

13 Outlandish Questions by Paul

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Years ago, I gave a Wednesday-night Bible study titled "13 Outlandish Questions by Paul."

The apostle Paul was a prolific writer. Many of his letters are included in the New Testament of the Bible.

A few of his letters were addressed to specific individuals. However, other of his letters were sent to groups of believers in various cities. In one case (Galatians), the letter was sent to a region (Galatia).

Teaching tool

Whenever a teacher is trying to convey his perspective, he tries to use tools to reach his audience. Effective teachers often use questions in an effort to influence the intended audience to think about the material.

In Paul's letters, we see him using the method of asking questions. Since he is using a letter as his form of communication, he is not expecting a quick response.

In fact, he may not be expecting a response at all. In the modern world, we call this a rhetorical question. When a person is not expecting return communication quickly, he may be asking the question to make his own perspective clearer.

Outlandish questions

In the following 13 examples, Paul asked a question that he thought was an outlandish question.

How do we know that the 13 questions are outlandish?

- In each example, Paul's response (in the King James Version of the Bible) to his own question was "God forbid."
- In the New King James Version, the following phrase is used all 13 times: "Certainly not!"
- In the New American Standard, the following phrase is used all 13 times: "May it never be!"

- In the Revised Standard Version, the following phrases are used: "By no means!" (10 times), "Certainly not!" (two times) and "Never!" (one time).
- In the Moffatt translation, the following phrases are used: "Never!" (12 times) and "Not for one moment!" (one time).

The list of 13

Romans 3:3-4—"For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! . . ."

Romans 3:5-6—"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! . . ."

Romans 3:31—"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! . . ."

Romans 6:1-2—"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! . . ."

Romans 6:15—"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!"

Romans 7:7—"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! . . ."

Romans 7:13—"Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! . . ."

Romans 9:14—"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!"

Romans 11:1—"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! . . ."

Romans 11:11—"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! . . ."

1 Corinthians 6:15—"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!"

Galatians 2:17—"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!"

Galatians 3:21—"Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! . . ."