

# IS ROMANS 14 THE 28<sup>TH</sup> BOOK?

By Keith Greer

Recently, I was listening to a series of lessons concerning Romans 14 and fellowship. Brother Larry Hafley, one of the speakers, made a point that really needs to be considered. In a nutshell: **is Romans 14 the 28th book of the New Testament?**

During the last two decades, I've been quite concerned about the direction many of my brethren are going in this chapter. Seems some believe that this chapter includes matters of "doctrine and moral views". Brother Ed Harrell wrote a seventeen part series in Christianity magazine some years ago, making this very point. Yet, is the statement true?

"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things." {Romans 14:1}

What "doubtful things" are under consideration here? A reading of the text will clearly show matters such as eating of meats or keeping of days. Does either of these areas involve matters of faith? Doctrine? Moral issues? Absolutely not!

"But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. "{1 Corinthians 8:8,9} Paul clearly shows these things to be matters of conscience, opinions, or personal judgment.

Romans 14 is ONE chapter in a book! Where does Romans 14 fit? Is this a "**catch all**" for all things which we cannot agree upon?

"Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." {Romans 13:13,14}

Paul rightly shows some works of the flesh we must not engage in. Does he in the next passage give us a "**loophole**" in case we desire to partake of such? Heaven forbid! Please read Colossians 3:5-10; Galatians 5:19-21.

"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them." {Romans 16: 17} Paul instructs us to mark those who walk "contrary to the doctrine". According to some of my brethren, it would depend upon which "doctrine" you were talking about!

Now some brethren want to put Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in Romans 14. If so, why not social drinking, gambling, homosexuality, and abortion? We need to stop and THINK— this is not where we want to be heading.

Please explain this to me. We can agree what the Bible says about adultery. If one becomes guilty, and will not repent, we would all agree one should be disciplined. Withdraw from the unfaithful, but offer the right hand of fellowship to one who says it's a "matter of indifference!" As one preacher put it: "Could a person practice what the preacher believes where you worship"? Think about that.

Now I know no one will include all these other areas. Yet, to be consistent they will be forced to eventually. If this thinking is correct, why are we divided with those who support the institutions, orphanages, and instrumental music? Just Romans 14 them in! If not, why not?

This is the door that we better close quickly. Any who practice sin cannot be in fellowship with God. If God is not in fellowship with them – how can we be? \*\*\*