyrus, the Law was just about impossible for anyone ...

CYRUS: Our ancestors...

JAMES: ... Including our ancestors.

BARKOS: Cyrus'll keep trying...

JAMES: Barkos, so help me if you don't shut up, I'm gonna come over there and clean your clock.

BILDAD: What would your brother say? Your brother, Jesus.

JAMES: (*With a reluctant laugh.*) Shut up.

BILDAD: He wouldn't say that either.

JAMES: Shhh. ... Don't anyone write that down.

CYRUS: We worked so hard ... we suffered for so many years. To try and follow the best we could—and now, any Tom, Luke or Larry can just dance in and be a member? It doesn't seem fair.

BILDAD: That's what's so wonderful about it. It isn't fair—it's better than fair—it's good news.

CYRUS: But we worked so hard.

JAMES: (*Rubs his face vigorously.*) Just for conjecture—a what if—what do you think might be crucial to expect these new converts to follow? And it can't be the entire Law of Moses. Just the big ones.

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CYRUS: I've come up with a few. (*Hauls out a huge scroll*)

BARKOS: You can't be serious.

JAMES: Cyrus, what among all of this, do you think is most important?

CYRUS: They're all important!

JAMES: Most important.

CYRUS: I can't possibly choose—that implies that there are some that are not important ... it's not far then to a slippery slope of immorality and chaos.

JAMES: Choose three.

CYRUS: Thr ... Three!!!??? Three!?

JAMES: Three. (*Rising.*)

CYRUS: Three! Oh, of all the ridiculous, empty headed...

JAMES: Cyrus!

CYRUS: Fine! ... No eating meat that has been sacrificed ... no eating meat that's been strangled...

BARKOS: That's what's most important?

BILDAD: What did you do, close your eyes and pick?

BARKOS: Why does he get to choose?

BILDAD: How did he get to be on this council?

JAMES: Hush. One more.

CYRUS: And sex.

BARKOS: What about it?

CYRUS: There will be none. (*There is a general hubbub and noise at this*

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announcement.)

JAMES: Cyrus, you can't disallow sex.

CYRUS: Would save a lot of problems.

JAMES: Can we say sexual immorality?

BARKOS: According to who?

CYRUS: *(Toward BILDAD.)* Not her.

JAMES: Everyone!! OK, no eating meat that's been sacrificed or strangled meats and can we say terrible sexual sin ... which will be determined on a ongoing, flexible discussion.

BARKOS: I'll make a note.

JAMES: *(Hands out.)* Let's not make this more complicated than it needs to be. And—*(With a look to BILDAD.)* I do remember what He said: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul and your mind—and love your neighbor as yourself.

BILDAD: Amen.

BARKOS: Amen.

JAMES: Cyrus.

CYRUS: Amen. *(There are murmurs of agreement.)* Thank you. So go. Go and continue to spread the word—there is good news.

BILDAD: Lunch?

JAMES: Lunch.

BARKOS: Good news.

BILDAD: See you at home, honey.

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SCRIPT
PREVIEW

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