

The righteousness of God is also the foundation of Paul's discussion of the problem of Israel (chosen by God yet unwilling to believe in the Messiah) and the basis of normative Christian living (12:1-15, 15:13).

Some Questions:

Why did Paul write several benedictions if not to end the letter? Was Romans to have been a theological treatise which became an epistle by the addition of practical (12-15) concerns? How did the church in Rome begin? Was it an organized church at the time Paul wrote Romans? Did Paul ever go to Spain?

Archaeology

One of the objections to Romans as an epistle is that it is too long to be a letter--it must have been a theological treatise later given the trappings of an epistle. A petition from AD 186, however, is nearly as long as Romans and gives some idea of what Romans must have looked like. It is a scroll, nearly three ~~years~~ ^{feet} long, made up of single column sheets joined at the edges.

Erastus, called Corinth's "Director of Public Works" in 16:23b, is generally identified with the Erastus mentioned on a paving block which had been built by "Erastus, Commissioner of Public Works."

When Paul finally went to Rome (as a prisoner of the Roman Empire) he traveled on the famed Roman roads. Many still exist today, a deep-dug base was covered with concrete into which large blocks of stone were laid.

Keys to Romans:

Some of the more important verses in Romans include Paul's statement of his theme (1:16-17) and the gift of righteousness by faith alone (3:21-26). Two major transitions of thought are indicated by 5:1 and 12:1-2.

Study Tips

Read through Romans in one sitting to grasp the flow and force of Paul's arguments. Read it again in a different version: imagine that you are reading it for the first time. Read about "Rome" and "Romans, Letter of" in a Bible dictionary or encyclopaedia. Now read it again, looking for themes and key words. Write out Paul's explanation of the gospel (1:8-4:25) in your own words. Simplify and shorten it so that you can easily