



ROMANS 14 EXPLAINED

By George Lujack

ROMANS 14:1-4:

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Mainstream Christianity often teaches that the Apostle Paul is addressing food issues in verses 1-4. Many Christians misunderstand these verses to mean that the one who is not weak, can eat all things - clean *and* unclean creatures alike, proclaiming that God's dietary laws are no longer in effect. God's dietary laws are eternal, so they remain in effect. Paul is addressing fellowship issues among believers with differing knowledge of God's dietary commands.

The one who is "weak" eats only vegetables, indicating that such persons are non-meat eating vegetarians, being weak in the knowledge of the faith that God permits man to eat certain sanctified animals (Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14). The one who believes he may eat "all things" also applies to Christians who believe the dietary laws have been done away with and they can now eat all things. The one who eats all proper things, according to the law, should not despise and be judgmental towards the vegetarian, nor towards the one who believes he can eat all things, the clean and unclean creatures.

ROMANS 14:5-13:

One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Messiah (Christ) died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Messiah (Christ). For it is written: "As I live, says YHWH (the Lord), every knee shall bow to Me, a every tongue shall confess to God."

So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

Paul continues to address brethren over being overly judgmental towards fellow believers. It seems that Paul was anticipating what would be the coming confusion over the proper Sabbath day, God's festival days, and His dietary commands. These issues are worth discussing, but believers will disagree on these issues and they shouldn't get into judgmental disputes over them. Yeshua (Jesus) said that He did not come to bring peace and unity, but rather strife and division (Matthew 10:34-36). Arguments and disputes will arise among brethren. Believers who know and obey the truth (the seventh-day Sabbath, the Leviticus 23 festivals, and the dietary commands of Genesis 1:29, Leviticus 11, and Deuteronomy 14), should not be overly judgmental towards their fellow less spiritually knowledgeable brethren over these non-salvation issues (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 John 3:15) concerning the lesser parts of the law, but teach these laws to them diligently and with love if they will listen.

ROMANS 14:14-23:

I know and am convinced by the Lord Yeshua (Jesus) that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your *food*, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your *food* the one for whom Messiah (Christ) died. Therefore do not let your

good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Messiah (Christ) in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things that make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of *food*. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. 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. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

If someone today were somewhere and there was nothing but halal meat prepared under Islamic Shariah law to eat, a believer should not be concerned if the animal may have been slaughtered in the name of Allah, but only whether the meat is from a clean animal that is acceptable for food.

Romans 14:14-23 declares that there is no *food* that is unclean of itself. Unclean creatures *are not food*. Unclean creatures *are unclean*, which is why they are called ‘unclean’ creatures. Clean creatures that are food are not unclean of themselves. These verses speak of food that was first offered to idols or pagan gods that some believers may regard as having become unclean. The Apostle Paul wrote that he was convinced by Yeshua (Jesus) that food does not become unclean by itself, even if it were first offered to pagan gods or idols. Pagan gods and idols have no effect on food, so if someone were to bless or sacrifice food to a pagan god or idol, that food does not miraculously become unclean by itself or as a result of a pagan blessing, ritual, or sacrifice.