

9.1 The Book of Romans

1A. Theme

1B. Competing Views

There are five competing views regarding the theme of Romans; each finds its basis in the chapters of the book listed below:

Five main views	chapters
1) Justification by faith (as Luther)	1-4
2) Union with Christ	5-6
3) The work of the Holy Spirit	7-8
4) The union of Jew and Gentile	9-11
5) Christian duty	12-16

What is wrong with all of these views due to the basis people argue for each?

2B. Definition of a theme

Commonly, people define a theme as a single topic or a heading (as paragraph headings in your English Bibles). What else should we include in the definition of a theme?

If we tried to describe the theme of Romans in one word, what would it be in light of the following passages?

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God (1.1)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (1.16)

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶ but has now been disclosed (16.25-26)

3B. The *theme* of Romans is quite full and somewhat difficult to narrow down. Still, we can state the theme in one word, and then fill it out by adding the information from the other passages in a variety of ways. Thus, how can we summarize the theme of Romans by interfacing the following texts and ideas?

Gospel: 1:1, 16, 16:25-27

Of God: 1:1

About God: 3:5, 3:26

From God: 16:26, 1:17

In history: 1:2, 16:25-27

Concerning Christ: 1:3

Revealing righteousness (not ours but ours)

Received by faith 1:17, 3:21-24

Received by faith that is itself by grace: 1:5-7, 8:29-30

2A. Outline (shape) of the book

1B. How would you outline the book based on taking the following texts as transitional?

1.18; 3.21; 12.1; 15.33

There are two steps to take here: 1) what is the outline as to chapter and verse divisions based on these passages? 2) Once those are in place, what heading might we give to each section?

2B. How might we more sharply refine the conclusion to the book in light of 15.5; 15.13; 15.33 & 16.20b?

3A. Benediction: how might you summarize the fourfold benediction of 15.5; 15.13; 15.33 & 16.20b?

4A. An exhortation from William Tyndale (1534) to the Christian regarding Romans

Forasmuch as this epistle is the principal and most excellent part of the New Testament, and most pure ...and also a *light and a way unto the whole scripture*, I think it meet that every Christian man not only know it by rote but also exercise himself therein evermore continually as with the daily bread of the soul. *No man verily can read it too oft or study it too well: for the more it is studied the easier it is, the more it is searched the more precious things are found in it*, so great treasure of spiritual things lieth hid therein (prologue to Romans in the 1534 edition of the English New Testament, italics mine).