

16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who in this way serves Messiah is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

14:16-17 The position of those who would hold to the opinion (v. 1) that eating meat is fine (v. 2) and that they did not necessarily have to observe days of fasting (vs. 5-6), is not one that the Apostle Paul has said is inappropriate or incorrect.

In a version like the NASU, the adjectival *to agathon* (τὸ ἀγαθόν), for v. 16, is rendered as the noun “a good thing,” although *mē blasphēmeisthō oun humōn to agathon* (μὴ βλασφημείσθω οὖν ὑμῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν), “let not be spoken against therefore your – good” (Brown and Comfort),⁶⁶ is best left in an adjectival sense: “So do not let your good be spoken of as evil (v. 16, RSV) or “Therefore, do not let your good be slandered” (HCSB). That Paul speaks here in terms of “your good,” does place a burden of proof upon those who have been criticizing others, perhaps to evaluate and reflect upon whether their convictions have been kept in line with a larger Kingdom ethic:

“[F]or the kingdom of God is not about eating and drinking, but righteousness and *shalom* [peace] and joy in the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* [Holy Spirit]” (v. 17, TLV).

The focus of the Kingdom of God for redeemed Believers is not to be over what is consumed at mealtime, but is to be focused on the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives, to enact peace, and to enable men and women to have true joy. To an extent, one can see a parallel between what Paul says in v. 17 and what Yeshua directed to the Pharisaical leaders in Matthew 23:23:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.”

What a person eats—especially at fellowship meals—is ultimately not as important as being united in the love and hope of the gospel. *Born again Believers are to be identified as changed people by the work of the Lord within them.* In this light, eating is a relatively minor matter, **even if all of the food available to be eaten is clean or “kosher”** (v. 20), because there are other things that are far more important in the Kingdom of God.

14:18-19 Those who are able to keep a Kingdom ethic of “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (v. 17) as being absolutely imperative, are described by Paul as follows: “The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval” (v. 18, NRSV) or “deserves respect from other people” (Kingdom New Testament). Such acceptance and approval, both Divine and mortal—because the people of God are to be guided by the Spirit of God—is the result of acting and conducting oneself different from the world, which is a society of competition between people and which too widely demeans and disparages others. The redeemed in Yeshua are to, quite contrary to this, “pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding” (v. 19, RSV). Psalm 13:14 had similarly directed, “Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.”

⁶⁶ Brown and Comfort, 570.

20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. 21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles. 22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

14:20 The Apostle Paul is serious about how the issues regarding eating have caused unnecessary problems for the Believers in Rome. He admonishes, “Stop tearing down the work of God for the sake of food. Indeed all things are clean, but wrong for the man who by eating causes stumbling” (TLV). The verb *kataluō* (καταλύω), “to put down, destroy” (LS),⁶⁷ has been rendered as “overthrow” (American Standard Version), “destroy” (KJV, RSV/NRSV/ESV, NIV), “break down” (Moffat New Testament), and “pull down” (Kingdom New Testament). We do not know to what extent human ignorance and arrogance had been overcoming the better sense and judgment of the Believers eating meat, but Paul recognizes how negative attitudes—over a relatively minor issue—could do severe damage to others.

The assertion made by Paul in v. 20, *panta men kathara* (πάντα μὲν καθάρᾳ), “Truly, all things are clean” (LITV), is something that tends to catch kosher-friendly Messianic people completely off guard. Paraphrased renderings that have “All food is clean” (NIV) or “All food indeed is ceremonially clean” (Montgomery New Testament) or “all foods are acceptable” (NLT), certainly do not help. Concurrent with this, if Romans ch. 14 is read as an abstract essay, as it frequently is, then *panta men kathara* is then taken as Paul’s personal abrogation of the Torah’s dietary laws. At least an interpreter like Cranfield, in noting how “all things indeed are clean,” can then be extrapolated to apply to things well beyond eating, is careful to advise a limited application of what is stated:

“[W]e have to understand this statement as intended in a restricted sense, the reference being not to such things as men’s thoughts, desires and actions, but only to the resources of the created world which are available and appropriate for human consumption.”⁶⁸

An even more limited approach to Paul’s statement *panta men kathara* is offered by Hegg, who sees it in terms of ancient Rabbinical debates over whether non-Jewish contact with foodstuffs, rendered them unclean:

“[Paul’s] statement that ‘everything is clean’ (πάντα μὲν καθάρᾳ) must be understood within the context of the debate about whether or not Gentile contact with food rendered it unclean. For Paul, this is wrong. That which God declared to be clean should not be considered unclean.”⁶⁹

When Romans ch. 14 is read as instruction issued because of circumstances that have arisen among the Roman Believers, then the statement *panta men kathara* should not be seen as some philosophical remark or observation, perhaps even in terms of non-Jewish contact with foodstuffs—but instead an actual assertion about the type of meat served at fellowship meals, where the whole issue regarding those who would eat, or who would not eat meat, likely arose.

While some could assume, based on customary interpretations of Peter’s vision (Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18) or Yeshua’s words in Mark 7:1-23,⁷⁰ that the statement “all things are clean” would mean that pork, in addition to beef, lamb, goat, or various forms of fowl, could have been served, this is by no

⁶⁷ LS, 410.

⁶⁸ Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 723.

⁶⁹ Hegg, *Romans 9-16*, 425.

⁷⁰ Consult the analysis of Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18 and Mark 7:1-23 in the *Messianic Kosher Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.

means the only way of approaching “all things indeed are clean.” It is absolutely safe to recognize that at public fellowship meals between the Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Rome, that the Apostolic decree regarding abstinence “from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication” (Acts 15:29) was being observed, to the best of the Believers’ ability. Stott, who certainly holds to the Torah’s dietary code being abolished for the post-resurrection era, still recognizes that Paul enforced the Apostolic decree, and even makes the note that non-Jewish Believers had to avoid non-kosher fare:

“Having stated categorically that circumcision was not necessary for salvation (the central theological principle in the debate), the Council not only (tacitly) gave Jewish Christians the freedom to continue their distinctive cultural-ceremonial practices, but asked Gentile Christians in certain circumstances to abstain from practices which would offend Jewish Christian consciences (*e.g.* asking them to avoid *eidōlothyta* [εἰδωλόθυτα] and non-kosher meat [referencing: Acts 15:19ff, 27ff.]). The apostle Paul evidently followed these guidelines in his own ministry...”⁷¹

The statement *panta men kathara* or “all things indeed are clean,” should be viewed from the standpoint of the Apostolic decree and Jewish sensitivities being recognized. The Greek term *katharos* (καθαρός), or “clean,” was employed in the Septuagint to describe those animals considered ritually clean and acceptable for eating, widely rendering the Hebrew *tahor* (טָהוֹר).⁷² Seeing this, it would be most unlikely that the meat served at the fellowship meals fell outside the guidelines of clean and unclean animals of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. But how acceptable would the meat be for some Jewish Believers, with clean meat possibly having to come from Roman sources?

If meat only from clean animals was being served at fellowship gatherings, then the previous statement about meat being *koinos* or “common,” “defiled,” or “profane” (v. 14) would have been a value judgment in the eyes of the beholder, as such meat served may have been procured from Roman sources. But, even with the meat being *katharos* or “clean” being served, this was not to be a means of judging others, whose sensitivities were heightened, and would hence only eat vegetarian.

14:21 Unlike, perhaps vs. 2-3 preceding, where the eating in view among the Roman Believers served as a prefacing remark to vs. 5-6 and various fast days, the eating in v. 20 is specified immediately in v. 21 following to be eating meat, which is also associated with drinking wine: “It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything by which your brother stumbles” (TLV). Rather than being an offense, it might be better to just not eat meat, drink wine, or make a huge issue out of something small, but a large enough issue to cause another to stumble and find other people—*non-Believers*—to associate with. Understanding the more conservative dietary opinions of some of the Jewish Believers in Rome, and the required sensitivity that the non-Jewish Believers should have had toward fast days, should enable these “strong” to restrict themselves in disputable matters should the situation require it. The issues are just not big enough to require any (more) significant divisions in the *ekklēsia*.

V. 21, “It’s a good thing not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything that trips your brother or sister” (Common English Bible), given its expansion to include drinking, is frequently thought by Christian readers to be a Pauline support for a doctrine of *adiaphora* or things indifferent. In the words of Dunn, “Paul lays out the principle of self-restricted liberty in the most far-reaching terms: what applies to eating meat and drinking wine applies also to *anything* which causes a fellow believer to stumble and fall on his or her own pathway of discipleship.”⁷³ And it is true, as there is, to some extent,

⁷¹ Stott, pp 356-357.

⁷² Genesis 7:2-3, 8; 8:20; Leviticus 4:12; 6:11; 7:19; Ezra 6:20; cf. Moo, 860 fn#63.

⁷³ Dunn, *Romans*, 38b:833.

support for a doctrine of *adiaphora* that can be deduced from Romans ch. 14, but this cannot be something applying permissively as much as restrictively.

Drinking is added to the mix here, and it is notable that we consider how the Torah includes no general prohibition on consuming alcohol as a part of normal life. Many, however, could easily have held to the opinion that drinking alcohol was not for them, especially given the many abuses that can occur as a matter of drunkenness, and/or how alcohol was used in terms of pagan ritual and debauchery in Ancient Rome. A restrictive approach toward v. 21, given social circumstances regarding food and drink, might find some justification in modern terms of adding usage of tobacco to the mix of what can cause someone to stumble. But leaping forward and making Romans ch. 14 about watching or not watching certain types of movies, listening or not listening to certain types of music, or reading or not reading certain types of books, would, we should think, be most outside of the venue by which people would be criticized for what they eat or drink.

14:22-23 The responsibility of the individual Roman Believers, who were largely non-Jewish, perhaps with some being Jewish as well, in regard to eating meat (v. 2) and days of fasting (vs. 5-6), was to take noticeable care of their personal faith in the Lord: *su pistin [hēn] echeis kata seauton eche enōpion tou Theou* (σὺ πίστιν [ἧν] ἔχεις κατὰ σεαυτὸν ἔχε ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ), “you [the] faith which have by yourself” (v. 22a, Brown and Comfort).⁷⁴ This can be taken as an emphasis of how each Believer is going to have their works evaluated by the Lord (vs. 10-12). The thrust of Paul’s admonition is, “Blessed are those who do not condemn themselves by what they approve” (v. 22b, TNIV). Perhaps it is unnecessary, to some degree, to consider meat served at fellowship gatherings to be *koinos* (v. 14), but eating such meat in a manner that causes those who abstain from it, to feel uncomfortable or unwelcome in the assembly, will cause the one eating meat to be condemned.

Recognizing the presence of those who will not eat meat at fellowship gatherings, such abstaining persons should not feel socially, and especially not spiritually, pressured, to forego their vegetarian preferences. Paul directs how “the doubter comes under condemnation if he eats, because his action is not based on trust. And anything not based on trust is a sin” (v. 23, CJB). The faith of the presumed “strong” (v. 22) will direct them to not care if the meat served at fellowship gatherings came from Jewish or Roman sources. The faith of the presumed “weak,” the doubter (v. 23), will not permit them to eat meat. For them to eat the meat being offered, as a means of fitting in, will be contrary to their faith convictions, and actually be regarded as sin and in violation of their beliefs. What Paul says here is somewhat similar to a view expressed in the Talmud:

*“Yes indeed, for has it not been taught on Tannaite authority: In respect to things that are permitted, treated by others as prohibited, you are not permitted to treat as permitted in the presence of those who regard them as prohibited, in line with the verse, ‘he shall not break his word’ (Num. 30:3)” (b.Nedarim 15a).*⁷⁵

Romans 14 application There has not been a huge amount of Messianic handling of Romans ch. 14 witnessed in popular materials written on the topic of the kosher dietary laws (virtually none on the topic of the Sabbath or appointed times). To the credit of what has been witnessed in popular Messianic books on kosher, some attention has been given to various Greek terms like *koinos* (κοινός) in Romans 14:14, and also to some potential First Century background. However, framing Paul’s admonitions in terms of incidents arising from what was being eaten, or not eaten, at fellowship meal times among the Roman Believers, is unique to this writer.

⁷⁴ Brown and Comfort, 571.

⁷⁵ *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary.*

The perspective offered regarding Romans 14:14, in the 2005 resource *Holy Cow! Does God Care About What We Eat?* by Hope Egan, is that meat which is labeled as *koinos* or common, might have been that which had been offered to idols, or was suspicious of being offered to idols:

“In Jewish estimation, any food that had been offered to an idol or as part of an idolatrous feast was regarded as ‘common.’ The Greek word is *koinos*. It means common, vulgar or profane. This is not the same as saying that it was ritually unclean in the biblical sense. The Greek word for biblically, ritually unclean is *akathartos*. The Septuagint, the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, translates ritual uncleanness as *akathartos*. It is critical that we understand the difference between these two Greek words....The word *koinos* (common) does not refer to impurity as defined by the Torah. The word *koinos* is reserved to apply to things made unfit through contact with idolatry or with Gentiles. Therefore, in Greek, pork would be *akathartos*. Wine poured out to an idol would be *koinos*.”⁷⁶

The discussion goes on to reference some of the Corinthian correspondence regarding meat sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 8:8; 10:25-26, 30-31), and Paul’s apparent “Don’t ask, don’t tell policy.”⁷⁷ The conclusion drawn is that *koinos* relates to meat or wine that had been potentially offered to idols or involved with idolatry, and that the conservatives or weak among the Roman Believers, would only eat vegetables, consistent with the Prophet Daniel in Babylon (Daniel 1:8). As is concluded,

“Paul does not take a hard stand on the issue of foods that have only been potentially offered to an idol. The conservatives in Rome certainly considered foods prepared by Gentiles as *koinos* (common) because they were potentially defiled by idolatry. Rather than eat meat or drink wine that might have been associated with idolatry and thereby rendered *koinos*, those conservatives chose to refrain from meat and wine and ate only vegetables as Daniel did in Babylon. Paul regards this as a debatable matter and leaves it to the conscience of the individual. {quoting Romans 14:2-4}....

“Though he advocates tolerance of those who insist on regarding meat and drink potentially defiled by idolatry as *koinos*, he himself is convinced that no food is *koinos*. He says as much in Romans 14:14....

“Unfortunately, this passage is almost universally misapplied to laws of clean and unclean animals as if Paul said that ‘nothing is unclean (*akathartos*) in itself.’ He did not. He did not use the Greek equivalent for ‘unclean,’ he used the equivalent for ‘common.’ There is a huge difference between the two. His statement that ‘nothing is unclean in itself’ is completely unrelated to the laws of clean and unclean animals. It is a question of whether or not food is permissible when it might potentially have been offered to an idol.”⁷⁸

What is stated here in *Holy Cow!* would be compatible with our proposal on Romans ch. 14, in that the meat provided for fellowship meals being *koinos* or “common,” may have had to be procured from Roman slaughterhouses, and not Jewish slaughterhouses, which may not have sold to the Messianic Believers per the fallout of the Edict of Claudius and Jewish expulsion from Rome. If the flesh of Biblically clean animals (14:20) was that being served at the fellowship gatherings, but the meat had been slaughtered and butchered from a Roman source, albeit in line with the Apostolic decree (Acts 15:20, 29), then issues regarding such meat’s status as *koinos*/common/profane/defiled would have

⁷⁶ Hope Egan, *Holy Cow! Does God Care About What We Eat?* (Littleton, CO; First Fruits of Zion, 2005), pp 118-119.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 120-121.

Gordon Tessler, *The Genesis Diet* (Raleigh: Be Well Publications, 1996), pp 101-108 has a similar position, advocating that potential association with idolatry, does not automatically render a meat defined by God as “clean” to be “unclean.”

been one of personal conscience for Paul. Avoidance of such meat would have taken place because of the presumed potential of idolatrous contamination.

The 2005 resource *Holy Cow!* does not, however, go into any detail on the issue of the sacred days (14:5-6), and what they could be or could represent.

More recently (2012), the book, *Biblically Kosher: A Messianic Jewish Perspective on Kashrut* by Aaron Eby, takes the view, quite contrary to most analysis, and associating the weak and the strong with those mentioned in 1 Corinthians 8, that instead of the weak being mostly Jewish Believers, they were actually non-Jewish Believers who could have been worried about some association with prior idolatry. Regarding Romans 14, Eby states,

“Paul uses the term ‘weak’ to describe people who were formerly associated with idol worship—individuals who are far more likely to be Gentiles than Jews. The reason that they abstain from meat is due to concern that it may be associated with idol worship, not because of kosher slaughter laws such as the species of animal, its method of slaughter, or its combination with dairy.”⁷⁹

In his estimation, the strong, who were not concerned about idolatrous contamination about meat, were admonished to be careful around the weak. Eby makes a comparison to this with a recovering alcoholic who is tempted by the presence of wine at a Sabbath table.⁸⁰ Certainly, whether one considers the “weak” to be non-Jewish Believers worried about relapsing into paganism, or more customarily, mostly Jewish Believers worried about idol contamination, we are at least agreed with Eby that the abstinence from eating meat had had some worry about idol contamination involved.

Further on, in terms of the sacred days in view, it is not surprising that Eby does not at all take the position that the sacred days are the Sabbath or the appointed times, as laid forth in the Torah. But, neither does Eby think that the sacred days might be extra-Biblical Jewish days of fasting. He instead proposes that the sacred days are likely pagan observances, noting some of the issues in translating the verb *phroneō* (φρονέω), “to think, to have understanding, to be sage, wise, prudent” (*LS*),⁸¹ commonly rendered in English versions as “observe(s)” (RSV/NRSV/ESV, NASU). Eby thinks that *phroneō* is better rendered as “mindful”⁸² (the LITV has “minding”). In his estimation,

“It should be noted that certain things are *not* stated in this passage. First, there is no distinction that these are days of the week, of the month, of the year, or if they are one-time events. Second, there is no mention as to whether these days are major Jewish holy days, minor Jewish fasts or observances, civil events, or pagan holidays. Third...there is no indication that either the ‘strong’ or the ‘weak’ looks at these days in a positive way at all, only that some are ‘mindful’ of them, whereas others are apparently not.

“Paul inserts this mention of days into a larger discussion about food and through the parallelism draws a comparison between the days and the food. This means that our explanation for the days has to correlate to the explanation for food. Given that the topic at hand is the question of eating food offered to idols and that the ‘weak’ represent people with former association with idolatry, it makes sense that the ‘days’ at hand also relate to idol worship. This is not to say that anyone condoned celebrating a pagan holiday, but in a community saturated with foreign religion, their holidays and observances would loom over the believers. Should one modify

⁷⁹ Aaron Eby, *Biblically Kosher: A Messianic Jewish Perspective on Kashrut* (Marshfield, MO: First Fruits of Zion, 2012), 57.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 58 makes note to a variety of Talmudic references to support not putting a temptation to relapse into forbidden behavior before someone: b.*Avodah Zarah* 6b; b.*Pesachim* 50b-51a; b.*Megillah* 5b; b.*Nedarim* 15a; 81b.

⁸¹ *LS*, 872.

⁸² Eby, 61.

their behavior on these idolatrous days so as to avoid association with them (i.e., be mindful of the day), or would it be better to ignore their existence all together (i.e., treat every day alike)?”⁸³

While Eby has some interesting thoughts about Romans 14, and what the eating involves and what the sacred days could have been, much of it hinges on the suggestion that v. 6a, “The one minding the day, he minds it to the Lord. And the one not minding the day, he does not mind it to the Lord” (LITV), involves no positive dimension to it. If this is a negative, or at least a neutral action, then it would imply that for various Believers, when a pagan day arrived on the calendar, those minding it to the Lord would have to recognize His supremacy over the pagan principalities and powers. But if the “minding” or “regarding” of the days in v. 6 is a positive action, then this has to give way to them being some sort of Jewish observances, positive and edifying practices for sure, but ones which would have been relatively optional for the Believers.

The proposal for Romans ch. 14, which has been represented by this publication, obviously does have points of agreement with others who have written on this chapter, either in commentary or in various books, within the Messianic movement. The biggest difference by far, though, is that it has been strongly asserted that Romans ch. 14 **is not an abstract essay** to be applied to things today like: the books people read, the movies they watch, playing cards, listening to music, video games, dancing, social drinking, modesty and grooming practices, homeschooling versus public or private school, or any number of other debates. It has instead been strongly asserted that Romans ch. 14, as part of a larger letter, addressed some real First Century circumstances among the Believers in Rome, with Paul needing to issue some admonitions. The proposal that there was unnecessary and inappropriate criticism of the presumed “strong” toward the presumed “weak,” over what the “weak” would not eat at fellowship meals, has the advantage of being something that works to explain the situation, if one holds to the traditional view of Paul considering kosher, the Sabbath, and appointed times to be matters of indifference—**or** as we should think, if the issue is clean (14:20) yet *koinos*/common meat (14:14), and optional fast days (14:5-6) being in view.

When we decide to consider the background issues behind the whole of Romans 14, is it really about things like the kosher dietary laws, Sabbath, and appointed times now being issues entirely of personal choice? Or, does it concern unnecessary divisions the Roman Believers were having at fellowship meals, and how if some Jewish Believers who fast on certain days were not to be criticized over their severity—why would anyone criticize some of them over the much more minor issue of not eating “common” meat? Too many of today’s Christian readers of Romans 14 forget that a mixed grouping of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers, in First Century Rome, is being addressed. They also forget that the religious and social climate of that ancient time and setting is not the same as today.

The contemporary application can very much be seen in the spiritual and social dynamics of today’s Messianic congregations. There are many Messianic Believers who are hyper-sensitive about the type of meat they eat. They will not eat clean meat unless it has a Rabbinical seal of approval on it, whereas at many Messianic congregations or homes more common meat from the local supermarket is served during fellowship times. This is the meat of Biblically clean animals, where the blood has been drained and soaked out with saltwater. But, the opinion of some is that it is too common, and that they will instead eat around. These are largely the same Messianic Believers who will be more prone to observe the many extra-Biblical fast days of Orthodox Jewish tradition, being convicted that it is helpful in their relationship with God.

The circumstances, that Romans 14 really does describe, are encountered in today’s Messianic congregations all the time. How are we to handle them? Like Paul, I would eat at someone’s table where

⁸³ Ibid., pp 61-61 goes on to reference some discussion in *m.Avodah Zarah* 1:1-3 on what the Jewish community was to do during the observance of pagan holidays.

“common,” albeit Biblically clean meat, was being served, without any problem. As a teacher and spiritual mentor to many, just like Paul who served the Lord (cf. 14:14a), I do not have the luxury of staying secluded to myself, in a protected environment where everything has to be certified “kosher”; I have to interact with the world at large. Yet I would be sensitive to the needs of those who are more cautious with what meat they eat, and by extension if they have chosen to separate out meat and dairy products as a part of their honoring *kashrut*. I would not at all look down upon certain Messianics who would not eat meat without a Rabbinical seal of approval, any more than I would look down upon them for not eating on various extra-Biblical fast days. I would pray that in their level of observance that they be blessed for their honoring of the Lord, and that I not unnecessarily offend them for their convictions.⁸⁴

Many of today’s evangelical Christians will be unable to consider this perspective of Romans 14. This is partially because resting on the Sabbath (much less observing the appointed times) has lost most of the significance it had for previous generations, including that of my parents—even if those previous generations of Christians kept a rigid “Sunday Sabbath.” But most significantly, it is because the Christian Church of the Twenty-First Century is not the mixed body of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers as the *ekklēsia* of the First Century. Yet, Romans 14 does speak profoundly to the circumstances that many of today’s Messianic congregations must work through—and so we must take important notice of Paul’s word to the Romans, and not be unnecessarily divided over what are ultimately disputable matters. We must learn to uphold the Torah’s instruction in Messiah (3:31), but similarly give grace to those who hold to different applications of it in terms of things like eating and fast days.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ For a further discussion, consult the author’s article “How Do We Properly Keep Kosher?”, appearing in the *Messianic Kosher Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.

⁸⁵ Further discussions are available in the *Messianic Kosher Helper* and the *Messianic Sabbath Helper* by Messianic Apologetics, and the author’s publication *Moedim: The Appointed Times for Messianic Believers*.