

4th. John Murray on Romans 14.5 (cont)

Review

Paul says, **One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind** (Rom. 14.5).

1A. Implications if the Sabbath is in view

- 1) The 4th is abrogated; one of the 10 has relevance no longer
- 2) The first day of the week would have no prescribed religious significance; it is not to be distinguished from any other day as a memorial of the resurrection or as the Lord's Day for special devotion to the Lord for worship and service.
- 3) It is the person who is weak in faith, per 14.5, that fails to recognize the abrogation of the 4th and the fact that every day is the same in religious significance: every day is the Lord's and is to be lived in devotion to Him.

2A. Considerations showing that the Sabbath is not in view

- 1) Abrogation goes too far: missing the creation ordinance, and the point of Mat. 5.17-19

Murray continued

2) Teaching on the Lord's Day

Murray makes the point that the first day of the week "is recognized in the NT as having a significance derived from...Jesus' resurrection" on that day. It is therefore called the Lord's Day in Revelation 1.10. There are three important facts: a) the first day is unique in history as the day of our Lord's resurrection and attention to it in the Gospels highlights the distinctiveness of that day. b) The early church gave special significance to the first day of the week in regular worship (Acts. 20.7; 1 Cor. 16.2). c) The title of the first day, the Lord's Day, shows that the day has religious significance; it is His day; it belongs to Him. How does this match up with the fact that *every* day is the Lord's? Does not that fact rule in favor of "no distinctiveness" and "not a memorial of the Lord's resurrection"?

If Murray is correct in his argument here, a) how do you think he would compare the Lord's Day with the Lord's Supper? b) What conclusion do you think he would draw in relation to the teaching of Romans 14.5? [*Discussion: Again we have a both/and not an either/or. We can say that every supper is the Lord's such that whatever we eat or drink, we are to do so to the glory of God. Still, there is a Supper that is distinctly the Lord's to be set aside to Him in a special way. Likewise in Genesis 1-2, God on the seventh day became Sabbath king of all that He created and made. Thus, He began His sovereign rule over all the days of history on the seventh day. At the same time, He blessed the seventh day and because of that fact He gave the 4th commandment with the duty to observe the seventh day and keep it holy. The Lord of all time and all days commands the keeping of one day; that day belongs to Him in a distinct way. There is a similar comparison to make between preaching Christ in every sermon and preaching Christ in a distinct way in communion remembering.*]

3) If the 4th day is not in view, then what days are in view?

Murray: "Romans 14.5 can properly be regarded as referring to the ceremonial holy days of the Levitical institution."

How do we handle the use of "all" (every) here in relation to days: "all days alike"? Most of the time the word "all" is not used in an absolutely universal sense. (all the world may mean all the inhabitants of the known world and not every member of the human race since Adam and Eve). All the days in view here are all the days of a particular kind: all the ceremonial days of the Levitical institution...excluding the Sabbath Day that has its roots earlier than the Mosaic Levitical Law.

What do we learn "by analogy" about ceremonial days from the fact that the apostle Paul took a Nazirite vow (completed by purification; partook of that part of the vow), which is no longer required, and that he had Timothy circumcised but opposed the circumcision of Titus?

Vow: Acts 21:20-24 ²⁰ And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law, ²¹ and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them

not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. ²² What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. ²³ Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; ²⁴ take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. Acts 21:26 ²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.

Timothy and Titus: Acts 16:3 ³ Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. Galatians 2:1-5 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. ² I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. ³ But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. ⁴ Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in- who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery- ⁵ to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

In conclusion, how do you think Murray would argue “the analogy of Scripture here?”
Discussion: In contexts where the definition of the gospel of grace is not at stake, matters of Jewish ritual (circumcision and vows) are indifferent, which means that they are not necessary but someone may practice them (in confusion or to avoid offense) only each is to honor their conscience in what they do and be charitable toward the practice of others in these respects. The ceremonial days of the Mosaic system come under this rule of indifference, but that does not apply to the 4th commandment with its roots in creation before the giving of the Law.