

## PROHIBITION AGAINST JUDGING IN MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE | ROMANS 14:10-13

- Verse 10 –
  - It is important to take every passage in context.
    - Paul is *not* prohibiting a believer from judging his brother (an activity Paul encourages in 1 Corinthians 6:1-4).
    - The prohibition is *in context* of the matters of conscience in this chapter.
  - Not only is a judgment not in order, but the practice of disregarding / sidelining another for these matters is also condemned in the statement **why doest thou set at nought thy brother?**
  - As in v. 4 and Romans 12:19, the **judgment** belongs to Christ, in a future day at **the judgment seat of Christ**.
  - Concerning **the judgment seat of Christ**, see note on 1 Corinthians 4:5.
    - The church would do well to recognize that it is not our function to be "judge and jury." If a man's conscience doesn't convict him, we will probably not be able to do so either. The word of God is **piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**. When we teach Scripture, it does its own internal work in the hearts of those who hear it. We should **judge nothing before the time**, and in that day the Lord will be the Judge. In the day of judgment, **every man shall have praise of God**, that is, *let God praise every man when the time comes*.
  - The details of the **judgment seat of Christ** are not fully given. Is it at the rapture or the Second Coming? Is it only for believers? Is it part of the judgment of the nations? These questions and more cannot be fully answered. For additional study see Romans 2:16, Matthew 25:31-32, John 5:22, 1 Corinthians 4:5, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Jude 1:14-15.
- Verse 11 - Largely a quote from Isaiah 45:23.
- Verse 12 - The emphasis is on **of himself** (the emphasis being clear by Greek word order). The YLT retains the word order, "each of us concerning himself shall give reckoning to God"
- Verse 13 –
  - This is the important issue in matters of conscience, that we not **put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall** for another person.
  - In 1 Corinthians 8 Paul speaks to stumblingblocks for unbelievers (see note on 1 Cor. 8:11). Unbelievers are also in view in Acts 15:20. It will be argued in the following verses that unbelievers are in view here as well.

## PERSONAL ATTITUDES IN MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE | ROMANS 14:14-23

- Verse 14 –
  - Paul makes a very strong statement with **I know** followed by **I am persuaded**. This is not something in which he is doubtful. His persuasion is that **nothing is unclean of itself**.
  - Why would Paul need to be **persuaded** of this truth?
    - Because, as a Jew, Paul knew that in the previous dispensation *this statement was blatantly false* and was totally at opposition with Leviticus 11.
    - Furthermore, nothing short of a revelation from God could revoke the unclean status of certain animals.
    - Compare Peter's experience with the vision of unclean foods. Such strict and clear regulations of Scripture cannot be annulled by any event, only by the express consent of God.
    - Paul spent much of his ministry writing about the Christian's freedom from the Law.
  - Why, if Paul has such persuasion, would he allow an individual estimation to override this truth? I believe it was for several reasons:
    - Because this matter, on a personal level, would not hinder a person from salvation.
    - Because it was a matter of a persons personal estimation, not a matter of doctrinal teaching. Paul would not have allowed the *teaching* that certain meats were unclean.

- Because the sacrifice of his own freedom for the sake of evangelism was a sacrifice he was willing to make. See verse 15, and 1 Corinthians 8:13.
- Verse 15 - I am not convinced that **brother** is always a sign that an individual is a Christian. It could (and likely does) have more reference to the *Jewish brethren* (as in Matthew 25:31-46). A Christian should be disciplined in the matter of the freedom of the law, and not be allowed to continue in weakness and bondage. If our actions keep a lost person from the cross, we can **destroy** the one **for whom Christ died**.
- Verse 16 - The **good** Paul speaks of is the liberty we have in Christ. We should not use this liberty in such a manner that it become **evil spoken of**.
- Verse 17 –
  - This is one of a handful of verses that us often used to prove that the Kingdom of God is *hear and now* and *spiritual not physical*. (My position is that the Kingdom is future, physical, and fraternal [i.e.: related to Israel]). But does this verse prove what others would like it to prove? This passage in no way *disproves* a future, physical Kingdom. In fact, the *future salvation of a Jewish brother* is the context, thus it is hard to claim this verse as a present condition. Further, a physical reality to the Kingdom does not negate the truth of this verse.
  - At the time this passage was written, the Jewish nation was still being given opportunity to receive the Kingdom of God (i.e.: it was the *age of the Kingdom offer*), thus it was appropriate that Paul would speak about the requirements of Kingdom acceptance for the Jewish nation. One of those requirements was to accept Jesus as Messiah, and if the eating of meat (a liberty of the Dispensation of the Church) hindered the Jew from doing that, then Paul was opposed to the liberty.
- Verse 18 - How in the world can Paul claim that the one who does **these things** (of v. 17) are **acceptable to God**? Such a position would be a works-based acceptance. The word **acceptable** is εὐάρεστος [euarestos] which is literally *well-pleasing*, as in Philippians 4:18, Colossians 3:20, Titus 2:9, and Hebrews 13:21. (A form of the word is used in Romans 15:1, 2, and 3, translated **to please or pleased**).
- Verse 19 –
  - Once again, this passage must be used in the context of *limiting our liberties for the sake of evangelism*. If we go outside this context, we create a church-environment in which nothing offensive is allowed.
  - So, a position that says, "I am free to \_\_\_\_\_, but I am not going to because it may cause a lost segment of society to reject the Gospel" would be appropriate. However, a position that says, "The doctrine of \_\_\_\_\_ is offensive to some people within the church, therefore we will only speak of doctrines which keep the peace" is not an appropriate conclusion from this text.
- Verses 20-21 -- Paul summarizes his argument, adds wine-drinking to the list of offenses, and even expands to **any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth** to the list. Once again, this is in relation to *evangelism*, not weaker brothers within the church (who should be taught, not coddled).
- Verse 22 - The **faith** referenced here is both further evidence that the *weaker brother* in the passage is one *without faith* (i.e.: lost), and that this faith has produced in the life of the believer certain liberties which should, at times, be kept **to thyself before God** and not flaunted before the world. To misuse our liberties is to bring condemnation upon ourselves.
- Verse 23 - If Paul is speaking of a believing weaker brother, how can he say that this brother is **damned if he eat**? This is further evidence that the *weaker brother* is not saved, but is one who is loved and for whom salvation is longed for.