

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

More than any other book in the Bible, this letter has changed the course of history. If you have never appreciated it before and you do now, it could change your history.

Romans is Paul's fullest explanation of the Christian message. It was written from Corinth (16:23; I Cor.1:14), probably during the time when Paul returned there in Acts 20:2,3. Paul had not yet visited Rome but he already knew many people who lived there.(16:3-23) He looked forward to coming one day.(1:11-13, 15:22-29) For the moment he could only write a letter and he did it superbly.

Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire with a population of over a million. The Empire had about 100 million people, half the total world population. If Rome caught on to what knowing Jesus Christ was all about, half the world would be affected, and it was.

At an early stage in this study read the whole book through in one session in whatever version you find easiest to read so that you get an overall sense of what Paul was saying. Before each study read the next chapter through several times until you really have confidence that you have grasped the point of that section. I would encourage you to work on the questions alone first, then be prepared to share your answers and your unanswered questions in your group. You will be amazed how you will find others answer your questions as you will be providing answers to theirs.

The book is in four parts:

- Chapters 1-4: how to be right with God in heaven
- Chapters 5-8: how to live right before men on earth
- Chapters 9-11: some important questions answered
- Chapters 12-16: how all this looks in real life

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER ONE

1:1 Q.1 Paul introduces himself. Who was his boss? What was his job? What was his message? What was his relationship with his boss? What did he mean by 'bond-servant'? (Exod.21) What are the main things we know about Paul's life? What is the gospel?

1:2 Q.2 In verses 2-4 we are given three reasons why we can be sure that the gospel is true. What is the first one? Give Old Testament examples of promises fulfilled in the New Testament. How can we use this information to help convince an unbeliever of the truth of the gospel?

1:3 Q.3 What is the second reason for believing the gospel to be true? From whom was Jesus descended? What were the circumstances of His birth? How was He like David? How was He different? How does it help us to know that He was a man?

1:4 Q.4 What is the third reason we know the gospel is true? What is the proof that Jesus is the Son of God? How does it help to know that He is the Son of God? What is holiness? What was the secret of His holiness?

1:5,6 Q.5 Like Paul we have a task; what is it? How are we equipped to do it? Three times Paul talks about our call.(1:1,6,7) Who calls us? Why does He call us and to what? How has He called you?

1:7 Q.6 'Grace' was the Greek greeting and 'peace' the Jewish one. How do these two words sum up the gospel?

1:8-10 Q.7 Paul prayed for the Roman Christians. What did he pray? Why did he thank God first,(1:8) and make request afterwards?(1:10) How could this approach make a difference when we pray?

1:11-12 Q.8 How did Paul see ministry? What did he expect to give? What did he expect to receive? How is ministry today often not like this?

1:13 Q.9 Paul also had struggled at times with God's will. What can we learn from his difficulties? What fruit did he want to obtain?

1:14,15 Q.10 What motivated Paul to preach the gospel? In what way was he in debt to people? Why do we preach the gospel?

1:16,17 Q.11 Why was Paul so confident in preaching the gospel? Why are we so often embarrassed to do this? Verse 17 could be a title for the whole book. Put this verse into your own words.

1:18-20 Q.12 What three reasons does God have for being angry with us? Is it possible according to verse 19 to be an honest atheist? What three things does everyone know about God?

1:21-23 Q.13 Where does unbelief start from? What steps inevitably follow unbelief? How does each step naturally lead to the next one? In what three ways have we 'exchanged' what God created us to enjoy for something else?

1:24-32 Q.14 In what three ways has God consequently 'given over' unbelievers? How does wrong thinking affect our desires,(1:24,25) our relationships,(1:26,27) and our behaviour?(1:28-32) What impresses you most about what the list of wrong behaviour contains and what it omits?

1:15-32 Q.15 If Paul's purpose is to preach the gospel, the good news, why does he first tell us all this bad news?