Romans chap. 14

For whatsoever is not of faith is sin

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. 7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 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. 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10 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. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. 14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. 19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. 22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. This chapter is very important and before we get started we need to understand that every church has strong believers and others who are weak. In the church at Rome there were Jewish and Gentile believers. The Jews had been raised under the Law or Torah where a distinction between clean and unclean foods was made. Under the gospel this distinction was cancelled and all foods had been made clean by the death of Christ. This was addressed in Acts chap. 10 and Paul says the same thing in verse 14. The strong believers understood this and made no distinction while the weak were very particular on what they ate. Paul warns the strong believers not to despise or judge those who are weak because God has brought them into the church and is able to make them stand. The weak were to be instructed in brotherly love that it is not what we put into our mouths that defiles us but what comes out of the heart - Matt 15:18. The problem with this council is that in our day the weak believers have taken over. There are entire denominations of weak Christians who overpower the strong by their sheer numbers. The particular denomination I had in mind is the Seventh-day adventist denomination.

I was raised Lutheran and in the early 90's I became an SDA. So I was raised under a grace perspective and then spent ten years under a law perspective which is a unique perspective to say the least. I saw things when I was an SDA that I can never unsee. I can remember meeting people who were reviling in the worst sins imaginable just so they could flee as far as possible from the law bondage they had been raised with. I grew up in the world and was never exposed to the law so I ended up falling into all the legalistic sins. So they knew I was wrong and I knew they were wrong which was a recipe for disaster. I got into fights with adventists that were so messed up and dysfunctional that there are people to this day that I can't go see for fear of receiving bodily harm, lol. I was so legalistic back then and driven by the performance mentality that it is only by a miracle of Divine grace that I ever received an understanding of the gospel. Many of my brothers and sisters from back in those days and I am not exaggerating are dead today. The condemnation of that experience was so terrible that many committed suicide while others have died from horrible health problems brought on by their health fanaticism. They were trying so hard to be healthy that they ended up emaciated and anorexic. We don't realize how important grace is until we get cut off from it. This is why Paul said - Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace Gal. 5:4.

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. The second area of contention in the early church were Jewish feast and sabbath days. Sunday or the Lord's day was observed by the church from the earliest

accounts and the primary purpose for this was to make a distinction between the new body of believers or the church and the old economy of Jewish law and sabbath observance. We are never justified by the day we go to church on or any type of foods we put in our mouths, healthy or unhealthy. Our justification comes solely by the life, death and resurrection of Christ and what he accomplished independently of us and our works of righteousness. Adventists can spin a web of lies to defend their sabbath/law keeping like nobody's business so for this reason they should be seen as a dangerous Judaizing cult. They will often come to town and put on one of their prophecy seminars where historical and defunct prophetic ideas are presented where the Catholic church is the greatest of all evils and Sunday keeping is the mark of the beast. They of course keep the 7th day Sabbath that the evil pope is trying so desperately to suppress and present themselves as the remnant church of bible prophecy. Churches like Lutheran and Reformed who are very strong on the gospel often don't have a viable prophetic understanding so Adventism has become one of the fastest growing denominations in the world when they are nothing more than a modern version of the Judaizing heresy of the 1st century.

Some of the arguments that adventists use are very compelling so I feel it is important to address the main ones. The most compelling argument and the one that actually led me into adventism was the 7th day Sabbath and the creation account. This argument is very powerful because it actually predates Judaism showing that the Sabbath was instituted at the beginning of time even before sin entered the world. Adventists will present the Sabbath not as a Jewish institution but as something that God intended for all mankind. While this may be true there is no record of Adam and Eve ever being commanded to keep the Sabbath the way the Jews were commanded under the law. This is important because as Christians we are commanded to follow Christ and believe the gospel. We don't live in a perfect world anymore so the perfect diet and the perfect day are all tainted by sin. Now is it a sin for Christians to use their liberty to worship on the Sabbath day if they choose? No, it's not but Sabbath keeping is the ultimate expression in works-righteousness where sinful men try to make a day holy with their good works. I can remember when I was an adventist there would be endless conversations on what was acceptable to do on the Sabbath and what was not. Can I spend money on the 7th day? Can I buy gas for my car? Can I go to a movie? All of this just leads one deeper and deeper into the works mentality and farther and farther away from Christ and his righteousness.

I can remember meeting adventists who kept the sabbath their whole lives thinking it would save them. They would glory in the fact that they were 3rd and 4th generation SDA as if the

amount of time they put into their religion would save them. They were the absolute worst when it came to tithes and offerings and were the loudest to preach the ten percent tithe and

the quickest to condemn those who didn't pay. Adventists who work for the church in any capacity and there are many that do have the ten percent tithe taken out of their paycheck automatically like a tax deduction so they don't even have a choice in the matter. Adventists are going to get their money like some kind of religious gangsters who come knocking on your door if you don't pay up, lol. I personally know adventist ministers who were told by the conference that if they preached grace or the finished work of Christ from the pulpit they would be fired which should show the level of delusion in the Adventist church. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Every person believer and unbeliever alike has an understanding of right and wrong. If I believe something is sin then for me it is a sin while it may not be seen as evil by others. This is usually the cause of most problems in any church. My standard is different than yours. As we grow in faith and come to know Christ more and more these petty differences vanish away and his love will be truly seen in our lives.

<u>Man</u>

The man character is for the tribes of Simeon, Levi and Issachar. In the creation account the man and woman were placed in charge of all the other animals so the man character is for those in positions of leadership. Humans are set apart from other animals by their ability to speak different languages, walk in an upright posture and their ability to make and wear clothing. Humans and some other animals like apes have opposable thumbs but our hands are unique in their ability to grip, work and create. Our extraordinary brains are not the largest in the animal kingdom but are the largest of all vertebrates relative to size and give us the ability to think, reason and sing with pitch. Singing and musical ability are displayed in humans like no other creature God has created on earth. Levi was originally set over his brethren to be in charge of the temple, the spiritual heart of Israel. So the man character would include all those who are spiritual leaders from ministers to priests to pastors. Bible studies can often become boring and tedious and I am a big fan of the allegorical style of the apostle Paul and John Bunyan so I will be incorporating some allegorical stories to keep the interest level up. Some of these stories may come across as believable so remember they are just allegorical and only meant to convey a spiritual lesson. I grew up watching Rambo, Terminator and Star Wars movies so I have a vivid imagination.