

NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR INDUCTIVE STUDY OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS - PART SIX

The good news has two parts to it. Firstly we can be right before God in heaven because Jesus Christ took the blame for our unrighteousness on the cross, and invites us to receive in exchange His perfect record before His Father. He shed His blood to buy the right to change places with us. Faith accepts His gift and says 'thank you' (chapter 3) Abraham and David illustrate how this is the only way to be right with God.(chapter 4)

The second part of the good news which Abraham also demonstrates to us is that we can receive a new life into us. For Abraham it was his son, Isaac. For us it is God's Son, Jesus. Again as for Abraham, so for us; that life of the son could only be received by faith.

Chapter five develops this second part of the gospel. The first consequence of our salvation is justification, our new condition in heaven, which means we are at peace with God.(5:1) The second result is our experience of His grace right here on earth. We can expect to share in His glory, what He is like, here and now.(5:2) But this will happen against tough conditions as step by step from tribulation we move to perseverance, to proven character and to hope as we experience His love within us because of the presence of His Holy Spirit.(5:3-5)

But why would God bother? The only reason He died for us was because He loves us, not because we deserved it.(5:6-8) Then, for the same reason, He did something even more amazing, He came to live in us to save us daily from the power of sin by His glory inside us.(5:9-11) Reconciliation, being friends with God again, is not just something to look forward to in heaven, it is to be our daily experience on earth.(5:12)

Our life can spring from only two possible sources, Adam or Christ. Adam's sin brought death into the world and was passed on to all of us. The Law just made the problem clearer.(5:13) In some ways Christ was like Adam in that both gave us something.(5:14) There the comparison ends. Adam brought us sin, disobedience, transgression, death, and condemnation. None of us as his descendants can escape. Jesus Christ on the other hand brought us grace, justification, righteousness, obedience and eternal life.(5:15-21) The first was earned, the second was a gift.

Chapter six moves on to tackle an obvious question, why bother? If we already have a perfect standing before God, it does not seem to matter how we live on earth. Traditional religion has always kept society under some control by threatening God's disapproval if we break their rules. Now that threat is removed, why bother to live the Christian life?

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER SIX

6:1 Q.1 In what way does this verse restate the silly excuse of chapter 3:5-8? How do people today still think like this? Why is it so damaging?

6:2 Q.2 What in your own words is Paul's answer? How is he applying the teaching of chapter 5 to this question?

6:3-11 Q.3 What two things does baptism in water represent? What practical effect does each half of this picture have upon us? How does this change the old problem that sin was inevitable?(1:18; 3:9-20,23) What do we have to do to benefit from what baptism represents? What therefore is the baptism by the Spirit all about?(I Cor.12:13)

6:9 Q.4 What difference does it make to us that Jesus died for sin once for all?(Heb.7:27; 9:28) Why does His sacrifice not need to be repeated? How do we often live as if it did need to be repeated?

6:12-14 Q.5 What picture is now used to describe the choice we make every day of our lives? What are the results of this choice?

6:15,16 Q.6 What is the third illustration Paul uses to explain what happened to us when we became Christians? Why is it a contradiction for Christians to go on sinning? What is the real problem when we do?

6:17,18 Q.7 What did we do when we became Christians which should forever change our behaviour?

6:19,20 Q.8 What are we therefore to do daily if sin is not to continue to be a problem for us?

6:21-23 Q.9 What have we lost sight of if we choose to go on sinning? What is the meaning of sanctification? Doesn't our good behaviour earn us eternal life?

6:1-23 Q.10 How in practical terms can understanding what this chapter means change our daily lives?