

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

Having been made right with God in heaven, justified, by the death of Jesus Christ, the second half of the good news is that we can be right on earth in the way we live by the life of Christ in us as the Holy Spirit.(Chapter 5) The old life does not suit us anymore.(Chapter 6) We do not have to try to please the Law, our old 'husband', because we are now 'married' to Jesus who enables us to be what we long to be.(Chapter 7) But the big question remains - how does this work in practice? Chapter 8 provides a superb and simple answer.

The Holy Spirit has set us free from our old slavery to sin to live as He wants.(8:1-4) Our old problem was not what we did, it was what we thought. The solution therefore is a new mind because with a new way of thinking comes a new way of behaving. The Spirit who has come to live within us has given us a new mind, His mind. He in us will think the thoughts of God and behave accordingly.(8:5-8) The important question is - does the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, Christ Himself, the Spirit of the Father dwell in us or not? If He does, we have His mind. If He does not, we are not even Christians. Five different titles are used here to describe the Lord living in us not because there are five different Spirits of God but to make it quite clear that these are all different ways of describing the one Lord.(8:9-11)

Our response is to be the one described in chapters 6 and 7; reckoning ourselves dead with Jesus at the cross to our old minds and the way of living they produced. His mind in us will now guide our lives by giving us a sense of belonging to His family by adoption, with all His resources available to be drawn on.(8:12-17) This new way of thinking will change the way we think about the present suffering of our bodies and our world. They are only temporary and will be replaced with a new life of which His mind in us is a foretaste. He keeps us looking beyond the present problems.(8:18-25)

His mind in us will also change the way we pray. Instead of me telling God from my mind what I think He ought to do, His mind will share God's view of my world with me and then give me the words to respond back to God. The outcome then will be the very best, exactly what He planned.(8:26-28) Now God's whole plan begins to fit together, drawing in all the ideas we have seen in Romans 1-8. The end result of His mind in us is that we become more and more like Jesus.(8:29,30)

With this new way of thinking we realise we have absolutely nothing to fear from the worst the world can try to do to us. In our thinking we are already with Christ in heaven, so what is the problem?(8:31-34) The realisation which more than anything else will dominate our thinking is that He loves us and nothing and no-one can take us away from Him. That certainty is the basis for facing suffering or persecution of every kind, whether it originates on earth or in hell!(8:35-39)

Before moving on to answer the question, 'What will this look like in real life?' in chapter 12, Paul pauses to deal with some basic issues we have about whether in all this God is just. Each of the next three chapters deals with a different part of the question.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER NINE

9:1-5 Q.1 How did Paul feel about his fellow Jews? How could this be so in the light of the way they had treated him? What special privileges had they enjoyed as a people? How had his feelings about them shown in his ministry?(Acts 13,14,17-19)

9:6-13 Q.2 Have all Jews rejected Christ? What two Old Testament examples of believing or refusing to believe does Paul use? Did God choose them or did they choose God? Isn't the question of whether we will become Christians all settled beforehand regardless of us?

9:14-18 Q.3 What is the question about God's justice that this chapter deals with? Didn't God choose Moses and condemn Pharaoh before they were even born? What key word is used here to describe on what aspect of God's character His choosing is based? How does this word give us the secret of answering the question the chapter is about?

9:19-22 Q.4 What now is Paul's illustration to show how God works in our lives? How has this picture already been used in the Old Testament?(Isa.29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jer.18:1-6) Apply this picture to, for example, God choice of Moses or Pharaoh. Was God unjust?

9:23-29 Q.5 If a potter's plans for a lump of clay are not about whether to use it or destroy it, what are they about? What has He planned for each of us? How do the 3 Old Testament examples used here,(Hos.1:10; 2:23; Isa.10:22,23; 1:9) help to confirm this idea?

9:30-33 Q.6 God chose both Jewish and Gentile 'lumps of clay'. On what basis? What therefore has been our great misconception about the justice of God?

9:1-33 Q.7 What has this chapter got to do with real life? Does it matter how and whom God chooses?