

# **DID APOSTLE PAUL ABOLISH THE SABBATH?**

**In Romans 14:5**

**'One person esteems one day above another: another esteems every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind' (Romans 14:5)**

**What does the above verse mean?**

**Does it nullify the Sabbath  
commandment?**

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## What does the above verse mean? Does it nullify the Sabbath commandment?

Read carefully the chapter while comparing it with the parallel verses.  
(Its Interpretations and commentaries are below the table)

<b>Romans Chapter 14:1-23</b>	<b>Parallel verses</b>
	<i>For "...In the mouth of <u>two or three witnesses shall every word be established.</u>" (2 Cor 13:1)</i>
<sup>1</sup> Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to <b>doubtful disputations.</b>	<i>Hebrews 13:9</i> <sup>9</sup> Be not carried about with <b>divers and strange doctrines.</b> For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with foods, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.
<sup>2</sup> For one believeth that he may <b>eat all things:</b> another, who is weak, <b>eats vegetables.</b>	
<sup>3</sup> Let <u>not him that <b>eats</b> despise him that <b>eats</b> not;</u> and let not him which <b>eats</b> not judge him that <b>eats:</b> for God hath received him.	<i>1 Corinthians 8:1-2; and 1 Cor 8:7-13</i> <sup>1</sup> Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies. <sup>2</sup> And if any man think that he knows any thing, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.
<sup>4</sup> Who art thou that judges another man's servant? to his own master he stands or falls. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.	<i>1 John 3:20</i> <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.
<sup>5</sup> <u>One person esteems <b>one day</b> above another:</u> another esteems every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. <sup>6</sup> He that regards <b>the day,</b> regards it unto the Lord; and he that regards not <b>the day,</b> to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that <b>eats, eats</b> to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that <b>eats</b> not, to the Lord he <b>eats</b> not, and giveth God thanks.	<i>Galatians 4:9-10</i> <sup>9</sup> But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the <u>weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage?</u> <sup>10</sup> You <b>observe days,</b> and <b>months,</b> and <b>times,</b> and <b>years.</b> <sup>11</sup> I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.
	<i>Colossians 2:16-17</i> <sup>16</sup> Let no man therefore judge you in <b>meat,</b> or in <b>drink,</b> or in respect of <b>an holyday,</b> or of the <b>new moon,</b> or of the <b>sabbath days:</b> <sup>17</sup> Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

<sup>7</sup> For none of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself. <sup>8</sup> For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

<sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

<sup>10</sup> But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. <sup>11</sup> For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. <sup>12</sup> So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

<sup>13</sup> Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

<sup>14</sup> I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteems any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

*Galatians 2:18*

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

*2 Corinthians 5:15*

<sup>15</sup> And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

*Philippians 2:10*

<sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

*Mathew 18:6*

<sup>6</sup> But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

*1 Corinthians 8:8*

<sup>7</sup> Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.<sup>9</sup> But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become **a stumbling block** to them that are weak.

*1 Corinthians 10:25*

<sup>25</sup> Whatsoever is sold in the meat market, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: for "the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness.

*1 Timothy 4:4*

<sup>4</sup> For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: <sup>5</sup> For it is sanctified by the **word of God** and **prayer**.

*1 Corinthians 8:7-13*

<sup>7</sup> Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. <sup>9</sup> But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.

<sup>10</sup> For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered

<sup>15</sup> But if thy brother be grieved with thy **food**, now walks thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy **food**, for whom Christ died.

to idols; <sup>11</sup>And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? <sup>12</sup> But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup> Wherefore, if food make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend.

*1 Corinthians 10:28-29*

<sup>28</sup> But if any man say unto you, this is offered in sacrifice unto idols, **eat not for his sake that shewed it**, and for conscience sake: <sup>29</sup> Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other:

*Mathew 18:6*

<sup>6</sup> But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

<sup>16</sup> Let not then your good be evil spoken of: <sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not **eating and drinking**; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

*1 Corinthians 8:8*

<sup>8</sup> But food commends us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

<sup>18</sup> For he that in these things serves Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. <sup>19</sup> Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

<sup>20</sup> For **food** destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who **eats** with offence. <sup>21</sup> It is good neither to **eat meat**, nor to **drink wine**, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumble, or is offended, or is made weak.

*1 Corinthians 8:11-13*

<sup>11</sup>And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? <sup>12</sup> But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup> Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend

<sup>22</sup> Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemns not himself in that thing which he allows.

*1 John 3:21*

<sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

<sup>23</sup> And he that doubts is damned if he **eat**, because he **eats** not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

*1 Corinthians 8:7*

<sup>7</sup> Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

*NB: The words "eat and food" are mentioned 19 times in a single chapter. So, the chapter theme is something to do with food and eating.*

## My commentaries of Romans chapter 14

### A brief context of the book of Romans

Around the year 57 A.D., The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans to the saints of believers in Rome. Writing to a church he had not yet visited; Paul wrote to counsel and comfort them as the Church grew. The church in Rome was composed of both Jews and Gentile believers and there were constant conflicts between them. Much of the content of the book of Romans is Paul's persuasive argument against Jewish Christians, who, due to their Jewish cultural background, still thought it was necessary to maintain the ordinances contained in the law of Moses even after becoming Christians. The subjects Paul wrote about would have been difficult and confusing to people outside the Church of that time and is still a source of doctrinal misunderstanding among Christians today.

### Verse-by-verse commentary of Romans chapter 14

*The word "eat" is mentioned 15 times. Could Paul have written a whole chapter just to counsel church on eating normal food?*

**In verse 1:** Paul straight forward mentions there were faith-related practical issues that had brought much disputes and doubts, especially among those members of the church who had weak faith.

**In verses 2 & 3:** he specifically reveals what the disputes were about; those strong in faith ate all the food they found in the market, and despised those weak in faith who preferred to only eat vegetables for fear of something. So, what is this something that would cause the weak in faith to only eat vegetables? It means, that in the markets, there was sold certain meat was associated with idol worship (*see parallel verse 1 Corinthians 8:7-13*). For fear of defiling themselves, and since they could not differentiate between meat offered to idols and those not, they choose to completely shun all the meats sold in the market.

**In verse 4:** but the problem lay with those who felt they had strong faith who judged and demeaned those with weak faith. Paul strongly rebukes this group for their judgmental attitude towards their fellow brethren. *The parallel verse* warns those who think they have more knowledge not to use their understanding to demean/judge others, as this can lead to self-pride (spiritual arrogance) and disunity in the church.

**In verse 5-6:** Following the same flow of thoughts and advice about eating, Paul argues that some people in the church were esteeming (regarding) one day above another, while others were regarding that every day was the same (those thinking have more knowledge). Paul counsels the church that each one should use his/her conviction to judge things, rather than condemn one another, which would escalate disputes in the church. Notice in *verse 6* what Paul connects with observing a day "**Eating**". Then we can ask ourselves, how were the two groups observing the day? By "some observing it" and others "not observing it." likewise, it also implies some were regarding the day by eating on that day and others by not eating on the day.

What counsel does Paul give these two groups of people? He tells them this: If one is fully convinced in his mind to regard the day more than the others (and does not eat on that day), he does it so to Lord, and if the other does not regard the day (and eats in that day), even to the Lord, he does not regard it. Therefore, Paul's counsel is not to bring striving and division but to bring harmony and unity to the church. Notice the words "the day" do not mention "The sabbath day" as such we cannot assume the day being talked to was the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week.

Before Paul was converted, he was a zealous legalist who persecuted greatly those who did not keep Jewish laws including the sabbath. Paul was a learned lawyer of the law and he could not have confused the sabbath with the phrase "one day". He knew the Sabbath was to be kept because he kept it (*"As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures", Acts 17:2*). The sabbath commandment specifically says there should be a holy convocation on the 7<sup>th</sup> day (Levi 23:3) for the people of God. This is what informed the custom of Paul.

**NB:** Most bible versions have deleted this second section of verse 6 ("**...and he that regards not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it**"). check if yours also omit this section.

This section is omitted intentionally, to deceive many people that Paul abolished the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath and that everyone is at liberty to choose any day he/she likes to rest and worship. Yet, God Himself specifically sanctified (set aside), blessed, and rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day (Genesis 2: 1-3). And then He commanded all His chosen people to keep the Sabbath holy (Exodus 20:8-11).

Satan deceives people that Paul, a humble apostle of the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8) annulled the Sabbath commandment, or to show that it does matter which day you keep. A servant cannot annul the law of his master.

Throughout this chapter, Paul is talking about that issue connected with food and eating that had brought dispute with the church. Another point to note is that the book of Romans does not mention even once the issue of the Sabbath. In fact, of the 13 books that Paul wrote in the New Testament, he never mentioned even once the 7<sup>th</sup>-day Sabbath. Why? because there were no disputes on Sabbath keeping among believers. Furthermore, he was a Jew and an apostle and he always went to church on the sabbath to teach and preach (as his custom was).

**The parallel verses** for verses 5 & 6 are *Galatians 4:9-10 and Colossians 2:16-17*. In these letters, Paul, warns Galatians and Colossians believers not to keep ordinances contained in the law of Moses. He wonders why believers should desire to bondage themselves again with those ordinances that were abolished on the cross. He clearly lists the ordinances as the feast days (appointed holy days and yearly sabbath days). He tells them they were just a *shadow of things to come*, for they all pointed to Christ, and we know Christ came, thus fulfilling them. In **Leviticus 23:1-44**, God gave Israel 7 appointed feasts that were to be observed in certain days of the year. In some of these feasts, the children of Israel were advised not to do any work (hence referred to as sabbaths), while in others they were to do fasting.

However, in Leviticus 23:1, God first separates the weekly sabbath before giving the names of the feast days. The 7<sup>th</sup>-day sabbath was not an ordinance written by Moses but rather one of the 10

commandments written by the finger of God, and given way back in creation. Though a shadow pointing to Christ, and in order not to bring disunity in the church, Paul still advises those who should desire to observe them not to be judged by those who don't. although he terms them a bondage to those who may keep them.

**In verses 7-13;** Paul repeats and expands on the same advice he gave in verse 4, by telling believers not to be judgmental towards one another, despite their different levels of faith, for they are all one in Christ Jesus. He warns those judging others that they shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account. He repeats and amplifies his advice given in earlier verses; that we should not offend one another, and we should not put a stumbling block that can hurt others, since we are equal in Jesus.

**In Verse 14:** Paul's thoughts flashback to verse 2 where he said some were eating all things and others were vegetarians. Now in verse 14, he expounds by saying that there is nothing unclean of itself. Something is considered unclean if it is defiled by human rituals or if God designated it to be so. But Paul states that human ritual cannot make something unclean in his writing to Corinthians (parallel verse *1 Corinthians 8:7-13*). But not to bring disunity, he defends specifically those with weak faith when he says "If any person considers certain food unclean (and not eat them), then to him they are unclean. It is his conviction that he/she should be respected and not despised or judged by others.

**The parallel verse** (1 Timothy 4:4); says that "*every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanks*". Again, many people use this verse to abolish God's commandment on the things He said should not be eaten, (including pigs, Camels, rabbits, snails, mouse among others). However, the truth is, they fail to read verses 4 and 5 together. Notice verse 5 starts with the word 'for'; meaning it provides an added explanation "**For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer**". What is to sanctify something with the word of God? To sanctify is "to set apart". Meaning that God has set apart his creatures, setting APART those clean and those unclean. So, the word of God should help a prayerful Christian to distinguish (set apart), by reading the bible, those creatures that God allows to be eaten and those He does not allow to be eaten.

**In verse 15-22:** Paul says that a believer who has full knowledge that idols are indeed useless things should eat the food offered to them because he/she knows idols means nothing. But Paul cautions such; If in presence of a brethren who have little faith, who yet believes those food offered to idols should not be eaten, then the brethren with strong faith should not eat them for the sake of not hurting him who has weak faith. In Verse 20: Paul says it is even evil for that person who eats with an offense, meaning we should be very careful not to offend anyone by eating those things that the weak in faith consider unclean (because they have been offered to idols). He cautions those who have strong faith to have it to themselves and not to use that faith to offend others.

**In the last verse, 23:** Paul concludes that if one doubts about food sold in the market, and considers it unclean, then it will be unclean because of your weak faith. And if you eat it, you will have condemned yourself. So, it's better to have strong faith in The Word of God.



Paul ends with a very strong guiding principle that every believer should embrace while considering what to eat or not to eat (only while considering those food offered to idols -1 Cori 8:7), "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin". Meaning that faith in the Word of God should be our measure in everything that we eat and do in our lives here on earth.

*So, this chapter is a counsel primarily on eating and foods*

### **Conclusion: What can we learn from Romans 14**

- Those believers who think themselves knowledgeable on some matters should not impose their wills and opinions on believers with weak faith.
- believers need to respect personal differences between themselves; it is about not assuming that one's opinion is right or that a differing opinion is wrong as long as it is based on the truth provided in the bible.
- Some issues (like eating meat versus vegetarianism) are personal matters that should be solved by an individual own conviction, based on the word of God.
- Every believer should put a higher value on keeping unity among believers, than imposing personal opinion that can bring conflict and disunity in church
- "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit". So, we should not condemn others for not eating some things because of their lack of knowledge or personal preferences.
- We should base everything we do by the Faith we gain from the Word of God "whatsoever is not of faith is sin". Faith comes by reading and internalizing the Word of God (see Romans 10:17)

**Finally,**

**From our understanding of the interpretation above, should we conclude that Romans 24:5 abolished God's 4th commandment, (to keep holy the sabbath on the 7th day), as many tend to believe?**

**The answer is NO!**