

Romans 14:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Analysis

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost—Ou gar estin hē basileia tou theou brōsis kai posis, alla dikaiosynē kai eirēnē kai chara en pneumati hagiō (οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρώσις καὶ πόσις, ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ χαρὰ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ). Hē basileia tou theou (the kingdom of God) is God's saving reign breaking into the present through Christ. It's not brōsis kai posis (eating and drinking)—external rituals or dietary codes don't define kingdom citizenship.

It is dikaiosynē (righteousness—right standing with God, Romans 1:17), eirēnē (peace—reconciliation with God and others, 5:1), and chara (joy—Spirit-produced delight, Galatians 5:22). All three are en pneumati hagiō (in the Holy Spirit)—Spirit-generated, not self-produced. Paul relativizes disputable matters: don't major on minors (diet) while neglecting majors (righteousness, peace, joy). Kingdom priorities demand perspective—what matters eternally versus temporally?

Historical Context

This corrects both Jewish Christians making dietary laws salvific and Gentile Christians despising OT categories. The kingdom Jesus inaugurated transcends external observance (Mark 7:18-19, 'nothing entering defiles'). Pharisees tithed mint and dill while neglecting justice, mercy, faith (Matthew 23:23)—majoring on minors. Paul's triad (righteousness, peace, joy) echoes Isaiah 32:17, 'the work of

righteousness shall be peace.' The kingdom manifests in transformed hearts, Spirit-indwelt lives, reconciled communities—not food codes. This shaped Reformation theology: external rites don't save; only Spirit-wrought faith produces righteousness.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'meat and drink' issues (external, disputable matters) dominate your Christian community at the expense of righteousness, peace, and joy?
2. How do you cultivate the kingdom's true marks—*dikaiosynē*, *eirēnē*, *chara en pneumati*—rather than focusing on externals?
3. What would it look like for your church to prioritize kingdom essentials (Spirit-produced character) over disputable matters (dietary choices, calendar observance)?

Interlinear Text

οὐ	γάρ	ἐστιν	ἡ	βασιλεία	τοῦ	θεοῦ	βρώσις	καὶ
not	For	is		the kingdom		of God	meat	and
G3756	G1063	G2076	G3588	G932	G3588	G2316	G1035	G2532

πόσις	ἀλλὰ	δικαιοσύνη	καὶ	εἰρήνη	καὶ	χαρὰ	ἐν
drink	but	righteousness	and	peace	and	joy	in
G4213	G235	G1343	G2532	G1515	G2532	G5479	G1722

πνεύματι	ἀγίῳ·
Ghost	the Holy
G4151	G40

Additional Cross-References

Romans 15:13 (Holy): Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 6:33 (Righteousness): But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

1 Corinthians 4:20 (Kingdom): For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

Galatians 5:22 (Spirit): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

1 Corinthians 8:8 (References God): But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

Romans 8:6 (Spirit): For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

1 Thessalonians 2:12 (Kingdom): That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Daniel 2:44 (Kingdom): And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

1 Corinthians 6:9 (Righteousness): Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

John 3:3 (Kingdom): Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.