



### **Background to Paul's letter to the Romans**

Paul wrote to the Romans in around AD57, probably from Corinth. He had not yet visited Rome, but hoped to, on the way to Spain, 15:24. The Roman church had not yet had apostolic teaching, so Paul wrote to tell them the basics of salvation. The Roman church was predominantly Gentile, but must have had some Jews too, precipitating chapters 9-11.

A summary of the structure of Romans might be:

Romans 1-8 – the gospel of salvation by faith in Christ alone

Romans 9-11 – Israel rejects the gospel

Romans 12-16 – practical applications

(from Bolt 1994, p13)

or:

Romans 1:18 – 3:20 – the wrath of God

Romans 3:21 – 8:39 – the grace of God

Romans 9-11 – the plan of God

Romans 12:1 – 15:13 – the will of God

(Stott 2007, p37-41)

### **Bible studies from Romans**

#### **Structure of the studies.**

These studies are designed for a group who are already Christians, but should not exclude people who have not made a profession of faith. You may have to back-track sometimes to re-explain the gospel, in order to help people understand what the letter to the Romans means – the letter was written to Christians, and assumes that the reader understands the basic gospel story.

There are a lot of questions in each study, but you will notice that several of them are simple comprehension questions and should not take more than a couple of minutes. We recommend that you do the study yourself before running it with prisoners, so that you can see which questions are likely to take up more time, and have a good understanding of the answers, and where the study is going.

Each study is designed to last for about 90 minutes. I would suggest a 10 minute break around half-way. If you only have an hour, just do the starred \* questions with no break.

Each study is written out twice, once for leaders (*with a guide to answers*) and once for participants. The studies are laid out in 2 sections:

### **What does the passage say and mean?**

Please don't be put off by the number of questions in a study! These studies contain some comprehension questions – it is important that we understand what the passage literally says. These questions can be taken fairly quickly. Try not to go too deep with them - they just aim to set the background. There are also some deeper questions to help the group to think, and unpack the meaning of the passage. There are some interactive questions, to keep people with short attention spans stay engaged:

**SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING – SDL** – 3 questions that need to be prepared. Write them on flip-chart paper, spaced out so that there is room to write the answer. Prepare enough flip-chart sheets for the group to work in pairs, and provide enough marker pens for them to write their answers. When they are finished, download the answers as a group, with a leader co-ordinating the discussion.

**STICKERS** – Write the question on the top of a flip-chart sheet. Give the group stickers or post-it's and ask them to write the answer to the question on their sticker. Ask them to stick their stickers on the flip-chart. When they are finished, the leader reads out the answers, and then explains the right answer to the group.

**SHOUT-OUT** – Write the question on the top of a flip-chart sheet. Ask the group to suggest answers, and write their answers up, so that they can see the results of their brainstorm. If someone gives an answer that is unacceptably wrong (i.e. not just slightly wrong), don't write it up, but do explain why you are not writing it.

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### **How can I live according to these truths in my life?**

Each study contains with some application questions. These application questions are very important, but should not be tackled without understanding what the Bible says – we cannot apply the Bible to our lives if we have not read and understood it!

These studies were written in 2014 and updated in 2015.

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<http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/the-spirit-led-are-the-sons-of-god>

<http://www.highfieldschurch.org.uk/sermons/> Romans 6:1-14, Pastor Jamie Rasmussen

<https://lumina.bible.org/bible/Romans> (viewed June / July 2014)