

Man Can't Choose His Own Day of Worship

A look at the meaning behind Romans 14:5.

Does it allow us to make our own decision about which day to keep holy?

In rejecting the observance of the weekly (Saturday) Sabbath, a number of groups rely heavily upon Romans 14 as a “proof text.”

Indeed, verse 5 certainly has the appearance of allowing each individual the liberty to choose whatever day he wishes to worship: *One man esteems one day above another: another esteems every day [alike]. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

If this verse really teaches that man may ignore the law and select any day he wishes in worship of Almighty Yahweh, then it runs counter to the other teachings of Paul in this same letter. Note that he quoted the Tenth Commandment, which forbids covetousness (Rom. 7:7). And in verse 12, Paul writes that “the law [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Rom. 7:12).

Paul Kept and Taught the Law

In Romans 7:22, Paul says that he delights in the law of Elohim after the inward man. Paul held the law in high regard and admits that he was taught according to the perfect manner of the law (Acts 22:3). He further states: *This I confess unto you, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the Elohim of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the prophets*, Acts 24:14. Paul followed the Bible’s teachings, but rejected the burdensome and erroneous man-made teachings added by the Scribes and Pharisees.

Acts 26:22 and 28:23 reveal that Paul continually relied upon, and quoted the Old Testament for his authority. Paul was not against keeping the law!

So, how do we explain these puzzling verses in Romans 14? Are we to understand that puny man can ignore the Commandments and observe any worship day that suits him?

An important discipline we must practice to resolve enigmas such as this is to read the verse in question in its entire content. Read all the pertinent verses before and after the passage to get a clear understanding of the meaning expressed.

Nothing against Eating Meat

The introductory verse of this 14th chapter of Romans zeroes in on the person who is weak in the faith. He is new to the Word, just starting to assimilate Bible truth.

For one believes that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eats herbs, Romans 14:2. Because much of the flesh of cattle and sheep available to them was dedicated to heathen deities, or was not drained of blood, some brethren were reluctant to eat flesh of any kind, but stuck to a diet of fruit, grain, nuts, and vegetables. But Paul clearly taught that Scripturally clean flesh was good and not to be rejected, for it is sanctified [set apart] by the Word of Yahweh (Lev. 11 and Deut. 14) and prayer by asking Yahweh’s blessings upon it (1 Tim. 4:5).

There is nothing wrong with eating meat, Paul writes, for Yahweh devotes two chapters to defining the differences so that we eat the clean and avoid the unclean animal like scavengers and carnivorous beasts.

Weekly Fasting Is a Personal Choice

In verse 3, Paul is likely referring to those who do not eat at all, but who select a day in which to fast. Instead of fasting one day a week, the self-righteous Pharisees fasted two days a week, both Monday and Thursday, as we see in the account of the Pharisee and publican (Luke 18:12).

Whether we fast or not is up to the individual, says Paul. It is between Yahweh and the person. If he is sincere and upright, Yahweh will strengthen him and make him stand. *Who art thou that judgest*

another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for Yahweh is able to make him stand, Romans 14:4.

Fasting, Not Worshiping

As we move to verse 5, we see that Paul comes to grips with this verse in which he explains that some people prefer a certain day to fast, and others deem any day suitable. *One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day [alike]. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, Romans 14:5.*

Notice that not one word has been uttered about observing a day of worship. The Sabbath or first day of the week is not even mentioned! The next verse clearly proves that the subject Paul is addressing here is fasting, not worshiping on a certain day. *He that regardeth the day, regardeth [it] unto Yahweh; and he that regardeth not the day, to Yahweh he doth not regard [it]. He that eateth, eateth to the Master, for he gives Elohim thanks; and he that eats not, to the Master he eateth not and giveth Elohim thanks, Romans 14:6.*

If one fasts on a certain day, he does so in reverence to Yahweh. If he eats on that day, he then thanks Yahweh for the food. He that fasts on that day gratefully thanks Yahweh for drawing closer to His people.

Nothing Here About the Sabbath

The rest of the chapter goes on to show that we do not live or die to ourselves, but all that we do is noted by Yahweh (Rom. 14:7). There is absolutely nothing in this 14th chapter dealing with the Sabbaths, festivals, new moons or Sabbath years. Paul did not do away with the weekly Sabbath or Feast days! Rather, he observed them and taught us to keep them also.

Paul is teaching us about being tolerant of other believers, especially the babe in the Word who has just begun to follow in the footsteps of the Messiah.

If someone brings up this verse in an effort to prove man “esteems one day above another,” and Paul did away with the Sabbath, remember, it simply means MAN prefers one day over another, NOT Yahweh (Rom. 14:5). And man can choose whatever day to fast that pleases him. The Savior said, *But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days, Luke 5:35.*

How clear! Paul is telling us through his letter to the Romans that we can select any day we wish to fast (except the weekly Sabbath). Now that the Savior Yahshua the Messiah—the Bridegroom—is taken from us, we are expected to fast.

Paul adds that we are not to ridicule anyone who is a vegetarian. Rather, his message is for us to “follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19). Also see our study entitled ***Romans 14*** for additional insight into this subject.