

Day of the Lord

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Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep It Holy
(Ex. 20:8)

One Person Esteems One Day above another;
another Esteems Every Day Alike. Let Each Be
Fully Convinced in His Own Mind
(Rom. 14:5)

There is a common thread used by those who attempt to discredit God's word by claiming there are many discrepancies. That common thread is to quote various scriptures out of context. By doing this, these individuals believe they can accomplish their goal. Quoting Romans 14:5 without explaining the context is a perfect example of this subterfuge. There were various disputes among some members of the early church and Paul acted to deal with these so they did not end up causing division. However, these disputes had nothing to do with observing God's weekly Sabbath, New Moons, or Holy Days. Instead, the issues being debated had to do with eating and not eating as plainly described in the following text,

For one believes he may eat all things (i.e. fruits, vegetables, and meat), but he who is weak (in the faith; cf. Rom. 14:1) eats only vegetables (Rom. 14:2; Ed. notes in parentheses; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

The problem lay with those who felt their manner of eating made them more righteous than other brethren. This practice crept into the early church in a number of ways including vegetarianism. However, it was not limited to eating habits. Other forms of asceticism led to more friction, with the potential for further division among the brethren. Some individuals, who embraced asceticism, criticized God's

church for having a good time when they celebrated God's appointed festivals,

Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding (your celebratory conduct during) a festival (feast day) or a new moon or Sabbath (Col. 2:16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

God instructed His people to rejoice and have a good time during His appointed feasts, but those who felt they were more righteous, by restraining themselves from "worldly pleasures", were in direct opposition to God and those He had called to serve Him,

You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. 23 And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstlings of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear (have deep respect for) the Lord your God always (Dt. 14:22-23; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

God expected His people to rejoice and enjoy themselves throughout His appointed festivals, and this included the consumption of meat and alcoholic beverages,

And you shall spend that money (cf. Dt. 14:24-25) for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep (meats considered "clean" according to God's law; see study – Did the Early Church Teach That the Law of Clean and Unclean Had Been Changed?), for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household (Dt. 14:26; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Paul compared the conduct of the ascetics to the doctrines of men, which Christ also condemned

during his ministry on earth (cf. Mt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7). Self-denial of various physical pleasures was a hallmark of the ascetic lifestyle, and Paul did not want this false humility to take root in the early church,

If you died with Christ (symbolically at baptism) from the basic principles of the world (which are contrary to God's law and commandments), why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations (imposed by men as their interpretation of righteous conduct) – 21 Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, 22 which all concern things which perish with the using – according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion (i.e. Buddhism, Jainism, the "Christian" Desert Fathers, and other sects originating with the Pythagoreans), false humility, and neglect of the body (severe treatment, asceticism), but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh (our human nature which is contrary to God's law; cf. Rom. 8:7) (Col. 2:20-23; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Going back to Romans 14, Paul also addressed the subject of "fasting" because some individuals were claiming that "fasting" should occur only on specific days, while others would "fast" whenever they felt they should. Also, some believed that you could not give proper thanks to God unless you were "fasting,"

One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the (fast) day, observes it to the Lord (the balance of this verse is omitted from the modern eclectic, or "critical", text of the Greek New Testament, abbreviated as NU) (Rom. 14:6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It seems odd that the later part of Romans 14:6 is missing from the NU because the balance of verse 6, as published in the NKJV, confirms that Paul was talking about "fasting." Perhaps one or more "custodians" of the NU wanted the reference to "fasting" to be missing because this would bolster support for observing days like Sunday instead of the weekly Sabbath, which occurs on Saturday in current secular calendars(see study: The Weekly Sabbath),

...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 (i.e. "fasts"), to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks (Rom. 14:6b; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Suffice it to say, Paul was not giving license to disobey God's law regarding the Sabbath command (cf. Ex. 20:8-11). Instead, he was dealing with some potentially subversive teachings that were beginning to enter God's church and like leaven they were creeping in slowly and in a manner that looked fairly innocent, without closer scrutiny (1Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9; cf. Gal. 1:6).

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