Romans 14:1-2

Overview

Romans chapter 14 continues the sixth major section in the book of Romans, which concludes in Romans 15:13. First six sections of the book of Romans: (1) 1:1-17: Introduction and Presentation of the Theme of the Epistle (2) 1:18-3:19: Both Jew and Gentiles are in need of the righteousness of God (3) 3:20-5:21: How to receive the righteousness of God (4) 6-8: How to live in the righteousness of God (5) 9-11: God’s righteousness is vindicated in His relationship to Israel (6) Romans 12:1-15:13: The righteousness of God manifested through believers in Jesus Christ.

In Romans 14:1-15:13, the apostle Paul instructs his readers that the righteousness of God is manifested in their conduct in relation to Christian freedom. He instructs them to not judge each other in relation to eating and drinking and teaches them the principle of Christian freedom (14:1-12) and exhorts strong believers to not put up stumbling blocks for weak believers by what they eat or drink and exhorts them to walk according to the principle of love (14:13-23). He closes this section by prohibiting selfishness and challenges them to imitate Christ (15:1-13).

The argument presented to us in Romans 14:1-15:13 by the apostle Paul could be outlined as follows: (1) Accept one another because God accepts us in Christ (14:1, 3; 15:7) (2) Do not judge one another with respect to diet and days because Christ is our only Master and Judge (14:3-12) (3) Love is more important than personal freedom (14:13-23). (4) Believers are to follow Christ’s example and set aside our rights for the edification of others and their good (15:1-13).

Romans 14:1-15:13 contains four one another commands that when obeyed promote unity in the church. The first appears in Romans 14:1, which is to accept one another and is the subject of verses 1-12. In Romans 14:13, we have the second, which is that we are not to judge one another and this is the subject of verses 13-23. In Romans 15:1-2, we are to please one another, which is the subject of Romans 15:1-7. In Romans 15:7, we are to rejoice with one another, which is the subject of Romans 15:7-13.

Romans chapter fourteen contains two paragraphs: (1) Verses 1-12 (2) Verses 13-23. The first paragraph is divided into three sections: (1) Verses 1-3 (2) Verses 4-9 (3) Verses 10-12. This division is signified or marked by the rhetorical questions “Who are you to judge the servant of another?” (verse 4a) and “why do you judge your brother?” (verse 10a). Both questions are directed towards those who are strong in faith and those who are weak in faith.
Now, though he does not explicitly address the strong as such, it is clear that Paul is addressing those who are strong in faith as indicated by his statement in Romans 15:1 that “the strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.”

The apostle Paul in Romans 14:1-12 instructs his Christian readers in Rome to not judge each other in relation to eating and drinking and teaches them the principle of Christian freedom.

Romans 14:1-12, “Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, ‘AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.’ So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.”

In Romans 14:13-23, the apostle Paul exhorts strong believers to not put up stumbling blocks for weak believers by what they eat or drink and exhorts them to walk according to the principle of love.

Romans 14:13-23, “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this -- not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then we pursue the things which
make for peace and the building up of one another. 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. It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles. The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.”

In Romans 14, Paul teaches that the peace of God is experienced among believers when they reflect God’s love in not judging each other regarding non-essentials such as food, drink and certain days.

In the first century apostolic church, Jewish and Gentile believers were interacting with each other for the first time in fellowship with each other. The Jewish believers who were raised under the Mosaic Law with its dietary restrictions and under the Rabbinical teaching, which emphasized the observance of certain days and the abstaining from certain foods was a cause of division in the first century apostolic church. Thus, to avoid this problem in Rome, Paul commanded the strong believers to not put a stumbling block before their weak brethren by eating and drinking certain things that they considered to be wrong due to their background.

Romans chapter fourteen deals with the problems related to balancing the function of these two spiritual principles (freedom and love) among believers. The law or principle of liberty or freedom permits a Christian to do certain things which may be perfectly lawful but may raise a question in the minds of other Christians and specifically Christians who are afraid of their freedom in Christ or are not aware of their new found freedom in Christ because of lack of knowledge. The law or principle of love motivates the Christian to readily sacrifice his freedom in Christ rather than to cause his fellow Christian, who is not as knowledgeable of the Word of God as he is, to stumble.

Christians are free from the sin nature and the Law through their union and identification with Christ in His death and resurrection but not from the spiritual obligation to love one another. We have freedom as a Christian but our freedom is not a license to sin or abuse our freedom and cause a weak believer to sin against his conscience (whether according to the teaching of the Word or not). No Christian is free to live as he pleases without regard for his fellow believer.

In Romans chapter fourteen, the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul was instructing the Christians in Rome who are knowledgeable of the Word God to not discriminate against those who were not and thus had conscientious scruples regarding matters considered by the mature believers as non-essential.
The Jewish believers who continued to observe dietary restrictions and the observance of certain days and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition are those whom Paul describes as weak in faith, i.e. conviction. They are weak in conviction because they have not been fully convinced and have not yet accepted by faith the Spirit’s revelation concerning their new freedom in Christ.

Those whom he describes as strong in faith, i.e. conviction are the Gentile believers and Jewish believers like himself who have been fully convinced by the Holy Spirit and have accepted the Spirit’s revelation concerning their new freedom in Christ. The strong are to operate according to the love of God and sacrifice their freedom in Christ for the sake of the weak who are not to condemn the strong for living in their freedom.

Those who are strong in faith are those who are knowledgeable of the teaching of the Word of God and put it into practice and experience their freedom in Christ. They are fully convinced by the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God that the dietary restrictions and the observance of certain days such as the Sabbath do not apply to them since Christ is the substance of these things.

A weak believer is someone who is not knowledgeable of the Word of God or they have heard the Word but have not been fully convinced by the Spirit that they no longer need to observe the dietary restrictions of the Law and do not need to honor the special days prescribed by the Law. This is indicated in that the Lord Jesus Christ taught that all foods are to be enjoyed and in Acts 10 the Lord told Peter that there were no longer dietary restrictions as under the Mosaic economy which he was brought up in whereas in Romans 14:1-12, the weak believers observe dietary restrictions.

Also Paul taught in Colossians 2:20-23 that observance of days is not mandatory whereas in Romans 14:5-6, the weak believer observes certain days. In Luke 7:33, the Lord Jesus admitted to drinking wine and Paul taught in Ephesians 5:18 not to be drunk with wine but did not prohibit the drinking of wine and told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23 to have a little wine to deal with his stomach problems yet in Romans 14:21, the weak abstain from drinking wine.

The weak have a conviction that observing certain days and dietary restrictions and abstaining from wine are God’s will and this is because they have either been taught incorrectly or they are ignorant of the teaching of the Word of God regarding these matters. Or, they have heard the teaching and have not accepted it by faith because they are not fully convinced that they no longer have to observe certain days, or dietary restrictions or abstain from drinking wine.

So the weak are Jewish believers still clinging to the ritual requirements of the Law and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition. The strong have a conviction that there is no observing certain days and there are no longer dietary restrictions for God’s people as in Israel and that it is nothing wrong to drink yet
drunkenness is prohibited. This conviction is based upon the fact that they have received and accepted by faith the teaching of the Word of God in regards to these matters.

Those who are strong in faith are to bear with the weaknesses of those who are weak in the faith and operate in love whereas the latter are to refrain from condemning those who are strong and are to become strong themselves by learning and applying the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus taught that there were no unclean animals under the church age dispensation as there were under the Mosaic Law.

Mark 7:14-19, “After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, ‘Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. And He said to them, ‘Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?’ (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

Acts 10 records the Lord teaching Peter that the dietary restrictions of the Mosaic Law were no longer applicable.

Acts 10:1-11:18, “Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, ‘Cornelius!’ And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, ‘What is it, Lord?’ And he said to him, ‘Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea.’ When the angel who was speaking to him had left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants, and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. A voice came to him, ‘Get up, Peter, kill and eat!’ But Peter said, ‘By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten
anything unholy and unclean.’ Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind
as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had
been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared
at the gate and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also
called Peter, was staying there. While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the
Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are looking for you. But get up, go
downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them
Myself.’ Peter went down to the men and said, ‘Behold, I am the one you are
looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?’ They said,
‘Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by
the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for
you to come to his house and hear a message from you.’ So he invited them in
and gave them lodging. And on the next day he got up and went away with
them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. On the
following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and
had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered,
Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised
him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I too am just a man. As he talked with him, he
entered and found many people assembled. And he said to them, ‘You
yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a
foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any
man unholy or unclean. That is why I came without even raising any objection
when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me. Cornelius
said, ‘Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth
hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, and he said,
‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered
before God. Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called
Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the
sea.’ So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come.
Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been
commanded by the Lord. Opening his mouth, Peter said: ‘I most certainly
understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the
man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. The word
which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He
is Lord of all) -- you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout
all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.
You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit
and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were
oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of all the
things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put
Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.’ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he? And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days. Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. and when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him, saying, ‘You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them. But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me, and when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ But I said, ‘By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ But a voice from heaven answered a second time, ‘What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.’ This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky. And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea. The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man's house. And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way? When they heard this, they
quieted down and glorified God, saying, ‘Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.’”

It is interesting that Peter had interpreted the vision as God accepting the Gentiles, which was true but it also should have been taken literally by Peter as well.

Even though the Lord taught that there were no longer any unclean foods during the church age, Jewish believers like Peter had a difficult time shedding these Jewish practices.

Paul confronted Peter with regards to his hypocrisy in not sitting to eat with the Gentiles when Jewish brethren came into the room, which is another manifestation of Peter having a difficult time understanding that dietary restrictions had been set aside by God.

Galatians 2:11-14, “But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to beat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?’”

So in Romans 14, the Jewish believers who continued to observe dietary restrictions and the observance of certain days and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition are those whom Paul describes as weak in faith, i.e. conviction. They are weak in conviction because they have not been fully convinced and have not yet accepted by faith the Spirit’s revelation concerning their new freedom in Christ. Those whom he describes as strong in faith, i.e. conviction are the Gentile believers and Jewish believers like himself who have been fully convinced by the Holy Spirit and have accepted the Spirit’s revelation concerning their new freedom in Christ.


In relation to who are the weak in Romans 14, Moo presents six possible alternatives: (1) The “weak” were mainly Gentile Christians who abstained from meat (and perhaps wine), particularly on certain “fast” days, under the influence of certain pagan religions. (2) The “weak” were Christians, perhaps both Jewish and Gentile, who practiced an ascetic lifestyle for reasons that we cannot determine. (3)
The “weak” were mainly Jewish Christians who observed certain practices derived from the Mosaic law out of a concern to establish righteousness before God. (4) The “weak” were mainly Jewish Christians who followed a sectarian ascetic program as a means of expressing their piety. This program may have been the product of syncretistic tendencies. (5) The “weak” were mainly Jewish Christians who, like some of the Corinthians, believed that it was wrong to eat meat that was sold in marketplace and was probably tainted by idolatry. (6) The “weak” were mainly Jewish Christians who refrained from certain kinds of food and observed certain days out of continuing loyalty to the Mosaic Law. (ibid, pages 828-829).

Moo contends that there are four considerations, which make the sixth alternative the most likely, which this author would agree with. However, Moo believes that there was a dispute actually going on in Rome among the Jewish and Gentile believers, which this author is inclined to disagree with based upon Paul’s statements in Romans 1:8 and in particular Romans 15:14-15. The latter makes clear that the Roman believers were actually practicing everything Paul had prescribed in the epistle and was thus simply giving them a friendly reminder in support of the teaching that they were already receiving from their pastors and were obeying. Thus, Paul’s teaching in Romans 14:1-15:13 is designed to reinforce and protect their fellowship with each other and their testimony before the unsaved.

That the weak in Romans 14 are Jewish believers who had difficulty breaking away from the Mosaic Law and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition is indicated in that the New Testament makes clear that the dietary laws of the Mosaic law practiced by the Jews was an important issue in the early first century apostolic churches (Mark 7:2, 5; 14-19; Acts 10). The Jews in the first century would abstain from meat and wine, which was not required by the Mosaic law (Leviticus 11; 20:15; Deuteronomy 14:3-21; cf. Leviticus 17:10-16; 19:26; Deuteronomy 12:15-25). They avoided meat and wine because they could not be sure that the meat had been prepared in a “kosher” manner. Daniel and his friends did this in Babylon (Daniel 1:8; 10:3).

The term “kosher” comes from a Hebrew word, the word is kashar, which means “fit” or “right.” Anything that is “kosher” is right, it is fit, it is proper, it is acceptable according to a Jew.

Now, Jewish Christians in Rome were ostracized from the Jewish community because of their faith in Jesus Christ and had been forced to settle in Gentile communities in the city after their exile brought about by the decree of Claudius. Consequently, these Jews would refrain from buying meat in the Gentile sections of the city where they settled because they knew it was not prepared in a “kosher” manner. Correspondingly, Jews would abstain from wine as well out of concern.
that it had been tainted by the pagan practice of offering wine as a libation to the gods (Moo, page 831).

Further indicating that the “weak” in Romans 14 are Jewish Christians who had a difficult time breaking from the Mosaic Law and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition is that Paul mentions the weak observing certain days, which was the case with the Jews who observed many days including of course the Sabbath as prescribed in the Mosaic Law. Also as the gospels make clear many first century Jews observed weekly fasting and prayer days. Therefore, it is clear that the “weak” in Romans 14 are Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition who erroneously believed that they were still bound to continue to observe the “ritual” requirements of the Mosaic Law.

Furthermore, the entire Roman epistle speaks of God forming a new humanity out of both Jew and Gentile races. In Romans 1:18-5:21, Paul makes clear that both Jew and Gentile races are condemned before a holy God and can only be justified through faith alone in Christ alone and that both can have peace with God through faith in Christ. Also, in Romans 9-11, Paul was very concerned that Gentile Christians did not look down upon the Jewish Christians or the Jewish nation itself or Jewish unbelievers and thus taught the Gentile believers to not be arrogant toward their Jewish brethren in order to insure unity between the two groups. Romans 14 appears to be another instance when Paul is again attempting to maintain unity among Jewish and Gentile believers by teaching Gentile believers to not be arrogant toward Jewish believers by condemning them for continuing to live under the ritual requirements of the Mosaic Law.
Romans 14:1 - The Strong With Respect To Conviction Are To Welcome The Weak With Respect To Conviction, Not For The Purpose Of Arguing Over Opinions

The apostle Paul in Romans 14:1 commands those who are strong with respect to conviction to welcome into their fellowship those who are weak with respect to conviction but not for the purpose of arguing over opinions.

Romans 14:1, “Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.”

“Now” is the “transitional” use of the post-positive conjunction de (δὲ) (dah), which marks a transition to a new section within the main division that appears in Romans 12:1-15:13.

In Romans 12:1-21, Paul discusses God’s righteousness being manifested in believers in the local assembly by their dedication to God (12:1-2) and in their use of their spiritual gift (12:3-8) and in the sincerity of their love for each other (Romans 12:9-16) and their love for the unbeliever (12:17-21).

In Romans 13:1-14, Paul teaches his readers that the righteousness of God is manifested in the believer’s conduct in relation to civil government (13:1-7) and towards the unbeliever (13:8-10) and their conduct in view of their eschatological confident expectation (13:11-14).

Now in Romans 14:1, Paul employs the conjunction de to mark a transition to a new section, which is within the main division in Romans 12:1-15:13. It marks the transition from a discussion about the believer’s conduct in relation to the imminent return of Christ at the rapture in Romans 13:11-14 to a discussion back to the believer’s relationship with his or her fellow believer. However, this discussion addresses specific problems that could crop up and have cropped up in the Christian assemblies throughout the Roman Empire and the solution to these problems. Therefore, the conjunction marks the transition from a discussion about the believer’s conduct in light of the imminent return of Christ at the rapture to a discussion as to how Christians can maintain unity despite their differences related to convictions regarding matters of conduct. We will translate de, “now.”

“Accept” is the second person plural present middle imperative form of the verb proslambano (προσλαμβάνω) (prose-lam-bano), which is a compound word composed of the preposition pro, “face to face” and the verb lambano, “to take, receive, accept” thus the word denotes “to accept a person into your presence.”

In classical Greek, this word can be used in a variety of ways generally pertaining to the act of “taking” or “receiving.” Thus, it can simply mean “to take” or “take in” or “to add, borrow” and can also mean “to appropriate” or “to help” (Liddell-Scott page 1518).
The verb appears only eight times in the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, it is used commonly in the middle voice reflexively meaning “to take to oneself.” It is used of the way God draws His people to Himself (1 Samuel 12:22 [LXX 1 Kings 12:22]), and makes them His elect (Psalm 65:4 [LXX 64:4] and has brought them into fellowship to deliver them from adversity (18:16 [17:16]) and loneliness (27:10 [26:10]) (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament volume 4, page 15).

Being in fellowship with Him provides His people with blessings (65:4 [64:4]) and protection (73:24 [72:24]).

The verb *proslambano* appears only twelve times in the Greek New Testament. Louw and Nida define the term “to accept the presence of a person with friendliness – ‘to welcome, to receive, to accept, to have as a guest’” (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, 34.53).

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition: (1) to take something that meets a personal need, take, partake of food, act (2) to promote one’s own ends, exploit, take advantage of (3) to take or lead off to oneself, take aside (4) to extend a welcome, receive into one’s home or circle of acquaintances (5) to take or bring along with oneself, take along (Page 883).

The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised lists the following meanings “to take to one’s self, assume, take as a companion or associate; to take, as food; to receive kindly or hospitably, admit to one’s society and friendship, treat with kindness; to take or draw to one’s self as a preliminary to an address of admonition (Page 351).

In Matthew 16:22 and Mark 8:32, the verb *proslambano* is used of Peter taking the Lord aside to rebuke Him for predicting His death. In Acts 18:26, it is used of Priscilla and Aquila taking aside Apollos in order to explain the way of God more accurately to him.

The word is used in Acts 17:5 of the Jews gathering together trouble makers from the rabble in the marketplace in order to form a riot against Paul.


The word is used in relation to Paul requesting that Philemon welcome back his runaway slave Onesimus in Philemon 17. It is used in Romans 14:3 of God accepting those who trust in His Son Jesus Christ as Savior.

The verb appears in Romans 15:7 where it is used of God accepting those who trust in His Son Jesus Christ as Savior and of the Roman Christians who were strong in the faith welcoming or accepting into their fellowship those Christians who were weak in the faith.

In Romans 14:1, the verb *proslambano* means “to welcome into one’s fellowship” and it is used of the Roman Christians who were strong in the faith.
welcoming into their fellowship those Christians who were weak in the faith. The word and Paul’s statement in Romans 14:3, that God has accepted all Christians, those strong in the faith and those who are not, implies that the strong in the faith were to welcome the weak in faith without reservation since God through faith in Christ has accepted both groups.

Morris writes, “The weak are not to be made to feel that they are barely tolerated and seen as second class members. They are to be received with warmth and true fellowship. Christian love demands no less.” (Morris, Leon, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, The Epistle to the Romans, page 478; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K., 1996.

The second person plural form of the verb pros lambano refers to Paul’s Christian readers in Rome who are strong in the faith as indicated by his statement in Romans 15:1 that “the strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.”

The strong as we noted would be Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians like Paul who had been fully convinced that they no longer were under any dietary restrictions and no longer had to observe certain days or abstain from wine because they were convinced by the Holy Spirit of their new freedom in Christ.

Some like Cranfield contend that Paul is speaking to the Christian community as a whole in Rome. In Romans 14:1-12, Paul addresses those who are weak in the faith in that they observe dietary restrictions and set aside certain days as more important than others and in the same breath, he also addresses those who are strong who eat everything, and regard every day as important and the Lord’s. Therefore, he is addressing both groups that would be in the Christian community throughout the chapter. However, in Romans 14:1 he implicitly is addressing the strong since he issues the command to welcome those who are weak in their convictions.

The middle voice is an indirect middle where the subject acts for himself or herself or in his or her own interest. This is called by some an indirect reflexive or benefactive or intensive or dynamic middle. With this type of middle, the subject shows a special interest in the action of the verb and calls special attention to the subject. The indirect middle emphasizes that the subject is acting in relation to himself. The middle voice is focusing attention on the responsibility of the Roman Christians who are strong in the faith, i.e. conviction to welcome into their fellowship those who are weak in the faith.

The present imperative form of the verb is a “customary present imperative” indicating that Paul is commanding those among his readers who are strong in the faith “to continue making it their habit of” welcoming into their fellowship those who are weak in the faith.
Paul’s statements in Romans 1:8 and 15:14-15 indicate quite clearly that those among the Roman believers who were strong in the faith were in fact welcoming into their fellowship those who were weak in the faith, i.e. conviction. Therefore, the present imperative form of the verb *proslambano* indicates that Paul’s command is simply giving a reminder to those who were strong in the faith to continue doing what they were doing and was designed to protect their fellowship with God and each other and their testimony among the unsaved.

We will translate *proslambano*, “all of you (who are strong) continue making it your habit of welcoming into your fellowship.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 14:1, “Now, all of you (who are strong) continue making it your habit of welcoming into your fellowship…”

Romans 14:1, “Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.”

“The one who is weak” is the articular accusative masculine singular present active participle form of the verb *astheneo* (ἅσθηνεω) (as-tha-nay-o), which has the following cognates: (1) *astheneia* (noun), “weakness, sickness, distress, lack of strength. (2) *asthenema*, “weakness, infirmity, sickness, illness.” (3) *asthenes* (adjective), “weak, sick, ill.”

This word group is formed from its opposite *sthenos*, “strength,” with the alpha-privative prefixed, thus the verb literally means to be without strength. Thus, it conveys the meaning of powerlessness, weakness, lack of strength, and includes particularly the following: (1) verb *astheneo* (Euripides, Thucydides). (2) Noun: *astheneia* (Herodotus, Thucydides). (3) Adjective: *asthenes* (Pindar, Herodotus).

All three denote primarily bodily weakness, i.e., sickness or impotence of different kinds (Herodotus 4.135; cf. also Josephus, War of the Jews, 1.76). The verb had the following classical meanings: (1) to be weak, feeble, sickly (2) to be needy (3) to be too weak to do a thing, not to be able (4) decline.

The verb *astheneo* is used quite a bit in the Septuagint (LXX) and is used to render extensive group of Hebrew equivalents: (1) `amal (אָמַל), “be weak, languish, grow feeble; pual: “waste away, languish” (1 Sm. 2:5; Lm. 2:8). (2) da’av (דַּאַב), “sorrow” (Ps. 88:9 [87:9] ). (3) dal (ld), “weak” (Jgs. 6:15; 2 Sm. 3:1; 13:4). (4) dalal (דָּלָל), “be low” (Jb. 28:4). (5) chalah (ךָלָה), Qal: “be weak” (Jgs. 16:7, 11, 17); niphal: “be made sick” (Ez. 34:4; Dn. 8:27). (6) chath (חָת), “broken” (1 Sm. 2:4). (7) kashal (כַּשָּל), Qal: “be weak, feeble, stumble” (2 Ch. 28:15; Jb. 4:3; Jer. 46:16 [26:16] ); niphal: “be tottering, feeble” (1 Sm. 2:4; Ps. 9:3; Zech. 12:8); hiphil: “cause to stumble, make weak” (Jer. 18:15; Lm. 1:14; Mal. 2:8). (8) la’ah (לָאָה), niphal: “be weary” (Ps. 68:9 [67:9] ). (9) mahar (מָהָר) niphal: “hastened” (Is. 32:4). (10) mul (מַל), “circumcise; hithpael: “be cut off, made blunt” (Ps. 58:7 [57:7] ). (11) mikhshol (מִקְשֹּל), “fall” (Ez. 21:15). (12)

The verb astheneo is used quite often in the LXX to translate kashal (חזק): (1) Qal: “be weak, feeble, stumble” (2 Ch. 28:15; Job 4:3; Jer. 46:16 [26:16]). (2) Niphal: “be tottering, feeble” (1 Sm. 2:4; Ps. 9:3; Zech. 12:8). (3) Hiphil: “cause to stumble, make weak” (Jer. 18:15; Lm. 1:14; Mal. 2:8).

It first acquires a specific character in the prophetic literature. In the Psalms and in the Wisdom literature, astheneo is sometimes used as in the prophets to express the stumbling of the unbeliever and of enemies (Ps. 9:3; 27 [26]:2; 58 [57]:7; 107 [106]:12; cf. Job 28:4).

On other occasions it expresses human poverty and human wretchedness (Ps. 6:2; 31 [30]:10; 88 [87]:9; 109 [108]:24; cf. Job 4:4; Prov. 21:13; 22:22). Theodotian employs the verb often where he uses it to depict the fate of wise and powerful men in the end-time (e.g. Dn. 11:14, 19, 33 ff).

The fact that astheneo is used in the LXX to denote human stumbling, disaster, a sense which goes beyond the genuinely Greek meaning of human weakness, is probably to be explained by the link-word in the translation, the Aramaic teqal, which means both to stumble and to be weak.

The verb astheneo appears 33 times in the Greek New Testament.

The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised lists the following meanings: (1) to be weak, infirm, deficient in strength, to be inefficient (2) to be sick (3) to be weak in faith, to doubt, hesitate, be unsettled, timid (4) to be deficient in authority, dignity, or power, be contemptible (5) to be afflicted, distressed, needy (Page 55).

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition: (1) to suffer a debilitating illness, be sick (2) to experience some personal incapacity or limitation, be weak (3) to experience lack of material necessities, be in need (Page 142).

Louw and Nida list the following meanings: (1) to be in a state of incapacity or weakness - ‘to be weak, to be unable to, to be limited’ (74.26). (2) to be sick and, as a result, in a state of weakness and incapacity - ‘to be sick, to be ill, to be disabled’ (23:144) (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains)

The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon lists the following meanings: (1) to be weak, feeble (2) to be weak in means, needy, poor (3) to be feeble, sick (page 80).
The verb *astheneo* appears in Romans 14:1, which marks the fourth time that we have seen this word in our study of the Roman epistle. In Romans 4:19, the verb *astheneo* is employed with the articular dative feminine singular form of the noun *pistis*, “faith” and is used in a figurative sense and means, “to be weak.”

The word’s meaning is negated by the negative particle *me*, “without” and expresses the idea that Abraham did “not” become weak with reference to his confidence that the Lord could deliver on His promise to him and Sarah of a child.

**Romans 4:19, “In fact, without becoming weak with respect to his faith, after careful consideration and observation he was thoroughly aware of his own physical body as now being sexually impotent while already being approximately a hundred years of age as well as the impotence of Sarah’s womb.”**

In Romans 8:3, the verb *astheneo* means, “to be powerless” indicating that the Law was “powerless” through the flesh, i.e. the sin nature to set the sinner free from the sin nature and real spiritual death.

**Romans 8:1-3, “Therefore, there is now, as an eternal spiritual truth, never any condemnation, none whatsoever for the benefit of those in union with Christ who is Jesus. Because, the life-giving Spirit’s authoritative power, by means of (the death and resurrection of) Christ, who is Jesus, has set you free from the sin nature’s authoritative power as well as spiritual death’s. Because with reference to the Law’s inability in which it was always powerless through the flesh, God the Father accomplished by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. In fact, with regards to the sin nature, He (the Father) executed the sin nature by means of His (Son’s) human nature.”**

In Romans 14:1, the verb *astheneo* means “to be in a state of weakness or incapacity” with respect to conviction. The word is used in a figurative sense of those Christians who are “weak” in conviction, which refers to the Jewish believers who still clung to the ritual requirements of the Law and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition. It denotes that a believer who is weak in conviction is someone who lacks spiritual strength and is not able to withstand pressure or attack upon that which they believe is true.

Their faith is easily upset and they are deficient in their knowledge of the Word of God. It also can denote a believer who has not firmly decided on a matter of practice because he is not fully convinced by the teaching of the Spirit in the Word of God.

They are weak because they lack judgment and discernment because they are deficient in wisdom, i.e. the ability to handle problems and situations and adversity and prosperity with the Word of God.
Furthermore, this verb denotes that those who are weak in faith are those who are not practiced or familiar with appropriating the power of God in prayer or the power of the Spirit when faced with temptation.

A weak believer is not accurate in his understanding of the Word of God in relation to doctrine and conduct. They lack skill in applying the Word of God. They are in a spiritually weak condition as a result of not being fully educated in the Word of God as to the implications of being under grace and in union with Christ and identified with Him in His crucifixion, spiritual and physical death, His burial and resurrection and session. Or they have been taught but are not fully convinced by the Spirit with regards to the divine omnipotence and victory over sin, Satan and his cosmic system that is available to them through this union and identification with Christ.

Those who are strong in faith are those who are knowledgeable of the teaching of the Word of God and put it into practice and experience their freedom in Christ whereas those who are weak in faith are those who are not knowledgeable of the Word of God and thus do not experience their freedom in Christ.

A weak believer is someone who is not knowledgeable of the Word of God or they have heard the Word but have not been fully convinced by the Spirit. This is indicated in that the Lord Jesus Christ taught that all foods are to be enjoyed and in Acts 10 the Lord told Peter that there were no longer dietary restrictions as under the Mosaic economy which he was brought up in whereas in Romans 14:1-12, the weak believers observes dietary restrictions.

Also Paul taught in Colossians 2:20-23 that observance of days is not mandatory whereas in Romans 14:5-6, the weak believer observes certain days. In Luke 7:33, the Lord Jesus admitted to drinking wine and Paul taught in Ephesians 5:18 not to be drunk with wine but did not prohibit the drinking of wine and told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23 to have a little wine to deal with his stomach problems yet in Romans 14:21, the weak abstain from drinking wine.

The weak have a conviction that observing certain days and dietary restrictions and abstaining from wine are God’s will and this is because they have either been taught incorrectly or they are ignorant of the teaching of the Word of God regarding these matters. Or, they have heard the teaching and have not accepted it by faith because they are not fully convinced that they are not to observe certain days and dietary restrictions or abstain from drinking wine.

The strong have a conviction that there is no observing certain days and there are no longer dietary restrictions for God’s people as in Israel and that it is nothing wrong to drink yet drunkenness is prohibited. This conviction is based upon the fact that they have received and accepted by faith the teaching of the Word of God in regards to these matters. Those who are strong in faith are to bear with the weaknesses of those who are weak in the faith and operate in love whereas the
latter are to refrain from criticizing those who are strong and are to become strong themselves by learning and applying the Word of God.

In Romans 14:1, astheneo functions as a substantive participle as indicated by the word’s articular construction, which is reflected in translating the article with the relative pronoun phrase “the one who.” The substantive partciple form of the verb astheneo also functions as an accusative direct object meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb proslambano.

The present tense and active voice of the verb are stative referring to those Christians who “exist in the state of” weakness with respect to conviction.

Therefore, we will translate astheneo, “the one who exists in a state of weakness.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 14:1, “Now, all of you (who are strong) continue making it your habit of welcoming into your fellowship the one who exists in a state of weakness…”

Romans 14:1, “Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.”

“In faith” is the articular dative feminine singular form of the noun pistis (πίστις) (pea-steecce).

Otto Michel makes the following comment regarding the word’s classical usage, he writes, “In classical literature pistis means the trust that a man may place in men or the gods (Hesiod, Works, 372; Sophocles OT, 1445), creditability (Sophocles OC, 611), credit in business (Demosthones 36, 57), guarantee (Aeschylus Frag. 394), proof (Democ. 125), or something entrusted (IG 14, 2012 A 23)” (The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology volume 1, page 594).

Liddell and Scott list the following classical meanings for the word pistis: (1) trust in others, faith (2) persuasion of a thing, confidence, assurance (3) in subjective sense, good faith, trustworthiness, honesty (4) of things, credence, credit (5) in a commercial sense, credit (6) position of trust or trusteeship (7) Theologically, faith, opposite of sight and knowledge (8) that which gives confidence (9) assurance, pledge of good faith, guarantee (10) means of persuasion, argument (11) that which is entrusted, a trust (12) political protection or suzerainty (13) in Egypt, safe-conduct, safeguard (14) Pythagorus name for ten (15) personified, equals Latin Fides (page 1408).

Rudolph Bultmann commenting on the noun’s classical usage, writes, “Pistis means a. (abstractly) ‘confidence,’ trust,’ with reference in this sense to persons, relations (Thucydides I, 120, 5) and also things. In so far as it contains an element of uncertainty, trust can be contrasted with knowledge, Sophocles Trach. 588-593 and expressly in Plato (Resp. VI, 511d-e). Nevertheless, it can also mean “conviction” and (subj.) “certainty,” for doxe men epetai pistis, Aristot. An., III, 3,
Parmen. contrasts *pistis alethes* (Fr. 1, 30 [Diels, I, 230, 12] “dependable truth” or “trust in what is real”) with *broton doxai*. In Resp. VI, 505 e Plato speaks of *pistis nominos* (“firm belief”), and in Tim. 37bc he refers to *doxai* and *pisteis*, which are *bebaioi* and *aletheis* though they have to be differentiated, of course from *nous* and *episteme*. Similarly, Plato contrasts *pistis orthe* and *episteme* in Resp. X, 601e. In many cases, however, *pistis* is “firm conviction” without such distinctions. b. In acc. with the Greek feel for language pistis can denote not only the confidence one has but also the confidence one enjoys (cf. II, 233, 39 ff. doxa), i.e., ‘trustworthiness.’ This is related to ‘reliability’ (175, 34; 176, 3), though there is a distinction. It is the same as the pass. *pisteuesthai*. Plutarch Pericles 33, 2 (I, 170a) etc. also n. 25. Stress is often laid on the fact that this pistis is a higher endowment than wealth. In this sense *pistis* is related to *paradoxe* (Polybius 1, 5, 5) and *apodoxe* (Polybius 1, 43, 4). c. Concretely *pistis* means the ‘guarantee’ which creates the possibility of trust, that which may be relied on, or the assurance of reliability, ‘assurance.’ The first use here is in the sphere of sacral law; *pistis* is often combined with *orkos*, Herodotus IX, 92; Plato Leg. III, 701c etc. and we find *pisteis* (*pistin* *didomai* and *lambanein* or *dechesthai*. *Pistis* is the ‘oath of fidelity,’ ‘the pledge of faithfulness’ security. This leads on the one side to the sense of ‘certainty,’ ‘trustworthiness,’ on the other to that of ‘means of proof,’ ‘proof.’ In particular pistis denotes the reliability of persons, ‘faithfulness.’ It belongs especially to friendship (*philia*)” (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament volume 6, pages 176-177).

In the Hellenistic period during the struggle with skepticism and atheism *pistis* acquired the sense of conviction as to the existence and activity of the gods. *Pistis* as faith in God stood for theoretical conviction. But stress was laid on the belief that life was constituted in accordance with this conviction.

*Pistis* acquired a special significance in the writings of the Stoics in the sense of “reliability, faithfulness” (Epictectus Diss. II, 4, 1). It reveals the essence of man (Epict. 2, 4, 1).

Man’s fidelity to his moral destiny leads to fidelity towards others (Epict. 2, 4, 1-3; 2, 22). *Pistis* is thus solidity of character according to the Stoic philosopher and it is typical that *pistos* and *pistis* are used abstractly with no object needing to be supplied.

Primarily then, *pistis* is an attitude of man to himself, not to others. In Stoicism, then, *pistis* has no religious significance in the sense of denoting man’s relation to deity or of having deity and its sway as objects. The attitude of *pistis* is, however, a religious attitude to the degree that in it man, as *pistos*, *eleutheros* and *aidemon*, actualizes his relationship to God.
In the mystery religions faith denotes abandonment to the deity by following his instruction and teaching, and by putting oneself under his protection (Apul., Met., 17, 25-28; P. Oxy., 11, 1380, 152).

The noun *pistis* appears 59 times in the Septuagint (LXX). The noun *pistis* translates the following Hebrew terms in the LXX: (1) `*amun* (אָמֻן) (noun), “faithfulness” (Dt. 32:20). (2) `*emunah* (אמנה) (noun), “trust, faithfulness” (1 Chr. 9:22; Prov. 12:22); “truth” (Jer. 5:1, 3). (3) `*amanah* (אמה) (noun), “agreement” (Neh. 9:38). (4) `*emesh* (אמת), “truth” (Prov. 16:6 [15:27]); “truly, assuredly” (Jer. 28:9 [35:9], 32:41 [39:41]).

The LXX indicates that the Greek term *pistis* especially corresponds to the Hebrew term `*emunah*, “fidelity, faithfulness.” The noun `*emunah* occurs 48 times in the Hebrew Bible and is one of many meaning “firmness” or “steadfastness.”

A distinction may be drawn between this noun and other related words, at least in contexts where the noun refers to a human quality of conduct.

The noun `*emunah* refers to conduct in the sense of conscientiousness. A clear example is in 2 Kgs. 12:15, where it is recorded that workmen repairing the temple did so “conscientiously.”

Jehoshaphat charges judges to work “with a conscientious and honest heart” (2 Chron. 19:9). This same quality leads to David and Samuel appointing certain individuals as gatekeepers, those who hold offices “on account of their conscientiousness” (1 Chron. 9:22). The text could read “offices of trust.”

One must make a choice to live a life governed by doctrine (Ps. 119:30). Trustworthiness is a prerequisite to living a life pleasing to God (Prov. 12:22). One is rewarded by Yahweh according to one’s righteous and trustworthy behavior (1 Sam. 26:23). Moreover, the two qualities go hand in hand (Hab. 2:4).

The noun `*emunah* is applied to the Lord and expresses His faithfulness and dependability (Deut. 32:4). It is frequently listed among the attributes of God (1 Sm. 26:23; Ps. 36:5; 40:10; Lm. 3:23). The word describes His works (Ps. 33:4), and His words (Ps. 119:86; 143:1).

`*Emunah* is also used to refer to those whose lives the Lord establishes, which He expects to see faithfulness in them (Prov. 12:22; 2 Chron. 19:9). Indeed, such faithfulness or a life of faith is characteristic of those justified in God’s sight (Hab. 2:4).

God’s Word of truth establishes man’s way of truth or faithfulness (Ps. 119:30). From this we can also see the concept of a duty being entrusted to a believer which becomes his trust (faithful responsibility, 1 Chron. 9:22; 2 Chron. 31:15, etc.) or office.

`*Emunah* is not so much an abstract quality, “reliability,” but a way of acting which grows out of inner stability, “conscientiousness.” It emphasizes one’s own
inner attitude and the conduct it produces and often conveys the idea of inner stability, integrity, conscientiousness, which is essential for any responsible service. It describes a living act of trust in the Old Testament, and also the dimension of human existence in a historical situation.

The noun *pistis* appears 243 times in the Greek New Testament.

Louw and Nida provide the following list: (1) that which is completely believable - ‘what can be fully believed, that which is worthy of belief, believable evidence, proof’ (31.43) (2) to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance - ‘to believe in, to have confidence in, to have faith in, to trust, faith, trust’ (31.85). (3) the state of being someone in whom complete confidence can be placed - ‘trustworthiness, dependability, faithfulness’ (31.88) (4) to believe in the good news about Jesus Christ and to become a follower – ‘to be a believer, to be a Christian, Christian faith (31.102). (5) the content of what Christians believe - ‘the faith, beliefs, doctrine’ (31.104). (6) promise or pledge of faithfulness and loyalty - ‘promise, pledge to be faithful’ (33.289). (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains)

The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon lists the following: (1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man’s relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and conjoined with it (a) when it relates to God, *pistis* is the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ (b) in reference to Christ, it denotes a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God; in an ethical sense, persuasion or conviction (which springs from faith in Christ as the sole author of salvation; concerning things lawful for a Christian (c) universally of the religious beliefs of Christians; (d) with the predominant idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith in the same (2) fidelity, faithfulness, i.e. the character of one who can be relied on (Pages 512-514).

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition: (1) that which evokes trust and faith (a) the state of being someone in whom confidence can be placed, faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, commitment (b) a solemn promise to be faithful and loyal, assurance, oath, truth (c) a token offered as a guarantee of something promised, proof, pledge (2) state of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted, trust, confidence, faith (3) that which is believed, body of faith/belief/teaching (Pages 819-820).

The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised lists the following meanings, “faith, belief, firm persuasion; assurance, firm conviction; ground of belief, guarantee,
assurance; good faith, honesty, integrity; faithfulness, truthfulness; faith in God and Christ; the matter of Gospel faith” (Page 314).

The noun pistis appears in Romans 14:1, which marks the thirty fifth time that we have seen this word in the Roman epistle. The word first appears in Romans 1:5 where it means, “trust, confidence, faith in the active sense, believing, faith, trust, confidence in God.”

Romans 1:1-5, “Paul, a slave owned by Christ who is Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel originating from God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who was born as a descendant of David with respect to His human nature. The One demonstrated as the Son of God by means of divine power with respect to a nature characterized by holiness because of the resurrection from the dead ones, Jesus Christ, our Lord through whom we have received the spiritual gift of apostleship in order to bring about the faith, which produces obedience among all the Gentiles on behalf of His name.”

In Romans 1:8, the word refers to the faith of the Roman believers in the Word of God after salvation, which demonstrated itself in obedience to the Word of God reflected in their conduct and Christ-like character.

Romans 1:8, “First and foremost indeed, I make it a habit to give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ concerning all of you because your faith is at the present time being proclaimed everywhere throughout the entire world.”

In Romans 1:12, the word refers to faith in the Word of God after salvation, which is demonstrated by obedience to the Word of God and is reflected in one’s conduct and the manifestation of Christ-like character.

Romans 1:11-12, “For I have been and continue up to the present moment to earnestly desire to visit all of you that I might impart a spiritual blessing to all of you with the result that all of you might be stabilized and strengthened. Namely, that is, in order that it might cause me to be encouraged while among all of you by means of each other’s faith, both yours and mine.”

The noun pistis appears three times in Romans 1:16

Romans 1:16-17, “For I am never ashamed of the gospel for it is as an eternal spiritual truth God’s power resulting in deliverance for the benefit of everyone who as an eternal spiritual truth believe, to the Jew first and then to the Greek. For by means of it, the righteousness originating from God is as an eternal spiritual truth revealed from faith to faith. Just as it stands written for all of eternity, ‘But the righteous shall choose for himself to live by means of faith.’”

“From faith” emphasizes that by means of the communication of the gospel, the righteousness of Christ was revealed in the believer the moment he accepted
Jesus Christ as His Savior since at that moment God the Father imputed the righteousness of His Son to him (See Romans 4).

“To faith” emphasizes that by means of the communication of the gospel, the righteousness of Christ is revealed in the believer “after” salvation when he appropriates by faith the teaching of the gospel that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ (Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17).

It also emphasizes that the righteousness of Christ is revealed in the believer when he receives a resurrection body at the rapture of the church, which completes the Father’s plan to conform the believer into the image of His Son (Romans 8:28-29).

The noun pistis, “by means of faith” appears a third time in Romans 1:17 and is used in the active sense referring to the believer’s faith in the Word of God after salvation, which demonstrates itself in obedience to the Word of God and is reflected in his conduct and Christ-like character.

In Romans 3:3, the noun means, “faithfulness” and denotes the faithfulness of God in relation to His covenant promises to Israel and the patriarchs since in context Paul is refuting any idea that Jewish unbelief could render inoperative God’s faithfulness to His promises to the nation of Israel and the patriarchs.

Romans 3:3, “So then, what if—and let us assume that it’s true for the sake of argument some did not believe, then will their unbelief render inoperative God’s faithfulness? No!”

The noun pistis in Romans 3:22 refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” Jesus Christ as one’s Savior.

Romans 3:21-22, “But now, independently of seeking to be justified by obedience to the Law, the righteousness originating from God is being manifested at the present time while simultaneously being attested to by the Law and the Prophets. Namely, the righteousness originating from God through faith in Jesus who is the Christ for the benefit of each and every person who does believe for there is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely no distinction.”

In Romans 3:25, the word refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His spiritual death on the Cross.

Romans 3:25, “Whom God the Father offered publicly as a propitiatory gift through faith by means of His blood in order to demonstrate His righteousness because of the deliberate and temporary suspension of judgment of the sins, which have taken place in the past on the basis of the tolerance originating from the character and nature of God the Father.”
In Romans 3:26, it refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” Jesus Christ as one’s Savior.

Romans 3:26, “Correspondingly, in relation to the demonstration of His righteousness during this present distinct period of history, that He Himself is, as an eternal spiritual truth, inherently righteous, even while justifying anyone by means of faith in Jesus.”

The word in Romans 3:27 refers again to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” Jesus Christ as one’s Savior.

Romans 3:27, “Under what conditions then, is there at any time pride and boasting? It has, as an eternal spiritual truth, been excluded! By what kind of principle? By means of actions produced by obedience to the Law? Absolutely not! But rather by means of the principle, which is faith.”

In Romans 3:28, the word refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:28, “Because we are always of the firm conviction that a person is, as an eternal spiritual truth, justified by means of faith independently of actions produced by obedience to the Law.”

The word appears twice in Romans 3:30 and in both instances it refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His spiritual death on the Cross.

Romans 3:30, “If, in fact-and let us assume that it’s true for the sake of argument, there is, as an eternal spiritual truth, one and the same God, who will certainly, as an eternal spiritual truth, justify the circumcision by means of faith as a source and the uncircumcision by means of faith.”

The noun pistis in Romans 3:31 refers again to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His spiritual death on the Cross.

Romans 3:31, “Are we then attempting to render useless at the present time the Law by means of faith? Absolutely not! On the contrary, we do uphold the Law.”

The noun pisteis in Romans 4:5 refers again to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:5, “On the other hand, for the benefit of the one who does not work hard but does exercise absolute confidence in the One who, as an eternal spiritual truth, justifies the ungodly, his faith is, as an eternal spiritual truth, credited and regarded as righteousness.”

In Romans 4:9, the word refers to Abraham’s non-meritorious decision “to place his absolute confidence in” the preincarnate Christ to deliver on His promise
that is recorded in Genesis 15:6 of a child and numerous progeny despite the fact that Abraham was childless when he received the promise.

Romans 4:9, “Then is, as an eternal spiritual truth, this blessing that produces a happiness that is divine in quality upon the circumcised, or also upon the uncircumcised? For we contend, ‘Faith was credited and regarded as righteousness for the benefit of Abraham.’”

Paul uses the word in Romans 4:11 to refer to Abraham’s non-meritorious decision of placing his absolute “trust” or “confidence in” the Lord.

Romans 4:11, “In fact, he had undergone the distinguishing mark, namely, circumcision as confirmation of the righteousness, that is by means of faith, which he had when uncircumcised in order that he himself might, as an eternal spiritual truth, be the spiritual father over each and every person who does believe while uncircumcised so that righteousness might be credited to them for their benefit.”

It is used in Romans 4:12 to refer to Abraham’s non-meritorious decision “to place his absolute confidence in” the preincarnate Christ to deliver on His promise of a child and numerous progeny despite the fact that Abraham was childless when he received the promise.

Romans 4:12, “In addition that he himself might, as an eternal spiritual truth, be the spiritual father over the circumcision, not only with reference to those from the circumcision, absolutely not. But also, with reference to those who do imitate the example produced by our father Abraham’s faith, which he exercised when uncircumcised.”

The noun refers to Abraham’s non-meritorious decision of placing his absolute “trust” or “confidence in” the Lord in Romans 4:13.

Romans 4:13, “For the promise to Abraham or to his Descendant that he himself, as an eternal spiritual truth, would inherit the earth was, as an eternal spiritual truth, never by means of obedience to the (Mosaic) Law but rather by means of the righteousness produced by faith.”

In Romans 4:14, it refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ in order to establish a relationship with a holy God.

Romans 4:14, “For, if-and let us assume that it’s true for the sake of argument, those who by means of obedience to the (Mosaic) Law are, as an eternal spiritual truth, heirs, then faith is useless and in addition, the promise is meaningless.”

The noun appears twice in Romans 4:16.

Romans 4:16, “On account of the following, it (the promise of inheriting the world) is, as an eternal spiritual truth by means of faith as a source in order that it might be fulfilled in accordance with grace with the result that
the promise is, as an eternal spiritual truth, guaranteed to each and every one of the descendants. Not only for the benefit of those descended from the jurisdiction of the Law, absolutely not but also for the benefit of those descended from Abraham’s faith who is, as an eternal spiritual truth, the spiritual father of each and every one of us.”

The first time it is used in the active sense referring to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His spiritual death on the Cross. The second time it refers to Abraham’s non-meritorious decision “to place his absolute confidence in” the preincarnate Christ to deliver on His promise of a child and numerous progeny despite the fact that Abraham was childless when he received the promise.

In Romans 4:19, pistis refers to Abraham’s non-meritorious decision “to place his absolute confidence in” the preincarnate Christ to deliver on His promise that is recorded in Genesis 15:6 of a child and numerous posterity despite the fact that Abraham was childless when he received the promise.

Romans 4:19, “In fact, without becoming weak with respect to his faith, after careful consideration and observation he was thoroughly aware of his own physical body as now being sexually impotent while already being approximately a hundred years of age as well as the impotence of Sarah’s womb.”

In Romans 4:20, the word refers to Abraham’s non-meritorious decision “to place his absolute confidence in” the preincarnate Son of God’s ability to deliver on His promise of a child to him and Sarah in their advanced age recorded in Genesis 17:16.

Romans 4:20, “Yet, with respect to the promise from (the Son of) God, he never permitted himself to doubt by means of unbelief but rather he permitted himself to be empowered by means of his faith while simultaneously giving glory to (the Son of) God.”

The noun pistis in Romans 5:1 refers again to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His spiritual death on the Cross.

Romans 5:1, “Therefore, because we have been justified by means of faith as a source, we, as an eternal spiritual truth, always have peace in the presence of God through our Lord who is Jesus, who is the Christ.”

The noun pistis doesn’t appear again until Romans 9:30 where it refers once again to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Romans 9:30, “Therefore, what is the conclusion that we are forced to? That the Gentiles who, customarily and characteristically do not zealously
pursue righteousness obtained righteousness, in fact a righteousness, which is by means of faith as a source.”

In Romans 9:32, it refers also to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Romans 9:32, “For what reason? Because they, as an eternal spiritual truth, never zealously pursue it on the basis of faith (as constituting the source of justification) but rather as if it were possible on the basis of meritorious actions (as constituting the source of justification). They stumbled by means of the stone which causes stumbling.”

The noun pistis in Romans 10:6 refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Romans 10:6, “However, the righteousness originating from and based on faith speaks in the following manner: ‘Do not think in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ This does imply bringing Christ down.’ ”

In Romans 10:8, pistis refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence” that the Father raised Jesus from the dead. Paul teaches in Romans 10:9 that faith in the Father raising Jesus from the dead, which is tantamount to acknowledging that Jesus is Lord, is required to receive eternal salvation.

Romans 10:8, “But in contrast what does it say? ‘The word is always readily accessible and available with respect to you,’ in your mouth as well as in your heart, namely, the word, which brings about faith, which we make it a habit to publicly proclaim as heralds in a dignified and authoritative manner.”

Pistis in Romans 10:17 refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Paul’s teaching in Romans 3:20-26 and 9:30-10:16 clearly indicates that Christ is the object of faith. That He is the object of faith is indicated in Romans 3:22 and 26.

Romans 10:17, “Therefore, faith (in Christ) is, as an eternal spiritual truth based on hearing the (the gospel) message as a source. Consequently, hearing the (the gospel) message is, as an eternal spiritual truth by means of the proclamation concerning Christ.”

The noun in Romans 11:20 refers again to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the Cross in order to receive the gift and imputation of divine righteousness resulting in justification.
Romans 11:20, “Absolutely! They were broken off because of their unbelief but you are inserted because of your faith. Do not think arrogantly but rather make it a habit to reverence God the Father.”

Pistis in Romans 12:3 refers to the non-meritorious system of perception of placing one’s “trust” or “confidence in” Jesus Christ as one’s Savior, which results in the imputation of divine righteousness, which in turn results in the Father declaring the sinner justified.

Romans 12:3, “In fact, by means of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others I say for the benefit of each and every person, namely those who are at this particular time living among all of you not to think more highly of oneself than what one is, as an eternal spiritual truth, obligated to think. On the contrary, make it a habit to think so that you think properly about yourselves consistent with the objective standard God the Father distributed to each and every person without exception for their benefit, namely justifying faith.”

In Romans 12:6, pistis refers to the Christian faith or in other words that body of doctrine held by the Christian church. This would also include the gospel since the gospel refers not only in Scripture to the good news proclamation to the unsaved but also to the good news that the Christian has died and been raised with Christ.

Romans 12:6: “Thus logically, as a result we, as an eternal spiritual truth, do possess and experience diverse spiritual gifts according to the grace which was given for the benefit of each and every one of us: whether the function of prophesy, according to the standard, which is the Christian faith.”

In Romans 14, the noun pistis appears four times.

Romans 14:1, “Now receive the one who is weak in the faith, and do not have disputes over differing opinions.” (NET Bible)

Romans 14:22-23, “The faith you have, keep to yourself before God. Blessed is the one who does not judge himself by what he approves. But the man who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not do so from faith, and whatever is not from faith is sin.” (NET Bible)

In each instance, the noun pistis means “conviction,” which is a “strong persuasion or belief” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition).

Convictions are beliefs which govern our behavior. The Christian’s convictions are to be based upon the teaching of the Spirit in the Word of God. A biblical conviction comes about in a Christian when he or she has been fully convinced or convicted by the Holy Spirit through the teaching of the Word of God with regards to the will of the Father regarding a particular subject and thus has decided to
accept this teaching. Consequently, this teaching becomes a part of their conscience, i.e. their norms and standards and thus governs their conduct.

A conviction is a decision concerning what it is true or God’s will for the Christian’s life, which in turn determines what the Christian should or should not do when faced with a particular situation or circumstance.

Pistis does not refer to faith in Christ, which results in being declared justified by God but rather it is related to the believer experiencing his sanctification and salvation and fellowship after being declared justified and refers to a believer’s “conviction” that what he or she is doing is according to the will of the Father.

In Romans 14, Paul mentions that those who are weak in their conviction are those who regard certain days as more important than others and adhere to dietary restrictions and do not drink wine whereas those who are strong, like himself, do not adhere to these things.

The weak abstain from certain foods and wine and observe certain days whereas the strong do not simply because the former are not familiar with the teaching of the Word of God regarding these things or they have been taught but are not fully convinced yet. The latter are educated in the Word of God with regards to these things and have been fully convinced by the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God.

The weak do not understand the implications of Christ’s death in relation to the dietary restrictions of the Law or the implications of their union and identification with Christ in His death with regards to these dietary restrictions or they have not been fully convinced of these implications.

Christ fulfilled the Law and the Christian has died to the Law and is no longer under its jurisdiction but is under grace. The strong believer has fully grasped the implications of his new found freedom in Christ whereas the weak believer has not. The weak believer is afraid to step out in faith in his new found freedom whereas the strong believer is already walking in his new found freedom.

The former is like a child afraid to separate from his mother and go to school whereas the latter is already on the bus. The weak erroneously believe that grace is a license to sin whereas the strong are convinced that it is a license to love and serve God and one’s fellow believer.

The believer weak in his convictions erroneously believes that they must practice certain rules and regulations. They are focused more on externals and do not understand that liberty or freedom in Christ is not a license to sin but to love and serve God. This is all because they are not knowledgeable of the Word of God and need to be educated in it or they have been taught and are not fully convinced because they have to overcome false or inaccurate teaching from their past or traditions they have learned and observed in other denominations.
Those who are weak in faith are saved and justified through faith in Christ but have not fully grasped by faith their new freedom and position in Christ and identification with Him in His death and resurrection. This is because they either need to be educated as to their new freedom and position in Christ and identification with Him in His death and resurrection or they have been taught but have not been fully convinced of it by the Spirit. They are hesitating being convinced because of their past experiences and exposure to certain legalistic teaching.

In the first century apostolic church, Jewish and Gentile believers were interacting with each other for the first time in fellowship with each other. The Jewish believers who were raised under the Mosaic Law with its dietary restrictions and under the Rabbinical teaching, which emphasized the observance of certain days and the abstaining from certain foods was a cause of division in the first century apostolic church.

Hebrews 13:9 teaches that the Christian is not spiritually strengthened by eating meat, but by God’s grace. Colossians 2:20-23 teaches that abstinence does not make us more spiritual.

Colossians 2:20-23, “If you have died with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world, why do you submit to them as though you lived in the world? ‘Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!’ These are all destined to perish with use, founded as they are on human commands and teachings. Even though they have the appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship and false humility achieved by an unsparing treatment of the body – a wisdom with no true value – they in reality result in fleshly indulgence.” (NET Bible)

Now, the Lord Jesus taught that there were no unclean animals under the church age dispensation as there were under the Mosaic Law.

Mark 7:14-19, “After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, ‘Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. And He said to them, ‘Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?’ (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

Peter was taught that there were no dietary restrictions for Christians (Acts 10). Even though the Lord taught that there were no longer any unclean foods during the church age, Jewish believers like Peter had a difficult time shedding these Jewish practices. They were not fully convinced by the Holy Spirit because they had to overcome years of being inculcated with these dietary laws. Thus, in
Romans 14, Paul commanded the strong believers to tolerate their weak brothers and sisters who were having a difficult time with the Lord’s teaching and were still abstaining from eating certain foods.

The strong believers were commanded not to put a stumbling block before the weak believers by eating those foods and drinking alcohol or forcing them to partake of these things when their conscience still said that they shouldn’t.

Since a Christian’s convictions must be based upon the Word of God, his convictions define what is wrong or right for them to do in life. A Christian’s convictions with regards to certain matters of conduct must be the result of accepting by faith the teaching of the Spirit in the Word of God.

Paul makes clear that conviction must be based upon the knowledge of the Word of God with regards to how one should conduct oneself in a particular circumstance or situation in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.

1 Corinthians 8:1-13, “With regard to food sacrificed to idols, we know that ‘we all have knowledge.’ Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. If someone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know to the degree that he needs to know. But if someone loves God, he is known by God. With regard then to eating food sacrificed to idols, we know that ‘an idol in this world is nothing,’ and that ‘there is no God but one.’ If after all there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we live, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we live. But this knowledge is not shared by all. And some, by being accustomed to idols in former times, eat this food as an idol sacrifice, and their conscience, because it is weak, is defiled. Now food will not bring us close to God. We are no worse if we do not eat and no better if we do. But be careful that this liberty of yours does not become a hindrance to the weak. For if someone weak sees you who possess knowledge dining in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience be ‘strengthened’ to eat food offered to idols? So by your knowledge the weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed. If you sin against your brothers or sisters in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. For this reason, if food causes my brother or sister to sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I may not cause one of them to sin.” (NET Bible)

However, as he does in Romans 14, he warns those who have knowledge of the Word of God, i.e. the strong in Romans 14, to not use that knowledge in a way that causes the weak brother or sister in Christ to violate their own convictions (though not based on the Word) or conscience.

So the Christian’s convictions are personal and must not be forced upon another believer. The believer who is strong in his convictions must always be governed by
operating in the love of God when determining whether or not to put these convictions into practice. This must be the case since he could cause his weak brother or sister to do something that will go against their convictions and conscience and cause them to sin in their own eyes.

So a Christian’s convictions must be the result of exercising faith in what the Spirit is saying in the Word of God and practiced and governed in accordance with the love of God. A Christian’s convictions are a reflection of how well He can discern the voice of the Spirit and obey that voice. The brother or sister in Christ who is weak regarding the strength of his convictions is more likely to cave in to peer pressure and to do what his faith does not endorse and his conscience condemns.

The so called “weak” brother or sister in Christ, then, is not the one who simply disagrees with what I do, or who gets upset by my freedom, they are the one who is likely to imitate me in what I do, violating his own conscience and convictions as Paul notes in 1 Corinthians 8:1-7. The weak brother or sister is the one more likely to sin because he gives in to another’s convictions rather than living by his own.

In Romans 14, Paul does not talk about convictions in general but of convictions concerning Christian liberties. Christian liberties are those practices the Christian is free to engage in, those practices which are not identified as sin. These are not “gray” matters, but practices God has granted us freedom to enjoy, if we can do so with a clear conscience.

Convictions are those decisions about Christian liberties which each person holds and practices before God. Our convictions should not be the subject of criticism or debate, nor should we seek to impose our convictions on others (see Romans 14:22 above, also 14:5-9).

Nowhere does Paul seek to shape or change the convictions of another. Our convictions will change as we mature, but God is the One who achieves this in the heart of His children through the work of His Spirit.

As Paul pointed out in 1 Corinthians 8:1-7 and in Romans 14, the exercise of our convictions may be either beneficial or detrimental to others. Therefore, while we are urged to hold our convictions firmly, we are not urged to practice every liberty which our convictions allow.

The weak believer will become strong in his convictions as the more they obey the will of the Father as it is revealed by the Spirit through the teaching of the Word of God. If they grieve (Ephesians 4:30) or quench (1 Thessalonians 5:19) the Spirit, then they will not become strong and will remain weak. Those who become strong are those who are obedient to the Spirit.

In Romans 14:1, the articular construction of the abstract noun pistis emphasizing the Christian quality and character of this conviction.
The noun functions as a dative of reference indicating that the word is that in reference to which some Christians are in a state of weakness. Therefore, we will translate the expression \textit{te pistei}, \textit{“with regards to conviction.”}

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 14:1, \textit{“Now, all of you (who are strong) continue making it your habit of welcoming into your fellowship the one who exists in a state of weakness with regards to conviction…”}

\textit{Romans 14:1, “Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.”}

\textit{“Not”} is the negative particle \textit{me} (μή) (me), which negates the prepositional phrase \textit{eis diakriseis dialogismon} (εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμόν), \textit{“for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.”}

Paul employs \textit{me} and not \textit{ouk} since the latter is much stronger than the former and would indicate that his readers who were strong in their convictions were in fact passing judgment on the opinions of those who were weak in their conviction. Thus, by employing \textit{me} instead of \textit{ouk}, he does not believe that his readers were doing this, which \textit{ouk} would indicate. Therefore, the particle \textit{me} indicates that this has not taken place but is used with the prepositional phrase \textit{eis diakriseis dialogismon} (εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμόν), \textit{“for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions”} to prohibit Paul’s readers who were strong in their conviction from doing this.

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 14:1, \textit{“Now, all of you (who are strong) continue making it your habit of welcoming into your fellowship the one who exists in a state of weakness with regards to conviction, not…”}

\textit{Romans 14:1, “Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.”}

\textit{“For the purpose of”} is the preposition \textit{eis} (εἰς) (ace), which functions as a marker of purpose indicating the purpose for Paul’s command to those who were strong with respect to conviction to welcome those who were weak with respect to conviction. We will translate the word \textit{“for the purpose of.”}

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 14:1, \textit{“Now, all of you (who are strong) continue making it your habit of welcoming into your fellowship the one who exists in a state of weakness with regards to conviction, not for the purpose of…”}

\textit{Romans 14:1, “Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.”}

\textit{“Passing judgment on his opinions”} is composed of the accusative feminine plural form of the noun \textit{diakrisis} (διάκρισις) (dee-ah-kree-sees), \textit{“passing judgment on”} and the genitive masculine plural form of the noun \textit{dialogismos} (διαλογισμός) (dee-ah-low-gees-mos), \textit{“his opinions.”}
The noun *diakrisis* is a noun form of the verb *diakrino* which means “to differentiate, discern” or “assess” in the sense of judging through with the objective of rendering an impartial decision. It also has the idea of “separation” or “division.”

The classical usage of *diakrisis* picks up the latter idea along with other meanings such as “quarrel” and “struggle.” It is also used to describe an interval.

The word appears only once in Job 37:16 and appears only three times in the Greek New Testament (Romans 14:1; 1 Corinthians 12:10; Hebrews 5:14).

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition lists the following meanings for the word: (1) the ability to distinguish and evaluate, distinguishing, differentiation (2) engagement in verbal conflict because of differing viewpoints, quarrel (Page 231).

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains: (1) the ability to evaluate and judge – ‘to be able to judge, ability to make judgments, ability to decide’ (30.112) (2) to dispute with someone on the basis of different judgments – ‘to dispute, to debate about, contention, dispute’ (33.444).

The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised lists the following, “separation; a distinction or doubt; a discerning, the act of discerning or distinguishing; the faculty of distinguishing and estimating” (Page 92).

The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon lists the following “a distinguishing, discerning, judging” (Page 139).

In Romans 14:1, the noun *diakrisis* means “dispute, debate, argue” and is used of the believer who is strong with respect to conviction. The word indicates that the strong believer is not to engage in a “dispute” or “argue” with the weak believer over his conviction with regards to his observance of certain days and dietary restrictions and abstaining from drinking wine. The implication is that the weak believer’s conviction is not based upon an accurate understanding of the Word of God.

The noun *dialogismos* is composed of the preposition *dia*, “through” in the sense of separation, and *logismos*, “a reasoning.” It primarily denotes an inward reasoning, an opinion.

In classical Greek the root word embodies modern dialogue. In its everyday usage it means general conversation but in the writings of the philosophers it denotes verbal interaction and debate with the objective in mind of a teaching and learning experience. Related to this meaning the noun form *dialogismos* emerges as a process of deliberating, considering, reckoning, weighing, and discussing.

It is fairly common in the writings of the historian Polybius and the Septuagint but does not occur in Josephus or Philo. The sense of reckoning is found in Demosthones and the Laws of Ptolemy Philadelphius. The most common use of the term is deliberation, reflection.
The word was used any human thoughts such as inconstant thoughts, troubled thoughts, anxious thoughts, evil thoughts, filthy adulterous thoughts. The sense of deliberation and discussion are found in Plutarch. The word can also be used with reference to instructive conversation as well as a technical term for convention.

**Dialogismos** was also used for judicial investigation and decision as early as the second century B.C. It is used figuratively to enquiry and examination.

Liddell and Scott list the following classical meanings for the word: (1) balancing of accounts (2) calculation, consideration (3) debate, argument, discussion (4) circuit court (5) judicial inquiring (Page 402).

In the Septuagint (LXX), *dialogismos* stands primarily for the Hebrew counterpart *machashavah* which means a plan or purpose devised in thought or reflection.

Dieter Furst states, “the noun *dialogismos* also often means the perverse, vain thinking which contemplates destruction (Ps. 94:11 [LXX 93:11]), and is turned against God (Isa. 59:7; Jer. 4:14) and against the pious (Ps. 56:5 [LXX 55:5])...But the word is also used for God’s profound (Ps. 92:5 [91:5] ) and wonderful (Ps. 40:5 [39:5]) thoughts” (Colin Brown’s The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology volume 3, page 820).

The LXX uses the word for God’s thoughts. In Polybius and the LXX it is also frequently used for design or plan, evil project. It is also used for God’s plans and resolves.

Significant in relation to the New Testament sense of questioning is Sir. 40:2 where there is reference to apprehension together with the fear of the right lobe (Hebrew: *leb*).

**Dialogismos** appears only 14 times in the Greek New Testament.

Furst states, “In the NT also, *dialogizomai* and *dialogismos* are always used with a slightly depreciatory connotation” (Colin Brown’s The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology volume 3, page 820).

Gottlob Schrenk lists four meanings for the word in the New Testament: (1) evil thoughts (2) anxious reflection, doubt (3) thought, discussion (4) bad decisions, deliberations (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament volume 2, page 97).

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition: (1) the process of reasoning, reasoning (2) content of reasoning or conclusion reached through use of reason, thought, opinion, reasoning, design (3) verbal exchange that takes place when conflicting ideas are expressed, dispute, argument (4) reasoning that gives rise to uncertainty, doubt (Pages 232-233).

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains: (1) to think or reason with thoroughness and completeness – ‘to think about carefully,
In Romans 14:1, the noun *dialogismos* is in the plural and means “opinions” referring to the opinions of the believer who is weak in his convictions. The word refers to the opinions of the weak believer that are not based upon an accurate understanding of the Word of God but were arrived at from inaccurate or false teaching or man-made traditions they learned in other denominations or perhaps through Satan’s accusations.

It functions as an “objective genitive” meaning that it functions semantically as the direct object of the verbal idea implicit in the noun *diakrisis*, which is indicated in that *diakrisis* can be converted into the verbal form of the noun, *diakrino* “arguing over” and the noun *dialogismos* into its direct object. Therefore, we will translate *diakrisis*, “arguing over” and the noun *dialogismos*, “opinions.”

Completed corrected translation of Romans 14:1, “Now, all of you (who are strong) continue making it your habit of welcoming into your fellowship the one who exists in a state of weakness with regards to conviction, not for the purpose of arguing over opinions."

In this passage, Paul issues a command to the Gentile and Jewish Christians in Rome who are strong with respect to conviction to continue to make it their habit of welcoming into their fellowship those Jewish and Gentile Christians who are weak with respect to conviction. They are weak because they still cling to the ritual requirements of the Mosaic Law.

Then, Paul says that the strong believers are to welcome the weak believers into their fellowship but not for the purpose of arguing over opinions. This command is designed to maintain unity among the Jewish and Gentile believers.
Romans 14:2-The Strong Have The Conviction That There Are No Dietary Restrictions Whereas The Weak Have The Conviction That There Are

In Romans 14:2, the apostle Paul provides an example which could cause a conflict between the believer who is strong with regards to conviction and the believer who is weak.

Romans 14:2, “One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.”

Romans 14:2 is a correlative clause that is formed by the particle of affirmation *men* (μέν) (men), which is not translated and the adversative use of the conjunction *de* (δὲ) (theh), which is translated “but.”

This clause contrasts the believer who is strong with respect to conviction with the believer who is weak with respect to conviction. The former has the conviction that he can eat all things, which is based upon the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. The latter have the conviction that there are dietary restrictions, which was the will of the Father for the dispensation of Israel prior to the First Advent of Christ but is no longer the case during the dispensation of the church age.

The Jewish believers who continued to observe dietary restrictions and the observance of certain days and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition are those whom Paul describes as weak in faith, i.e. conviction. They are weak in conviction because they have not been fully convinced and have not yet accepted by faith the Spirit’s revelation concerning their new freedom in Christ.

Those whom he describes as strong in faith, i.e. conviction are the Gentile believers and Jewish believers like himself who have been fully convinced by the Holy Spirit and have accepted the Spirit’s revelation concerning their new freedom in Christ. The strong are to operate according to the love of God and sacrifice their freedom in Christ for the sake of the weak who are not to criticize the strong for living in their freedom. Those who are strong in faith are those who are knowledgeable of the teaching of the Word of God and put it into practice and experience their freedom in Christ whereas those who are weak in faith are those who are not knowledgeable of the Word of God and thus do not experience their freedom in Christ.

A weak believer is someone who is not knowledgeable of the Word of God or they have heard the Word but have not been fully convinced by the Spirit. This is indicated in that the Lord Jesus Christ taught that all foods are to be enjoyed and in Acts 10 the Lord told Peter that there were no longer dietary restrictions as under the Mosaic economy which he was brought up in whereas in Romans 14:1-12, the weak believers observe dietary restrictions.

Also Paul taught in Colossians 2:20-23 that observance of days is not mandatory whereas in Romans 14:5-6, the weak believer observes certain days.
In Luke 7:33, the Lord Jesus admitted to drinking wine and Paul taught in Ephesians 5:18 not to be drunk with wine but did not prohibit the drinking of wine and told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23 to have a little wine to deal with his stomach problems yet in Romans 14:21, the weak abstain from drinking wine.

The weak have a conviction that observing certain days and dietary restrictions and abstaining from wine are God’s will and this is because they have either been taught incorrectly or they are ignorant of the teaching of the Word of God regarding these matters. Or, they have heard the teaching and have not accepted it by faith because they are not fully convinced that they no longer have to observe certain days, or dietary restrictions or abstain from drinking wine. Again, the weak are Jewish believers still clinging to the ritual requirements of the Law and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition.

The strong have a conviction that there is no observing certain days and there are no longer dietary restrictions for God’s people as in Israel and that it is nothing wrong to drink yet drunkenness is prohibited. This conviction is based upon the fact that they have received and accepted by faith the teaching of the Word of God in regards to these matters.

Those who are strong in faith are to bear with the weaknesses of those who are weak in the faith and operate in love whereas the latter are to refrain from criticizing those who are strong and are to become strong themselves by learning and applying the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus taught that there were no unclean animals under the church age dispensation as there were under the Mosaic Law. He taught that food does not defile a man (Matthew 15:10-20).

Mark 7:14-23, “Then he called the crowd again and said to them, ‘Listen to me, everyone, and understand. There is nothing outside of a person that can defile him by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles him.’ Now when Jesus had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. He said to them, ‘Are you so foolish? Don’t you understand that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him? For it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and then goes out into the sewer.’ (This means all foods are clean.) He said, ‘What comes out of a person defiles him. For from within, out of the human heart, come evil ideas, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly. All these evils come from within and defile a person.’” (NET Bible)

Acts 10 records the Lord teaching Peter that the dietary restrictions of the Mosaic Law were no longer applicable.

Acts 10:1-11:18, “Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who
feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, ‘Cornelius!’ And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, ‘What is it, Lord?’ And he said to him, ‘Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea.’ When the angel who was speaking to him had left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants, and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. A voice came to him, ‘Get up, Peter, kill and eat!’ But Peter said, ‘By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.’ Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there. While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are looking for you. But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself.’ Peter went down to the men and said, ‘Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?’ They said, ‘Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you.’ So he invited them in and gave them lodging. And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I too am just a man. As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled. And he said to them, ‘You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. That is why I came without even raising any objection
when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me. Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, and he said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.’ So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord. Opening his mouth, Peter said: ‘I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all) -- you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.’

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he? And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days. Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. and when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him, saying, ‘You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them. But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me, and when I had fixed my gaze on
it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' But I said, ‘By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ But a voice from heaven answered a second time, ‘What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.’ This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky. And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea. The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man's house. And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way? When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, ‘Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”

It is interesting that Peter had interpreted the vision as God accepting the Gentiles, which was true but it also should have been taken literally by Peter as well. Even though the Lord taught that there were no longer any unclean foods during the church age, Jewish believers like Peter had a difficult time shedding these Jewish practices.

Paul confronted Peter with regards to his hypocrisy in not sitting to eat with the Gentiles when Jewish brethren came into the room, which is another manifestation of Peter having a difficult time understanding that dietary restrictions had been set aside by God.

Galatians 2:11-14, “But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to beat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?’”

Thus, in Romans 14, Paul commanded Gentile believers to tolerate their Jewish brethren who were having a difficult time with the Lord’s teaching and were still
abstaining from eating certain foods. The Gentile believers who were strong were commanded not to put a stumbling block before the Jewish believers who hung onto the Law by eating those foods and drinking alcohol or forcing them to partake of these things when their conscience still said that they shouldn’t.

Even though the Lord taught that there were no longer any unclean foods during the church age, Jewish believers like Peter had a difficult time shedding these Jewish practices. Thus, Paul commanded Gentile believers to tolerate their Jewish brethren who were having a difficult time with the Lord’s teaching and were still abstaining from eating certain foods.

The Gentile believers were commanded not to put a stumbling block before the immature believers by eating those foods and drinking alcohol or forcing them to partake of these things when their conscience still said that they shouldn’t.

So in Romans 14, the Jewish believers who continued to observe dietary restrictions and the observance of certain days and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition are those whom Paul describes as weak in faith, i.e. conviction. They are weak in conviction because they have not been fully convinced and have not yet accepted by faith the Spirit’s revelation concerning their new freedom in Christ. Those whom he describes as strong in faith, i.e. conviction are the Gentile believers and Jewish believers like himself who have been fully convinced by the Holy Spirit and have accepted the Spirit’s revelation concerning their new freedom in Christ.

That the weak in Romans 14 are Jewish believers who had difficulty breaking away from the Mosaic Law is indicated in that the New Testament makes clear that the dietary laws of the Mosaic law practiced by the Jews was an important issue in the early first century apostolic churches (Mark 7:2, 5; 14-19; Acts 10). The Jews in the first century would abstain from meat and wine, which was not required by the Mosaic law (Leviticus 11; 20:15; Deuteronomy 14:3-21; cf. Leviticus 17:10-16; 19:26; Deuteronomy 12:15-25). They avoided meat and wine because they could not be sure that the meat had been prepared in a “kosher” manner. Daniel and his friends did this in Babylon (Daniel 1:8; 10:3).

The term “kosher” comes from a Hebrew word, the word is kashar, which means “fit” or “right.” Anything that is “kosher” is right, it is fit, it is proper, it is acceptable according to a Jew.

Now, Jewish Christians in Rome were ostracized from the Jewish community because of their faith in Jesus Christ and had been forced to settle in Gentile communities in the city after their exile brought about by the decree of Claudius. Consequently, these Jews would refrain from buying meat in the Gentile sections of the city where they settled because they knew it was not prepared in a “kosher” manner. Correspondingly, Jews would abstain from wine as well out of concern
that it had been tainted by the pagan practice of offering wine as a libation to the gods (Moo, page 831).

Further indicating that the “weak” in Romans 14 are Jewish Christians who had a difficult time breaking from the Mosaic Law and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition is that Paul mentions the weak observing certain days, which was the case with the Jews and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition who observed many days including of course the Sabbath as prescribed in the Mosaic Law. Also as the gospels make clear many first century Jews observed weekly fasting and prayer days. Therefore, it is clear that the “weak” in Romans 14 are Jewish Christians who erroneously believed that they were still bound to continue to observe the “ritual” requirements of the Mosaic Law and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition.

Furthermore, the entire Roman epistle speaks of God forming a new humanity out of both Jew and Gentile races. In Romans 1:18-5:21, Paul makes clear that both Jew and Gentile races are condemned before a holy God and can only be justified through faith alone in Christ alone and that both can have peace with God through faith in Christ. Also, in Romans 9-11, Paul was very concerned that Gentile Christians did not look down upon the Jewish Christians or the Jewish nation itself or Jewish unbelievers and thus taught the Gentile believers to not be arrogant toward their Jewish brethren in order to insure unity between the two groups.

Romans 14 appears to be another instance when Paul is again attempting to maintain unity among Jewish and Gentile believers by teaching Gentile believers to not be arrogant toward Jewish believers by condemning for continuing to live under the ritual requirements of the Mosaic Law.

So Romans 14:2 is a correlative clause that is formed by the particle of affirmation men (μέν) (men), which is not translated and the adversative use of the conjunction de (δὲ) (theh), which is translated “but.” This clause contrasts the believer who is strong with respect to conviction with the believer who is weak with respect to conviction. The former has the conviction that he can eat all things, which is based upon the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. The latter have the conviction that there are dietary restrictions, which was the will of the Father for the dispensation of Israel prior to the First Advent of Christ but is longer the case during the dispensation of the church age.

The particle of affirmation men sets up a contrast presenting a concept, which Paul seeks to contrast. The word presents the believer who is strong with respect to conviction in that he is fully convinced that the Father’s will is that he can eat all things. On the other hand, de introduces a statement that presents the Jewish believer and the Gentile Christian influenced by Jewish tradition who are weak with respect to conviction in that he is not fully convinced that it is the Father’s
will that they can eat anything and thus abstain from eating meat because they could not be sure that the meat had been prepared in a “kosher” manner. Therefore, we will translate this correlative clause as “on the one hand...while on the other hand.”

Romans 14:2, “One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.”

“One person” is the nominative masculine singular form of the relative pronoun hos (ὅς) (oce), which is a relative reference to those believers who are strong with respect to conviction, which is indicated by the direct object clause phagein panta, “that he may eat all things.”

The antecedent of the relative pronoun hos is omitted. Hos functions as a demonstrative pronoun in place of the definite article referring to no particular believer who is strong with respect to conviction since they are fully convinced that they can eat anything. This word refers to Gentile and Jewish Christians like Paul who had been fully convinced that they no longer were under any dietary restrictions and no longer had to observe certain days or abstain from wine because they were convinced by the Holy Spirit of their new freedom in Christ. With this word, Paul is presenting a hypothetical case in order to illustrate his statement in the previous verse.

In Romans 14:1, he commands the believers who are strong with respect to conviction to welcome into their fellowship those Jewish and Gentiles believers who are weak with respect to conviction. This weakness is illustrated by the fact that they continue to observe the dietary restrictions in the Mosaic Law.

The word functions as a “nominative subject” meaning that it is performing the action of the verb pisteuo, “has faith.”

We will translate hos, “one person.”

“Has faith” is the third person singular present active indicative form of the verb pisteuo (πιστεύω) (pee-stev-o), which means to “to be convinced” by the Spirit in the Word of God that one as a believer can eat anything.

The present tense and active voice of the verb are stative referring to those Christians who “exist in the state of” being convinced that they can eat anything.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as an unqualified statement of fact.

We will translate the verb “is convinced.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 14:2: “On the one hand, one person is convinced...while on the other hand...”

“That he may eat all things” is composed of the aorist active infinitive form of the verb esthio (ἐσθίω) (es-thee-o), “that he may eat” and the accusative neuter plural form of the adjective pas (πᾶς) (pas), “all things.”
The verb *esthio* means “to eat” and denotes the process of eating in order to sustain human biological life.

It functions as an infinitive of result meaning that it indicates the outcome produced by the controlling verb, which in our context is *pisteuo*, “is convinced.” This indicates that the strong believer with respect to conviction eats everything “as a result of” being convinced by the Spirit in the Word of God that he can do so.

That the word is an infinitive of result is indicated in that Paul is emphasizing the results of a believer being fully convinced by the Spirit through the teaching of the Lord Jesus and the apostles that they can eat everything and that the dietary restrictions of the Law are no longer applicable to God’s people. The strong believer eats everything as a result of being convinced by the Spirit in the Word of God that he can do so.

The aorist tense of the verb is a “constative” aorist describing in summary fashion the lifestyle of the strong believer eating all kinds of food.

The active voice means that the subject performs the action of the verb indicating that the strong believer is performing the action of eating all kinds of food because he is convinced by the Spirit that he can do so.

The adjective *pas* is used in relation to food denoting a totality of kinds or sorts and means “everything” or “all things.” The word functions as a substantive and as an accusative direct object meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb *esthio*.

We will translate the verb *esthio*, “eat” and the substantive use of the adjective *pas*, “everything.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 14:2: “On the one hand, one person is convinced with the result that they eat everything while on the other hand…”

Romans 14:2, “One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.”

“He who is weak” is the articular nominative masculine singular present active participle form of the verb *astheneo* (ἀσθηνεῖν) (as-tha-nay-o), means “to be in a state of weakness or incapacity” with respect to conviction.

The word is used in a figurative sense of those Christians who are in “weak” in conviction, which refers to the Jewish believers who still clung to the ritual requirements of the Law and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition. This is how the word was used in Romans 14:1.

In Romans 14:1, *astheneo* functions as a substantive participle as indicated by the word’s articular construction, which is reflected in translating the article with the relative pronoun phrase “the one who.”

The substantival participle form of the verb *astheneo* also functions as a nominative subject meaning that it is performing the action of the third person
singular present active indicative form of the verb *esthio*, “*eats,*” which appears in the adversative part of this correlative clause.

The present tense and active voice of the verb are stative referring to those Christians who “exist in the state of” weakness with respect to conviction.

Therefore, we will translate *astheneo*, “the one who exists in a state of weakness.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 14:2: “On the one hand, one person is convinced with the result that they eat everything while on the other hand, the one who exists in a state of weakness…”

Romans 14:2, “One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.”

“*Eats*” is the third person singular present active indicative form of the verb *esthio* (ἐσθίω) (es-thee-o), which once again means “to eat” and denotes the process of eating in order to sustain human biological life.

The present tense of the verb is a customary present emphasizing the lifestyle of those Jewish Christians who eat only vegetables.

The active voice of the verb indicates that the weak Jewish and Gentile believers who continue to observe the dietary restrictions in the Law perform the action of the verb of eating only vegetables.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as an unqualified statement of fact.

We will translate the verb *esthio*, “as a lifestyle eats.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 14:2: “On the one hand, one person is convinced with the result that they eat everything while on the other hand, the one who exists in a state of weakness, as a lifestyle eats…”

Romans 14:2, “One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.”

“*Vegetables*” is the accusative neuter plural form of the noun *lachanon* (λάχανον) (lach-a-known), which is correctly translated referring to any one of the smaller edible garden plants or herbs, i.e. vegetables cultivated in a garden and sold in the market and prepared in the kitchen.

The vegetable is the edible product of a herbaceous plant—that is, a plant with a soft stem, as distinguished from the edible nuts and fruits produced by plants with woody stems such as shrubs and trees. Vegetables can be grouped according to the edible part of each plant: leaves (lettuce), stalks (celery), roots (carrot), tubers (potato), bulbs (onion), and flowers (broccoli). In addition, fruits such as the tomato and seeds such as the pea are commonly considered vegetables. Most vegetables are valuable sources of vitamins, minerals, and fiber and are low in fat and calories. With cereals and legumes, they are important to a healthy diet).
The noun *lachanon* functions as an accusative direct object meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb *esthio*. We will translate it “*vegetables.*”

Completed corrected translation of Romans 14:2: “*On the one hand, one person is convinced with the result that they eat everything while on the other hand, the one who exists in a state of weakness as a lifestyle eats vegetables.*”

So in Romans 14:1, Paul commands those who are strong with respect to conviction to welcome into their fellowship those who are weak with respect to conviction but not for the purpose of arguing over opinions. Then, in Romans 14:2, he contrasts the believer who is strong with respect to conviction with the believer who is weak with respect to conviction.

The former has the conviction that he can eat all things, which is based upon the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. The latter have the conviction that there are dietary restrictions, which was the will of the Father for the dispensation of Israel prior to the First Advent of Christ but is no longer the case during the dispensation of the church age.

Then, in Romans 14:3, Paul instructs his readers that the strong believer who eats everything is not to regard with contempt the weak believer who still observes the dietary restrictions in the Law and Gentile Christians influenced by Jewish tradition. He also warns that the weak believer who observes dietary restrictions is not to judge the strong believer for the fact that he does not observe the same restrictions since God has accepted that believer.

*Romans 14:3,* “*The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.*”