

INTRODUCTION

Today we will continue our exploration of the major themes presented in Paul's letter to the believers in Rome. There are a total of nine major themes that we will consider, including the major theme of **authorship** that we started with last week. Before we continue, however, let's quickly review a few points from last week.

SESSION 1 REVIEW

1. Three "lenses" through which we can view Paul's letter to Rome:

2. How is faith formed by favor? _____

3. How is faith formed by freedom? _____

MAJOR THEMES (cont'd.)

We pick up where we left off with Session 1...

The Preeminent Jesus (1:1, 4; 3:22, 24, 26; 4:24-25; 6:1-5; 8:3; 10:4)

The word preeminent means 'surpassing all others' and refers to something or someone without peer or equal. One lesson we can learn from this letter is that Jesus is preeminent. Paul is clear about this from the very beginning, and he carries this theme throughout the letter. Jesus Christ comes into focus in every topic discussed. Here is how we recognize the preeminence of Jesus in Romans

The Gospel (1:2, 16; 10:14-17)

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the engine of Paul's message. The Gospel shaped everything Paul had to say, even what he said of himself. The Gospel was Paul's message and his motivation for ministry. For the people of Rome, the Gospel was intended to offer a new belief system (for Jews - 3:21), and a new way of life for everyone (3:22).

- The Gospel is: _____

- The Gospel is necessary because: _____
- The Gospel is given to: _____

Salvation (2:4; 4:22-24; 7:24-25; 10:4, 9-13; 13:11; 15)

Salvation is the product of the Gospel, and just as the Gospel can be heard and received by all, so too can salvation be received by all.

- Salvation means: _____
- Salvation is important/necessary because _____

The Nature of Sin (1:18-32; 2:12; 3:9-18, 22-23; 5:12, 18-20; 8:10-11)

Salvation is necessary because sin is real and it runs deep. Sin has been part and parcel of the human experience since Adam sinned, and the law is intended to address sin within the human experience. But, the law does not have the final word about sin; the final word belongs to Jesus.

Christians, Ethnicity, and Society (1:16; 2:17-24; 3:1-4; 4:1-3; 11:1-32; 13:1-10, 12-14)

What, to the Christian, is more important--one's ethnic identity or one's Christian identity? In an ideal world we would never need to raise this question because the two don't belong in competition with one another. But in Rome and in larger society, this is often the case, and this is Paul's point, precisely. The ways of Rome ≠ Life in Christ.

Righteousness (3:21-26; 4:22; 10:4-6)

Humanity cannot claim righteousness apart from Jesus Christ; the law and the prophets attest to this.

Justification (3:24; 4:25b-5:1-6, 8-11, 16-18; 8:1-2)

Righteousness and justification share similarities, because one (righteousness) reveals the other (justification), and both are products of God's grace.

Transformation: From Flesh to Spirit/New Life (6:6-14, 17-23; 7:4-6; 8:4-9, 29-30; 12:1-2; 14:7-9)

Christianity presented citizens of the Roman empire had a choice to make. They could continue as they had been, or they could embrace the transforming grace of God. This grace was available to them all as God's free gift. But, to really enjoy God's grace one must embrace the new life that God's grace affords.
