



# **NT 2732 The Book of Romans**

## **Chapters 9 – 16**

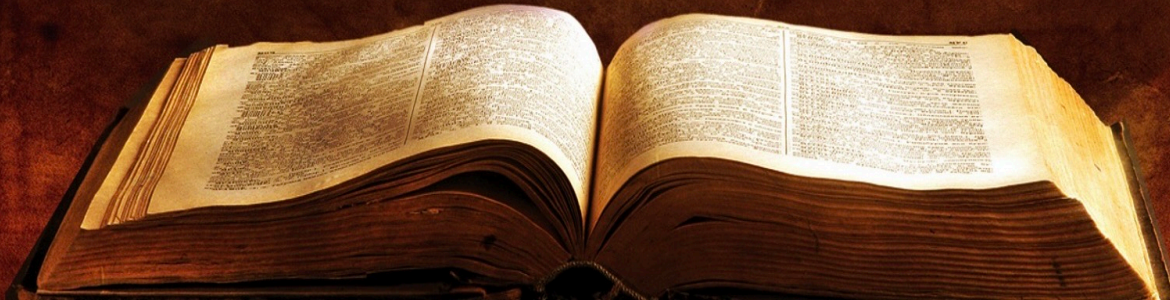


**MID-AMERICA**  
SEMINARY • COLLEGE

**Michael Spradlin, PhD**  
**Bradley Thompson, EdD PhD**

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF  
ROMANS

CHAPTER 14A



**This week...**

**Chapter 14a:**

**Principles of Conscience**



# ROMANS

## THE GOSPEL

Introduction — Personal (1:1–17)	<b>Saving the Sinner</b>		<b>Concerning Israel</b>		<b>Concerning Christian Conduct</b>	
	<u>Depravity of humanity</u> <u>Grace of God</u> <u>Justification by faith</u> <u>Sanctification through the Spirit</u> <u>Security of the saint</u>		<u>Divine sovereignty and human will</u> <u>Past, present, and future of the nation</u>		<u>Social</u> <u>Civil</u> <u>Personal</u>	
	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 1:18–8:39		<i>CHAPTERS</i> 9–11		<i>CHAPTERS</i> 12:1–15:13	
<b>Emphasis</b>	Doctrinal		National		Practical	
<b>Response</b>	Faith		Hope		Love	
<b>Doctrine of God</b>	Wrath		Righteousness		Glory	
<b>Doctrine of Humanity</b>	Fallen	Dead	Saved	Struggling	Freed	
<b>Doctrine of Sin</b>	Exposed	Conquered	Explained		Forgiven	
<b>Scope</b>	Dead in sin	Dead to sin	Peace with God		Love for others	
<b>Theme</b>	God's righteousness is given to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.					
<b>Key Verses</b>	1:16–17					
<b>Christ in Romans</b>	Jesus is the focus of the gospel and the means of salvation by God's grace apart from works (1:1–4, 16–17).					

Conclusion — Relational (15:14–16:27)

## Chapter 14

**Verse 1-** *Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not to have quarrels over opinions.*

Paul commands stronger believers to accept those who are weak (*asthenounta*- anesthesia) in faith without quarreling over opinions. In the next verse, he'll give two examples of eating meat sacrificed to idols (verse 2) and observing special holidays (verse 5). New believers might still be wary of the law and those who eat only vegetables or still feel the need to act differently on holidays. These are non-fellowship issues.

Stronger believers are not to take a superior attitude towards those who only eat vegetables and observe special holidays.

## Chapter 14

**Verse 2-** *One person has faith that he may eat all things, but the one who is weak eats only vegetables.*

Kosher dietary laws and special days were originally commanded by God for the good of Israel and were useful and right. However, our new life in Christ has freed us from the law.

1 Timothy 4:4- *“For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude.”*

Mark 7:17-20- Is Mark writing about washing hands or eating any kind of food?

## Chapter 14

**Verse 3-** *The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.*

Paul commands stronger Christians with different convictions not to “regard with contempt” (*exoutheneitō*- set as zero, see as nothing) weaker Christians with different views.

He also commands weaker believers not to judge those who eat meat or those who do not observe holidays.

If we don't receive each other, we think of ourselves as bigger than God because God accepts both the weak and the strong.

## Chapter 14

**Verse 4-** *Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

Paul bears down by stating that an outsider's opinion on the relationship between a servant and his master doesn't matter. Keep it to yourself. The Holy Spirit will help us grow in a deeper relationship with our Master. He is the one to inspect and correct-it's not our job.

Our standing (being in right relationship with God) is something God can do on His own, whether we are freer or rules oriented.



## Chapter 14

**Verse 5-** *One person values one day over another, another values every day the same. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.*

Is the Sabbath, feast days, festivals, and holy days better intrinsically than any other 24-hour period of time? No. In fact, Paul condemns the Galatian believers for continuing to observe "days and months and seasons and years" (Galatians 4:10). They were trusting religious rule-keeping to save them instead of trusting God's grace through faith in Christ, much like the Judaizers insistence on the act of circumcision (Galatians 2:4).

## Chapter 14

**Verse 5-** *One person values one day over another, another values every day the same. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.*

Every believer must be “fully convinced” (*plérophoreó- plérēs- full + phérō- carry or bring*). Most issues are negotiable (non-moral). Most are non-fellowship concerns, but there are some clearly defined in Scripture that are ethical and moral (stealing, lying, cheating, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, etc.) in nature. New Testament churches are to deal with these issues (Matthew 18).

## Chapter 14

**Verse 6-** *The one who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and the one who eats, does so with regard to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and the one who does not eat, it is for the Lord that he does not eat, and he gives thanks to God.*

Paul writes about disputable matters between Christians where the Bible does not give distinct, obvious guidance. Sexual immorality, idolatry, lying, stealing, coveting, and gossiping are clearly condemned. Our convictions are by God, not others.

Going to church on Christmas or Easter will not make God love you more. Neither will tithing, witnessing, or church attendance. There is nothing we can do to add to our salvation.

## Chapter 14

**Verse 7-** *For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;*

Whatever we do or don't do is to honor the Lord. If we observe a special day to honor the Lord or if we view every day equally to honor Him, both views are to honor God. If we eat every animal on the earth and thank Him for it, or if we eat only vegetables (e.g., Daniel) in honor of God, both are acceptable.

Paul is not making a sociological observation ("No man is an island"- Donne). He is revealing a spiritual truth- believers live their lives accountable to the will of God.

## Chapter 14

**Verse 8-** *for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.*

The life of a believer should be according to God's will, and their death is in His timing. We belong to Him for eternity, so it doesn't matter whether here or there; we are His.

We need to learn the difference between our preferences and convictions and between negotiable and non-negotiable issues.

From an eternal perspective, many matters that divide us are of little or no consequence. Others are important enough to break fellowship and enact church discipline.

## Chapter 14

**Verse 9-** *For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

Jesus (the Son) has always been Lord from eternity past, along with the Father and the Spirit.

Here, Paul emphasizes that He is the “Lord of Salvation” (Romans 10:9- *“That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”*)

Philippians 2:10-11 *So that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

## Chapter 14

**Verse 10-** *But as for you, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or you as well, why do you regard your brother or sister with contempt? For we will all appear before the judgment seat of God.*

Paul reminds his readers that Jesus is Lord of Creation and Salvation, so his next question is obvious- Why are they acting in place of Jesus the Lord?

Why are the weaker believers judging the stronger as libertines and the stronger judging the weaker as legalists? The contempt (*exoutheneis*- “treat for naught”) they show “zeros out” the other.

## Chapter 14

**Verse 11-** *For it is written: “As I live, says the Lord, to Me every knee will bow, And every tongue will give praise to God.”*

Paul quotes Isaiah 45:23 (Which he does again in Philippians 2:10-11):

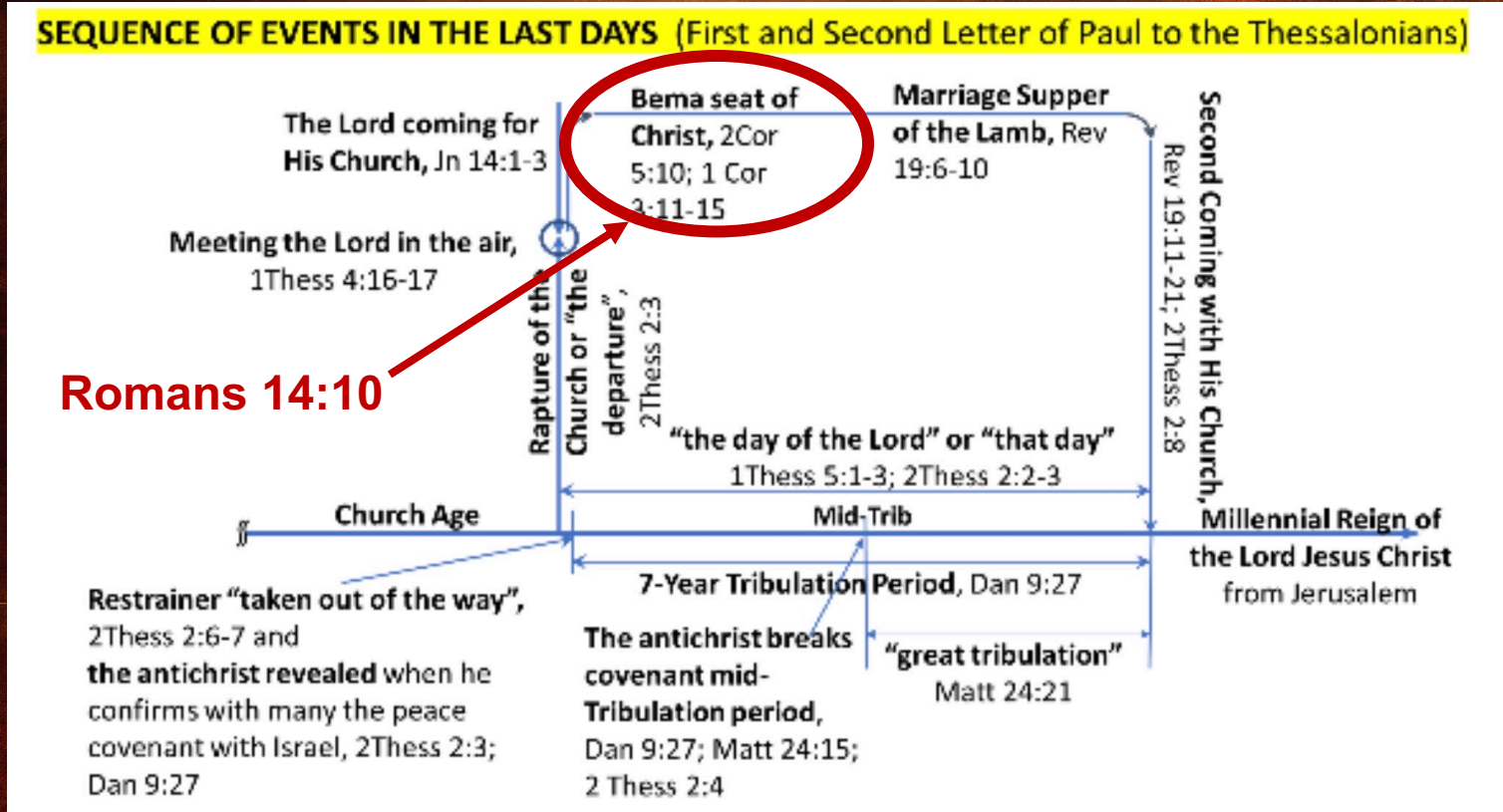
*I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, **That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.***

*When we judge other believers on non-essential issues, we are essentially taking God’s role as Judge.*



# Chapter 14

**Verse 12-** *So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.*



## Chapter 14

**Verse 13-** *Therefore let's not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this: not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's or sister's way.*

Paul concludes the previous verses by urging the weak to stop criticizing the strong and the strong to stop finding fault with the weak. Stronger believers are not to put obstacles (*skandalon*) or stumbling blocks (*skandalon*- snares). We shouldn't entice people to "grow up" by doing things that are against their conscience. Let the Lord tell them what to do. (Sometimes, we try to get people to practice what we are doing out of another motive. We are unsure what we're doing is right, so we involve them in it to ease guilt).

## Chapter 14

**Verse 14-** *I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to the one who thinks something is unclean, to that person it is unclean.*

Paul continues to talk about a person's conscience. Even if it is okay for someone to participate in something, it might be wrong for someone else.

(E.g., A person might be able to eat a candy bar once a week and be satisfied. Someone else might eat a candy bar and get hooked on sugar, eating ten every day. It might ruin their health, so they don't eat any candy bars.)

## Chapter 14

**Verse 15-** *For if because of food your brother or sister is hurt, you are no longer walking in accordance with love. Do not destroy with your choice of food that person for whom Christ died.*

Paul now addresses those who are enjoying their freedom in Christ at the expense of other believers who think it to be wrong. Paul warns that a believer can't flaunt his freedom while claiming to love their fellow Christian. More dramatically, he says we must not, for the sake of food, destroy someone for whom Christ died. Paul is not speaking of the loss of salvation but the loss or ruin of spiritual well-being (MacArthur).

## Chapter 14

**Verse 16-** *Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;*

If a believer pushes his freedom onto another, causing his faith to be harmed, his freedom in Christ can be thought of as an evil thing.

If I find no wrong in eating pork, but serve it to you at a dinner party, expecting you to eat it along with other dinner guests who love barbeque pork you might eat it under duress (fear of embarrassment). This would be me causing you to violate your conscience, which is wrong (evil).

## Chapter 14

**Verse 17-** *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Paul reminds his readers that they didn't come to faith in Christ just for the freedom from restrictions in the Law. Once they were bound in thought and action to the Law, but now they are free as they understand the true nature of salvation.

This is the real meaning of the kingdom of God- not what we eat or drink, but living in a right relationship with God (righteousness, peace, and joy).

## Chapter 14

**Verse 18-** *For the one who serves Christ in this way is acceptable to God and approved by other people.*

If believers focus on the righteousness, peace, and joy the Holy Spirit gives, instead of insisting on exercising their freedom in Christ at the risk of harming the faith of others, they will be approved (*dokimos*- used of money at the time. Inspected and found genuine). This is in opposition to *adokimos*-a counterfeit coin, a disqualified athlete, a cowardly soldier, a rejected candidate, or a defective stone.

If we serve Christ, we should focus on being right with Him and acceptable by other people, both lost and saved.

## Chapter 14

**Verse 19-** *So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.*

There is a balance between giving more legalism-minded believers the right to police the actions of other Christians (Colossians 2:16-23) and Christians discerning the difference between exercising freedom and abusing it.

*Therefore, no one is to act as your judge in regard to food and drink, or in respect to a festival or a new moon, or a Sabbath day- things which are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. Take care that no one keeps defrauding you of your prize by delighting in humility and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.*



## Chapter 14

**Verse 20-** *Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the person who eats and causes offense.*

Paul is clear as he sums up his point- There is nothing intrinsically wrong with meat or drink itself. Everything is clean for those who are in Christ (1 Timothy 4:4), but it is a lot easier to tear down than build up.

Believers have been released from any obligation to the Law, but it is wrong when a Christian eats and drinks, and it has the potential to cause another Christian to stumble by violating his or her conscience before God.

## Chapter 14

**Verse 21-** *It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother or sister stumbles.*

Paul restates his point from a negative point-of-view. Paul is not calling on believers to submit to the judgment of others. He is calling on Christians to consider the weakness of others before pursuing their own freedom.

It is worth the loss of our freedom in Christ if it will genuinely help a believer grow in their faith.

## Chapter 14

**Verse 22-** *The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is the one who does not condemn himself in what he approves.*

Our faith in God should be both public and private. Public in the sense that we should want to tell others about the wonderful gift of salvation we've been given. It should also be private in the sense that we should not push people into our convictions.

Essentially, Paul is saying, "When in doubt, don't." The "strong" Christian (15:1) is wrong if he causes a weak brother to sin (by and a weak brother (Vv. 1–2) who does what he doubts also sins (v. 23).

## Chapter 14

**Verse 23-** *But the one who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.*

Paul has been writing to stronger and weaker believers. Now, he ends the chapter with a word to those who are weaker.

Those who eat or drink against their own beliefs (faith) are condemned (*kata-* against + *krino-* to judge = to judge against) because they are eating against their own faith. Paul doesn't mean that they are condemned in the sense that they lose their salvation, but that they are guilty of sin, though still in Christ.

Next week...  
Reformation Day  
Break!

