



February 18, 2022

A Look at Romans 14 Continued

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. We've just returned from our week-long visit to brethren in South Carolina and are back home. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

We began to examine Romans 14 last Friday evening. Let's continue with these thoughts.

If one was to claim that "Paul in this chapter is promoting doing away with the commandments including keeping the Sabbath" would make Paul out to be contradictory and perhaps somewhat schizophrenic! We've noticed some of his other comments in the same book of Romans such as "The doers of the law will be justified."

The passage in question about "days", in verses 5 and 6, is immediately between references to "eating meat" and "vegetarianism" in verses 2, 3 and 6. There's frankly no biblical connection between Sabbath observance and vegetarianism, so these verses would sincerely need to be taken out of context to assume that Paul was referring to the Sabbath or Biblical Holy Days.

"The close contextual association with eating, suggests that Paul has in mind a special day set apart for observance as a time for feasting or as a time for fasting" (Everett Harrison, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1976, Vol. 10, p. 146).

I wish Paul had explained more of the *context* that he and the members in Rome obviously were aware of. There appears to have been local traditions and practices that were held to by some in the congregation.

It's also helpful to understand *the timing of* Paul's letter to the Romans.

Many Bible resources agree that Paul wrote the book of 1 Corinthians around A.D. 55 and that he wrote his epistle to the Romans from the city of Corinth in A.D. 56 or 57. Demonstrated by Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, (where he addresses the touchy subject of whether to eat meat sacrificed to idols or not) within the food controversy, what he addresses in Romans 14, is evidently over meat sacrificed to idols. Since Paul was writing to the Romans from Corinth, where this had been a significant issue, the subject was still fresh on Paul's mind and is the logical, biblically supported basis for his comments in Romans 14.

Notice Romans 14:21: "*It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which*

your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak." This supports the idea that *meat offered to idols* was the dominant issue or main focus of this chapter. Romans of the day commonly offered both meat and wine to idols, with portions of their offerings later sold in the marketplace.

[The Life Application Bible comments on Romans 14:2:] "The ancient system of sacrifice was at the center of the religious, social, and domestic life of the Roman world. After a sacrifice was presented to a god in a pagan temple, only part of it was burned. The remainder was often sent to the market to be sold. Thus a Christian might easily-even unknowingly-buy such meat in the marketplace or eat it at the home of a friend."

So, a good question would be, should a Christian question the source of his meat?

Some thought there was nothing wrong with eating meat that had been offered to idols because idols were worthless and phony. Others carefully checked the source of their meat or gave up meat altogether, in order to avoid a guilty conscience. The problem was especially acute for Christians who had once been idol worshipers. For them, such a strong reminder of their past days (such as eating meat that was offered in a pagan temple), might weaken their newfound faith.

Also, Romans 14 is, in part, a chapter on *Christian liberty* and acting according to one's conscience within the framework of God's laws as they pertained to eating meat and especially eating meat sacrificed to idols.

Depending upon their conscience, early believers had several choices they could make while traveling or residing in their communities. If they did not want to eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols, they could choose to fast, or eat only vegetables to make sure they did not consume any meat of suspicious background that might offend their consciences. If their conscience was not bothered by eating meat sacrificed to idols, they could choose any of the options.

Within this context, said Paul, "*let each be fully convinced in his own mind*" (verse 5) because "*whatever is not from faith is sin*" (verse 23). He emphasizes "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (v.17) The subject however of the chapter, is eating and drinking and/or not doing so, and whether to have certain days set aside especially for fasting.

The apostle Paul warns that we need to beware that a carnal human reasoning mind leads us away from obedience to God and His laws. "*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*" (Romans 8:7) Often, you and I, if not

careful, use human reasoning in place of seeking God and His will, and we end up in all sorts of difficulties and problems in our lives because of such.

Paul condemns *lawlessness* in Romans 6:19: "*I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.*" The Greek word translated "lawlessness" is *anomia* and refers to "contempt and violation of law" (Online Bible Greek Lexicon).

I hope what is penned in this letter is of some help in understanding Romans 14. If you missed the letter the week before this one, it is on the CGM website for your review.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.



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