

## Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Session 2

### Introduction, Romans 1

### Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

#### 1. Abstract of Keener, Romans, Session 2, Introduction, Romans 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Craig Keener's course on Romans surveys the book's central theme: **Jewish-Gentile reconciliation in Christ**. Keener explains Paul's argument, showing how Paul establishes the equal lostness of Jews and Gentiles before demonstrating that salvation comes through faith in Christ, not ethnic lineage. He addresses potential divisions within the Roman church stemming from differing interpretations of Jewish law and customs. The lecture also **examines Paul's identity**, exploring evidence for his Roman citizenship and its implications for his ministry and the interpretation of his letters. Finally, Keener connects Paul's message to the broader context of **cultural and racial reconciliation**.

**2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Romans, Session 2 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Romans).**



**Keener\_Romans\_Session02.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

#### Briefing Doc: Romans Introduction and Romans 1:1

**Source:** Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 2 Romans Introduction and Romans 1 :1

#### Main Themes:

- **Jewish-Gentile Reconciliation:** This is the central theme of Romans, culminating in Romans 15 with Old Testament quotations highlighting the coming together of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. Keener argues that the entire book revolves around addressing the divisions between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome.
- **Salvation through Christ Alone:** Keener emphasizes that Paul consistently argues for salvation being accessible to everyone equally through faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of ethnicity or adherence to the law. This is presented as a counter to the prevailing Jewish belief in their exclusive chosenness through Abraham and the law.
- **Paul's Identity and Authority:** Keener meticulously analyzes Paul's self-introduction in Romans 1:1, highlighting his status as a slave of Christ, a called apostle, and one set apart for the Gospel. He explores the implications of these titles, Paul's likely background as a Roman citizen descended from freed slaves, and the significance of his name "Paul."

#### Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Romans 1-3:** Establishes the universality of sin, declaring that everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, is condemned.
- **Romans 4-8:** Demonstrates that salvation comes solely through faith in Jesus Christ, not through ethnicity or law-keeping. Paul uses Abraham as an example of faith preceding circumcision, emphasizing spiritual lineage over physical descent.
- **Romans 9-11:** Addresses the question of Israel's chosenness, arguing that God's sovereignty allows him to choose based on faith, not ethnicity. Paul reassures that God still has a plan for the Jewish people.
- **Romans 12-15:** Focuses on the practical implications of the Gospel for Christian living, urging love, unity, and mutual respect among believers, particularly regarding culturally sensitive issues like food customs and holy days.

- **Romans 16:** Concludes with an exhortation to avoid those who cause divisions and a list of greetings to individuals in the Roman church.

#### Quotes:

- **On the universality of salvation:** "If everyone is equally damned, then everyone has to come to God on the same terms."
- **On Abraham and faith:** "Ethnic descent from Abraham is not what matters so much, at least with regard to salvation...what you need is to be spiritually circumcised, to be spiritually descended from Abraham, to have faith like Abraham did."
- **On God's sovereignty and election:** "God is so sovereign that God can choose on any basis that he wants to. He doesn't have to choose you on the basis of your ethnicity."
- **On the essence of God's law:** "The real heart of God's law...is loving one another."
- **On the theme of Romans:** "The theme of Romans, I believe, is that Jesus is the only way of salvation. But the reason for Romans... is to address Jewish-Gentile division in the church."
- **On Paul's call as an apostle:** "He's a called apostle, a called commissioned one sent by God himself. God initiated this."
- **On Paul as a slave of Christ:** "To be a slave of Caesar sometimes could allow one to wield more power than senators. So, if you're a slave of somebody powerful, you might be in a position of great power. That was certainly how Paul viewed being a slave of Christ."

#### Relevance for Today:

Keener highlights the ongoing relevance of Romans' message for racial, cultural, and ethnic reconciliation in the church and society at large. He challenges believers to follow Jesus' example in crossing boundaries and embracing diversity.

**Note:** This briefing document focuses primarily on the introductory themes and Paul's self-introduction in Romans 1:1. Keener's lecture provides further detailed analysis of subsequent verses in Romans 1, which are not included in this summary.

## Romans: Introduction and Chapter 1 Study Guide

### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Keener, what is the central theme of the Book of Romans?
2. How does Paul argue for the equality of Jews and Gentiles in the context of sin?
3. What does it mean to be a "slave of Christ," according to Paul's self-description?
4. What is the significance of Paul's designation as a "called apostle?"
5. What evidence suggests Paul's Roman citizenship, and what did it allow him to do?
6. What does Paul mean by the phrase "good news?"
7. How does Paul use the example of Abraham in his argument?
8. How does Paul's self-introduction in Romans 1:1 serve his purpose in the letter?
9. What does Keener suggest is the ultimate purpose of the letter to the Romans?
10. According to Keener, how does Romans speak to issues of reconciliation today?

### Quiz Answer Key

1. The central theme of Romans, according to Keener, is the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. This reconciliation addresses the divisions between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome.
2. Paul argues that all people, Jews and Gentiles, are equally lost in sin and are in need of salvation, therefore negating a claim of superiority based on ethnicity or law keeping. This equal footing is key to understanding that salvation is a gift given through faith in Jesus.
3. Paul's self-description as a "slave of Christ" reflects his complete submission to God's will and highlights his role as God's messenger. The designation emphasizes the high honor of serving a powerful and righteous master.
4. Paul's designation as a "called apostle" emphasizes his divine commission from God. It indicates that his ministry was divinely initiated with the special purpose of spreading the Gospel, particularly among the Gentiles.

5. Paul's Roman citizenship is likely derived from his freed-slave ancestors. It provided him with legal rights, which allowed him to appeal to Caesar and enhanced his credibility among Roman believers.
6. The "good news" refers to the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. It encompasses forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the promise of a renewed creation, drawing upon Old Testament prophecies of restoration.
7. Paul uses Abraham as an example of faith preceding the law, arguing that spiritual descent through faith is more significant than physical lineage for salvation. This contrasts with the idea of being "chosen" through ethnic descent.
8. Paul's self-introduction in Romans 1:1 establishes his authority as a divinely commissioned messenger and highlights his commitment to spreading the Gospel. He also emphasizes his unique identity and experiences, strengthening the message for his audience.
9. Keener argues that while the primary theme of Romans is that Jesus is the only way of salvation, the letter's purpose is to address the Jewish-Gentile division within the church in Rome, creating unity.
10. Keener emphasizes that Romans' message of reconciliation speaks directly to contemporary issues of racial, cultural, and ethnic division. It challenges believers to bridge divides and embrace diversity, following the example of Jesus.

## Essay Questions

**Instructions:** Answer each of the following questions in a well-developed essay.

1. How does Paul's self-understanding as a "slave of Christ," "called apostle," and "set apart for the Gospel" contribute to his authority and persuasive power in the letter to the Romans?
2. Explore the ways in which Paul uses the concept of "faith" to undermine the prevalent Jewish belief of ethnic privilege in the context of salvation, as discussed by Keener.
3. Analyze how Keener uses Paul's emphasis on Jewish-Gentile reconciliation in Romans to underscore the ongoing significance of the book for issues of division and reconciliation in contemporary society.

4. How does Keener interpret the structure of Romans (Chapters 1-16) to support his claim that the main purpose of the letter is to address the Jewish-Gentile division in the Roman Church?
5. How does the intersection of Paul's Jewish identity and his Roman citizenship shape his message and mission, according to Keener's lecture?

### Glossary of Key Terms

- **Apostle:** A person commissioned and sent by God, specifically tasked with spreading the Gospel; characterized by signs, wonders, and authority.
- **Called Apostle:** A specific designation emphasizing that one's apostleship was not self-appointed but ordained by God, as in the case of Paul.
- **Faith:** Trust and belief in Jesus Christ as the means of salvation, not based on works or ethnic background.
- **Gentiles:** People of non-Jewish origin or ethnicity.
- **Good News:** The message of salvation through Jesus Christ, which includes forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the promise of a renewed creation.
- **Jewish-Gentile Reconciliation:** The coming together in unity of Jewish and Gentile believers, which is a central theme of Romans.
- **Law (Jewish Law):** The Mosaic Law, the set of rules and commandments given to the Jewish people through Moses. In Romans, it is contrasted with salvation by grace through faith.
- **Roman Citizenship:** The legal status of being a citizen of Rome, which carried with it certain rights, privileges, and legal protections.
- **Slave of Christ:** A designation that signifies complete submission and devotion to Jesus, as well as an elevated position as a representative of a powerful master.
- **Salvation:** Deliverance from sin and its consequences through faith in Jesus Christ, a gift offered to all humanity regardless of ethnic or religious background.
- **Spiritual Circumcision:** A metaphor referring to the spiritual transformation of one's heart through faith in Christ, in contrast to the physical act of circumcision.
- **Universality of Sin:** The doctrine that all of humanity, Jews and Gentiles alike, are subject to sin and are in need of God's grace.

## **5. FAQs on Keener, Romans, Session 2, Introduction, Romans 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Romans FAQ**

#### **Based on Dr. Craig Keener's Lecture 2**

#### **1. What is the main theme of the book of Romans?**

The main theme of Romans is that Jesus is the only way to salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. Paul emphasizes that everyone is equally lost in sin and therefore must come to God on the same terms, through faith in Jesus Christ.

#### **2. How does Paul address the Jewish-Gentile division in the Roman church?**

Paul systematically argues that salvation is not based on ethnicity or adherence to the Law but on faith in Christ. He uses the examples of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to show that God's choice is not limited by lineage. He also highlights that God has a plan for both Jews and Gentiles, ultimately bringing them together in Christ.

#### **3. What are some key examples of Jewish-Gentile reconciliation in Romans?**

Paul provides two main examples. First, he points to Jesus, who, though Jewish, ministered to Gentiles. Second, he highlights his own ministry, collecting offerings from Gentile churches for the Jerusalem church, demonstrating the unity and mutual support between Jewish and Gentile believers.

#### **4. Why does Paul emphasize his status as a "slave of Christ"?**

Paul's use of "slave of Christ" reflects the high honor of serving a powerful master. It emphasizes his complete submission to God's will and his role as God's messenger and representative. This concept also applies to all believers who are called to be "slaves of righteousness" through Christ.

#### **5. What does it mean for Paul to be a "called apostle"?**

Paul's apostleship was not self-appointed but divinely ordained. His call indicates a specific commission from God to break new ground, particularly spreading the Gospel among the Gentiles. Characteristics of an apostle include performing signs and wonders, enduring suffering, and possessing authorization and authority to preach the Gospel.

**6. What is the significance of Paul's Roman citizenship?**

Paul's Roman citizenship, likely inherited from freed slave ancestors, provided him with certain legal rights and status within the Roman world. It allowed him to appeal to Caesar, contributed to his acceptance among Roman believers, and possibly played a role in his interactions with authorities.

**7. What is the "good news" that Paul repeatedly mentions?**

The "good news" refers to the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. It draws upon the Old Testament, particularly Isaiah's prophecies about God's reign, peace, and restoration of Israel. This good news offers forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the promise of a renewed creation, ultimately realized in Christ.

**8. How does Paul connect his personal background and credentials to his message?**

By introducing himself as a "slave of Christ," a "called apostle," and "set apart for the good news," Paul establishes his authority and emphasizes his complete dedication to spreading the Gospel. His Roman citizenship further connects him to his audience and enhances his credibility, especially within the context of the Roman church.



