

## Primary and Secondary Issues of Theology and Practice

### Romans 14:1-12 (Part 1)

#### Introduction

1. Romans Chapters 1-8 cover the essential Gospel
  2. Romans Chapters 9-11 cover God's purposes for the Jews and Gentiles
  3. Romans Chapter 12 and following, addresses practical aspects of the Christian life.
- And foundational to all our behaviour is love (Rom.12:9-21) since, "love is the fulfillment of the Law" (Rom.13:10)

#### 1. Problems facing the early church (Rom.14:1ff; 12:2)

1. When we become Christians, we all hold to some false beliefs which emanate from our pre-Christian life

2. What was the specific problem facing the church at Rome?

1. Paul addresses the "weak" (14:1,2) and the "strong" (15:1)

1. The "weak" (14:1,2)

2. The "strong" (15:1)

1. Notice that Paul includes himself among the "strong" (15:1)

2. Notice that Paul believes the view held by the "strong" is correct; and the view held by the "weak" is incorrect (15:1)

2. The nature of the issue between the "weak" and the "strong"

1. The "weak"

1. The "weak" with regard to food (14:2b,6b)

2. The "weak" with regard to religious days (14:5a,6a)

2. The "strong"

1. The "strong" with regard to food (14:2a)

2. The "strong" with regard to religious days (14:5)

3. The consequences of these differences (Rom.14:3)

1. The "strong" Christians

2. The "weak" Christians

#### 2. The solution

1. The "weak": Understanding their past identity

1. It is clear from Romans Chapters 9-11, that the church in Rome had a mixed fellowship of Jews and Gentiles.

2. The combination of diet and holy days

### 3. Jews and Gentiles had very different backgrounds before they were converted

#### 2. A summary understanding of Jewish belief

- The OT—was God’s inspired revelation given to the Jews alone
- The covenants in Gen.17; as well as,
- The dietary laws (Lev.7:22-27; 11:1-47; 17:1-16) (NT. Mk.7:1-23), and,
- The detailed observance of the,
  - Sabbath
  - Important festivals like the Passover
- The moral law outlined in the 10 Commandments
- The nature of forgiveness through substitution involving the temple and the sacrificial system; and the critically important “Day of Atonement.”

#### 3. Understanding the Jewish difficulty in transitioning from the OT principles to the NT principles (Acts 10:9-46)

1. Peter’s Vision (Acts 10:9-20)
2. Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:25-29)
3. Gentiles Hear the Good News through Peter (Acts 10:34-43)
4. The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-45)
  1. A three-fold vision of the sheet with the unclean animals, reptiles and birds
  2. The Holy Spirit specially commanding Peter to go to Cornelius the Gentile and cease calling the Gentiles unclean (10:19-20)
  3. An angel telling Cornelius to send servants to Peter inviting him to present the gospel to the Gentiles (10:22)
  4. The Jewish believers witnessing this event, were “amazed” that God would save the Gentiles (10:45)
  5. “When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, <sup>3</sup>“You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” (Acts 11:2-3)
  6. Peter, explained what happened (Acts 11:18)

#### 4. Understanding a partial reason for Jewish confusion

#### Conclusion

1. There are primary and secondary issues to the Christian faith
2. Christians and non-essential beliefs (Mk.7:18-19)
3. Note that not all the Jews were “weak,” because they were Jews, and not all the Gentiles were “strong,” because they were Gentiles (1Cor.8)
4. Remember that in some areas we are all probably “weak” and in other areas “strong”
5. Now you may say, “What has this issue between Jews and Gentiles got to do with us today?”
  1. On the religious front
  2. On the theological front
  3. Then on the maturity side