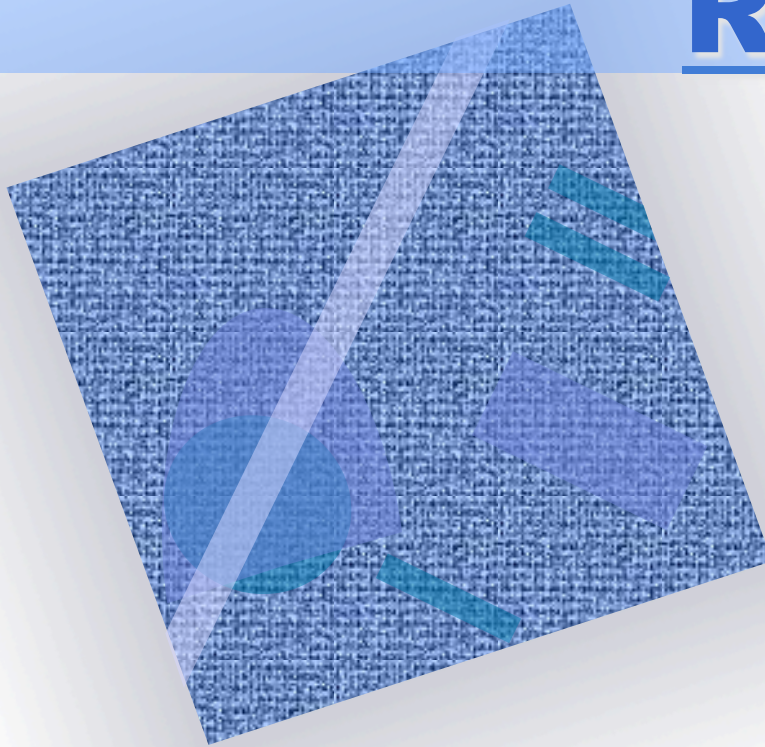


Paul's Epistle to the Romans

**The *Abuses* of
Divine
Righteousness,
14:1 – 15:13**



Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness



Remember the overall theme:

Salvation is afforded to all (Jew & Gentile) through God's power to save by the Gospel.






Also remember that these chapters (14 & 15) fall within the *Practical* or *Application* portion of the epistle:




>chps.1-11 were the *Doctrinal* or *Theory* section in which God's Scheme of Redemption was shown from start to finish.

>chps.12-15 manifest the *Application* of it.

Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness

-  As 1:16-17 keys the *doctrinal* section,
-  12:1-2 keys to the *practical* portion, outlining:
 - what is “*holy, acceptable, living sacrifices*”
 - & -what it means to be “*transformed*” rather than “*conformed.*”
-  Now we’re ready for the continuation & conclusion of *Living in response to God’s Plan of Redemption:*
 - Staying in Divine Righteousness,*
 - hopefully without *Abusing It!*

Romans 14-15: The *Abuses* of Divine Righteousness

-  A word of caution: chp.14 is one of the most *abused* sections of the Bible.
-  Most of the abuse comes from people who *want* it to say something it doesn't; *putting something into the text* that doesn't belong.
-  So, let's start with the basics:
 - To *whom* is the chapter addressed? (this is imperative to proper application)
 - >the “*strong*” (by implication*), v.1
 - >recognize the *dichotomy* of the text....

The *Dichotomy* of Romans 14:

the Weak

- weak *in faith*- not *out of faith or sinful*, vv.1,3-4
- eats *vegetables only*, v.2
- operates on *opinion** he *currently* believes is *faith*, vv.4-5
- cannot judge him who eats, v.3
- must *give account* of himself to God, vv.11-12

the Strong

- is strong *in faith*, vv.13ff
- eats all things (cf. 1Cor. 8:1-13; Gen.9:3-4)
- operates on faith fully founded in truth, 10:17
- must accept him who *eats vegetables only*, 14:1; 15:1ff
- must give account of himself to God, vv.11-12

Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness

 This chapter is not about things on which God has no expressed will...

 Or about things toward which He is *completely indifferent* because:





He has specified His will on the matter,
vv.14,20; 1Cor.8:1-6; 1Tim.4:3.

 However, He is *somewhat indifferent* in that both positions are acceptable to Him!

Illustration: God says *take care of your own*, (1Tim.5:8)

He doesn't care what kind of (non-sinful) job you have!


Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness

-  Thus, the *acceptance* or *rejection* of God is not at stake,
-  because both positions, although juxtaposed to one another, are *acceptable* to Him!
-  Although He has specified that *eating meats* is acceptable, 1Tim.4:3-5, *not eating* is also acceptable, v.3.
-  Now, here is the crux of the matter that we must understand....

Romans 14-15: The *Abuses* of Divine Righteousness

These facts do not allow application of this text to matters which He has specified* as being *unacceptable* to Him!

Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness

 **For example** (of things some *want* to be in Romans 14 which are specified by God as *unacceptable*):

Marriage, Divorce, & Remarriage for any reason at all.

**>He has a specified will on the matter,
Matt.19:9.**

**>Any reason other than an *infidelity* is
*unacceptable,***

**And therefore cannot be *put into* Romans 14!
et. al. homosexuality, instrumental music, etc.**

Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness



Now, vv.13-23 give the application of the teaching. Some obvious lessons emerge:

- >Rather than judging/condemning one another simply because of disagreement, we should be concerned with not placing obstacles before one another, v.13.
- >Failure in this area is failing to “*walk according to love*” v.15; cf.12:9.
- >The Kingdom is not “*eating and drinking*” but rather “*righteousness, peace, and joy.*” These are *acceptable*, vv.17-18.


Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness



Additional obvious lessons:

- >We should “*pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another*” instead of trying to force our own personal convictions on others (obviously, when both are acceptable to God).**
- >We must live with our own consciences, but that in and of itself does not justify us, 1Cor.4:4!**
- >The goal is to have our consciences operating on a *strong* and *mature* faith founded in truth rather on *weak* and *immature* faith founded in personal desire or opinion, vv.22; 10:17.**

Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness

 And now, Chapter 15: the *Summing Up of All Things*.

vv.1-6 continue and conclude the instructions relative to the situation of chp.14 and its applications. Namely:

- the strong* must be patient & longsuffering with *the weak*, v.1
- in so doing, they emulate Christ, vv.2-3
- we should heed previously examples in this regard, v.4

Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness

with the result that we will be able to *“be of the same mind...that with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* vv.5-6

v.7 connects these thoughts to the next, which is a reiteration of the overall theme of *Salvation for all men through the gospel of Jesus Christ!*

>through ministry of Christ to the Jews, v.8

>and for the benefit of/to the Gentiles, vv.9-12

v.13 is in some ways the conclusion of the book,

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 14-15: The Abuses of Divine Righteousness

The rest of chp.15 and most of chp.16 have predominantly to do with Paul's personal plans, messages, benedictions, and farewells.

Conclusion?

The epistle has come full circle:

- from the premise of salvation for all men through the gospel,
- it has shown God's Scheme of Redemption from beginning to end.
- It has shown not only the *need* of man for God's gracious salvation,
- but has likewise demonstrated how it is accomplished & maintained w/o abuse!

