

## Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Session 16

### Romans 15:29-16:7

### Resources from NotebookLM

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

#### 1. Abstract of Keener, Romans, Session 16, Romans 15:29-16:7, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Craig Keener **explains** Romans 15:29-16:7, focusing on Paul's planned mission to Spain. He **details** Paul's fundraising efforts for the Jerusalem church, **highlighting** the contributions of various Gentile churches and their representatives. Keener **discusses** the significance of this collection as a demonstration of reconciliation between Jewish and Gentile believers. Furthermore, he **introduces** key figures like Phoebe, Prisca and Aquila, and Andronicus and Junia, **analyzing** their roles and contributions to the early church. Finally, he **emphasizes** Paul's respect for women in ministry, contrasting it with societal norms of the time.

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Romans, Session 16 – 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\_Session16.mp3

### 3. Briefing Document

#### Dr. Craig Keener's Lecture on Romans 15:29-16:7: Key Themes and Insights

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and insights from Dr. Craig Keener's 16th lecture on the book of Romans, focusing on chapters 15:29-16:7.

#### Paul's Missionary Vision:

- **Reaching Spain:** This mission represents breaking new ground, as it involves cultural and linguistic barriers (Latin and lack of Jewish connections) not previously encountered by Paul. "Spain would really be breaking new ground for him because of certain cultural and linguistic barriers." (Page 2)
- **Foundation Laying:** Paul aims to establish the gospel in new regions for others to build upon. "Paul's mission was to reach the ends of the earth. It was to lay foundations where foundations hadn't been laid before so that others could build on those foundations and spread the gospel even more." (Page 1)

#### The Jerusalem Collection:

- **Gentile Support:** The collection symbolizes the Gentile churches' commitment to and support for the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. It embodies the concept of reciprocity, acknowledging the spiritual debt owed by Gentiles. "Paul speaks of the obligation of debt, and how the Gentile churches owed it to them." (Page 6)
- **Potential for Reconciliation:** Paul hopes the collection will foster reconciliation between Jewish and Gentile believers. However, scholars debate its reception and impact. "The collection may not accomplish everything Paul hoped for...But it doesn't mean that the offering was rejected." (Page 10)
- **Representatives from various churches:** The presence of representatives from Gentile churches underscores the unified effort and signifies a step toward fulfilling God's promises. "And it would send a message to the Jerusalem church and Jerusalem as a whole that here the Gentiles are coming in. God is fulfilling his promises." (Page 8)

#### The Importance of Prayer:

- **Paul's Constant Requests:** Paul consistently seeks prayer support for his ministry, acknowledging its role in his deliverance and success. "Paul often requests prayer in his letters." (Page 8)

- **Specific Prayer for Jerusalem:** Paul asks for prayer regarding potential trouble from disobedient individuals in Judea. “He also prays that his ministry...will be pleasing...to the saints.” (Page 3)

### **Women in Ministry:**

- **Phoebe's Significant Role:** Phoebe, likely a businesswoman, carries the letter to Rome and is commended for her service and patronage, suggesting a leadership position in the church. “Whatever else it meant, certainly if Paul had recommended her in this way, she could be called upon to explain the letter.” (Page 14)
- **Prisca and Aquila:** This couple is praised for their collaborative ministry and risk-taking for Paul. Prisca being named before Aquila repeatedly suggests her prominence. “Normally, the husband would be named first, but four of the six times in the New Testament, we have Prisca named before her husband.” (Page 17)
- **Recognition and Encouragement:** Paul commends several women for their labor in the gospel, suggesting their active involvement and perhaps a need for extra encouragement in the context of Roman society. “So, in terms of per capita, it would be like commending women like four times as often as men, proportionally speaking. Why? Maybe they needed more encouragement in that culture than the men did.” (Page 19)

### **Theological Significance:**

- **The God of Peace:** Paul's closing wish for the Roman believers emphasizes the importance of peace amidst potential conflict. This theme resonates with the challenges of unity and reconciliation within the diverse Roman church. “May the God of peace be with you all.” (Page 10)
- **Gentiles' Debt to Jews:** The collection for Jerusalem highlights the interconnectedness of Jewish and Gentile believers. It underscores the Gentiles' responsibility to reciprocate the spiritual blessings received from the Jewish community. “If they have ministered to the Gentiles in spiritual matters, then the Gentiles owe them something surely in...material matters, the spiritual being more important than the fleshly.” (Page 6)

**Overall:**

Dr. Keener's lecture provides valuable insights into Paul's mission, the dynamics of the early church, and the important role of women in ministry. He challenges traditional assumptions and sheds light on the complexities of Christian life in the Roman world.

## 4. Romans Study Guide: Session 16, Romans 15:29-16:7

### Romans 15:29-16:7 Study Guide

#### Quiz

1. What were the two main missions Paul discussed in this passage, and what was the order in which he planned to undertake them?
2. Why would the Roman church have felt honored to support Paul's Spanish mission?
3. Explain the significance of Paul "fixing his seal" on the collection for the Jerusalem church.
4. Why does Paul ask the Roman church to pray for him?
5. What evidence does Keener present to suggest that the Jerusalem church did accept the collection?
6. What is the purpose of Paul's letter of recommendation for Phoebe?
7. What clues suggest that Phoebe may have been a businesswoman?
8. Describe the potential significance of Prisca being named before her husband, Aquila.
9. What does the phrase "risk their necks" mean in the context of this passage?
10. What is notable about the number of women Paul commends for their ministry in Romans 16?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Paul's two main missions were the Jerusalem mission and the Spanish mission. He planned to go to Jerusalem first and then to Spain.
2. Supporting Paul would have been considered an honor because hospitality was highly valued in this culture. It was a privilege to assist those on a mission.
3. Paul's "seal" signified his guarantee that the collection would remain untouched and that he would personally oversee its delivery to Jerusalem. This act demonstrated accountability and transparency.
4. Paul asks for prayer because he anticipates facing opposition ("the disobedient") in Jerusalem, highlighting the potential dangers of his mission.

5. Keener argues that the Jerusalem church, having requested support for the poor, wouldn't logically refuse the collection. Refusing a gift was a sign of enmity in that culture.
6. The letter introduces Phoebe to the Roman church, vouches for her character, and requests their hospitality and assistance during her travels.
7. Phoebe's ability to travel, her potential leadership role as a *prostatis*, and her association with the port city of Cenchreae all suggest she may have been involved in business.
8. Naming the wife before the husband in this context likely indicates that Prisca held a higher social status, either generally or within the church community.
9. "Risk their necks" is an idiom that signifies putting oneself in danger, potentially facing death. It emphasizes the extent to which Prisca and Aquila supported Paul.
10. Paul commends women for their ministry proportionally more often than men, suggesting he valued their contributions and recognized their significance despite the cultural limitations they faced.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze Paul's motivations for undertaking the Spanish mission. Consider the challenges he anticipated and the significance of this mission for spreading the Gospel.
2. Discuss the importance of the collection for the Jerusalem church, exploring its practical implications and its symbolic meaning in the context of Jewish-Gentile relations within the early Christian community.
3. Evaluate the role of Phoebe in the Roman church. Analyze the evidence for her social standing, her potential ministry activities, and her significance as a carrier of Paul's letter.
4. Compare and contrast the ministries of Prisca and Aquila with those of other individuals mentioned in Romans 16. Explore how their work exemplifies the diverse contributions of individuals within the early church.
5. Analyze the significance of Paul's commendation of women in ministry in Romans 16. Consider the cultural context, the potential challenges these women faced, and the implications of their contributions for understanding the role of women in the early church.

## Glossary of Key Terms

**Cenchareae:** One of the port cities of Corinth, located on the eastern side of the Isthmus of Corinth. Known for its mercantile activity.

**Deacon (*diakonos*):** A term used in the New Testament to describe someone who serves or ministers. The specific role of a deacon in the early church is debated, but it often involved practical service and ministry.

**Diaspora:** The dispersion of Jews outside of the land of Israel.

**First Fruits:** A term used metaphorically in the Bible to refer to the first converts of a particular region or group.

**Fellow Worker (*synergos*):** A term used by Paul to describe his close colleagues in ministry. These individuals often traveled with him, assisted with his work, and shared in his mission.

**Hospitality:** A highly valued practice in the ancient world, particularly within the early Christian community. Involved welcoming strangers, providing food and lodging, and offering support.

**Jerusalem Mission:** Paul's planned journey to Jerusalem to deliver the collection from Gentile churches to the church in Jerusalem.

**Letter of Recommendation:** A common practice in the ancient world, used to introduce an individual to someone in another location, vouch for their character, and request assistance or hospitality.

**Patron (*prostatis*):** A benefactor or sponsor, particularly one who provides financial or practical support. In the context of Romans 16, Phoebe may have acted as a patron by hosting a house church.

**Spanish Mission:** Paul's ambitious plan to travel to Spain to preach the Gospel and establish new churches.

**Temple Tax:** A half-shekel tax paid by adult Jewish males throughout the Roman Empire to support the upkeep of the temple in Jerusalem.

## 5. FAQs on Keener, Romans, Session 16, Romans 15:29-16:7, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### FAQ: Paul's Letter to the Romans (15:29-16:7)

#### 1. What were Paul's mission plans after writing Romans?

Paul intended to travel to Jerusalem with a collection for the poor, then visit Rome on his way to a groundbreaking mission in Spain. He saw Rome as a cultural bridge to the Western Mediterranean, where Rome held influence. He believed the Roman church could support his Spanish mission, especially considering their shared language (Latin).

#### 2. Why was Spain a challenging mission field for Paul?

Unlike the regions where Paul had previously ministered, Spain lacked established Jewish communities or synagogues, which Paul typically used as starting points for his ministry. Additionally, Greek was not widely spoken in Spain, forcing Paul to rely on Latin or interpreters, posing a linguistic barrier. This mission represented a significant step outside Paul's comfort zone, culturally and linguistically.

#### 3. What was the significance of the collection for Jerusalem?

The collection was more than just financial aid; it represented a symbolic act of unity and reconciliation between predominantly Gentile churches and the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Paul hoped this gesture would demonstrate the commitment of Gentile believers and provoke his Jewish brethren to embrace the Gospel, furthering its spread.

#### 4. Did the Jerusalem church accept the collection?

While some scholars believe the collection might have been rejected, evidence suggests that it was accepted. Refusing a gift in ancient times implied enmity, which contradicts the Jerusalem church's initial request for Paul to remember their poor (Galatians 2:10). Additionally, the Jerusalem leaders would have been expected to attest to Paul's claims about the collection during his trial, implying their awareness and acceptance.

#### 5. Who was Phoebe and what role did she play?

Phoebe was likely a businesswoman from the port city of Cenchreae, near Corinth. She is commended by Paul as a *diakonos* and *prostatis*, suggesting she was a respected leader, possibly hosting a house church. Paul entrusted her with delivering his letter to the Romans, indicating her trustworthiness and understanding of his teachings. She was likely the first person to explain the letter's contents to the Roman believers.



**6. What significance does Paul's mention of Prisca and Aquila hold?**

Prisca and Aquila were a couple who had worked closely with Paul in Corinth and Ephesus. Notably, Prisca's name often appears before her husband's, suggesting her prominent role, possibly due to higher status within the church. Paul describes them as "fellow workers" (*synergos*) who even risked their lives for him, highlighting their dedication to the ministry and their importance to the early Christian movement.

**7. What can we learn about the role of women in ministry from Romans 16?**

Romans 16 features several prominent women, including Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, and Junia. Notably, Paul commends women for their ministry proportionally more often than men in this chapter. This suggests their active and crucial contributions to the early church despite the prevailing cultural limitations on women's public roles.

**8. What controversy surrounds the mention of Andronicus and Junia?**

Andronicus and Junia, Jewish believers who predated Paul's conversion, are described as "outstanding among the apostles." This raises questions about Junia's role. The debate centers on the interpretation of "apostle" and whether it signifies a leadership position equivalent to the twelve apostles. Some believe this indicates Junia held a significant authoritative role within the early church.