

## **Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Session 17**

### **Romans 16:7-20**

### **Resources from NotebookLM**

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

#### **1. Abstract of Keener, Romans, Session 17, Romans 16:7-20, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Craig Keener's lecture** on Romans 16:7-20 discusses the roles of women in early Christianity, specifically addressing the interpretation of Junia as a female apostle. He examines biblical passages mentioning women prophets and ministers, contrasting them with verses seemingly restricting women's roles in the church. Keener explores varying interpretations of these texts, considering cultural context and historical church practices. He ultimately argues for a broader understanding of women's ministry in the early church, acknowledging the diversity of views among Christians on this issue. Finally, the lecture concludes with a discussion of false teachers and warnings against them, referencing the importance of adhering to apostolic teaching and avoiding deceptive rhetoric.

#### **2. 25 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Romans, Session 17 – 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).**



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ssion17.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Craig Keener's lecture on Romans 16:7-20:

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Craig Keener on Romans 16:7-20**

**Source:** Excerpts from "Keener\_Romans\_EN\_Lecture17.pdf" (Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 17, Romans 16:7-20)

**Date:** 2024

#### **Overview:**

This lecture focuses on Romans 16:7-20, delving into the significance of the individuals Paul greets and the broader implications of his remarks on women in ministry, the structure of house churches, and warnings against false teachers. Keener pays particular attention to the historical and cultural context of the letter to illuminate these passages.

#### **Main Themes & Key Ideas:**

##### **1. Junia the Apostle (v. 7):**

- **Significance:** Keener argues that Junia was indeed a woman apostle, alongside Andronicus.
- **Linguistic Analysis:** He refutes the idea that Junia is a male name (Junias), noting that "Junia" was consistently a woman's name in ancient texts, and the contraction from "Junianus" to "Junias" is not linguistically valid.
- **Broader Definition of Apostle:** Paul does not limit the term "apostle" to the twelve disciples. He uses it for himself, James, Silas, Timothy, and others. This suggests a broader understanding of the term for those with a specific ministry/calling. "For Paul, it's a larger group than the 12."
- **Circular Reasoning:** Keener points out the circular logic in denying Junia's apostleship based on the presupposition that women cannot be apostles: "...we have no reason to reject her as being an apostle in the Pauline sense, unless we're starting with the premise that a woman can't be an apostle. In which case we may be assuming what we were claiming to be proving because it's kind of circular in that case."
- **Supportive Evidence:** Even John Chrysostom, in a period when women's activities were more restricted, recognizes Junia as an apostle.

## 1. Women in Ministry (General):

- **Commendation:** Paul commends women more than men in Romans 16, which is not unique to this chapter. "...he commends twice as many of the women as the men."
- **Biblical Precedents:** Keener highlights examples of women in the Old Testament holding significant roles, including prophets like Miriam, Huldah, and Deborah, and in the New Testament, such as Anna and Philip's daughters who prophesied. He also cites women mentioned as 'fellow workers' and 'diakonos' (Phoebe).
- He notes that the prophecy of sons and daughters prophesying in Joel and quoted in Acts 2 shows that prophesying is not restricted to men.
- **Prophetic Speech:** He discusses 1 Corinthians 11, noting that women are allowed to pray and prophesy in the church as long as their heads are covered.
- **1 Corinthians 14 & 1 Timothy 2:** These passages that seem to suggest that women must keep silent are difficult to reconcile with the passages showing women in ministry. Keener proposes that the silence in 1 Cor 14 is likely referring to interruptions with questions during teaching, particularly by unlearned women. For 1 Tim 2, the false teachers were targeting women.
- **Diversity of Views:** Keener acknowledges that Christians hold differing views on women in ministry. He does not want to restrict the ministry of women, saying he sees "more cultural influence here on some points."

## 1. House Churches & Cultural Context:

- **Mixed Setting:** House churches were a unique setting, being both private and public.
- **Cultural Norms:** In some, more conservative cultures, women were not expected to speak publicly in the presence of other women's husbands. Inspired speech, though, was seen as an exception to those rules.
- **Gender Progressiveness:** Rome and Philippi (two places where women are prominently mentioned in Paul's letters) were more gender-progressive cities in the Roman Empire, suggesting a connection between cultural acceptance and women's involvement in ministry. "Is it possible that more women would pursue ministry where their ministries would be more affirmed, where their ministries would be more welcomed?"

## 1. Individuals in Romans 16:

- **Slave Names:** Many people mentioned had common slave names like Ampliatus and Urbanus, possibly freed persons who had moved to Rome. "If Paul met them in the Eastern Mediterranean, probably these were freed persons which would explain how they could move to Rome."
- **Aristobulus' Household:** This was prestigious, as Aristobulus was a prince from the line of Herod the Great.
- **Powerful Slaves & Freedmen:** Slaves of powerful people, like the household of Narcissus, could themselves wield considerable wealth and influence, and freed slaves of important figures like Caesar often had considerable power. Keener notes that Narcissus, Claudius' freedman secretary had 400 million sesterces, a massive sum.
- **Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis:** These women's names are mentioned together, suggesting that they were sisters or even twins. Persis, a rare name, often belonged to slaves or freedwomen from Persia, suggesting that she might have been a slave or freedwoman from Central Asia.
- **Rufus and His Mother:** Paul speaks of Rufus's mother as "also my mother", which is fictive kinship language, showing a close bond. Keener raises the possibility that Rufus was the son of Simon of Cyrene, mentioned in Mark 15:21.
- **Nereus and his sister:** Paul mentions Nereus and his sister, but does not name the sister.

## 1. Greetings & Holy Kiss:

- **Custom:** Kisses were a standard form of greeting in the culture, but it was important for Paul to specify a "holy kiss". "...it was normally a light kiss, not a passionate kiss." This practice was later limited to same-gender interaction in the church.
- **Unity:** The holy kiss is meant to promote unity and reconciliation.

## 1. Warnings against False Teachers (vv. 17-18):

- **Division & Stumbling Blocks:** Paul warns against those causing division and stumbling blocks. He cites Romans 14 and 15 as relevant chapters, as well as potential false teachers in Philippians 3:2.

- **Apostolic Teaching:** The standard to recognize false teaching is the teaching they already received, the apostolic message. "The apostolic message, the apostolic teaching. Paul hasn't been there to give them a lot of it, although he has given them a lot of it in his letter."
- **Slaves of their Bellies:** False teachers are described as "slaves of their bellies," meaning they are self-indulgent and prioritize their desires. This is not just limited to gluttony, but any kind of self-indulgence and not being interested in something higher than themselves.
- **Tricky Rhetoric:** False teachers use deceptive rhetoric, with smooth and persuasive speech (crestologia) and flattering praise (eulogia), exploiting their audience's desires.
- **Deceitful:** Keener likens the deceptive nature of sin in Romans 7 to that of the false teachers in Romans 16.

#### 1. **Encouragement to the Romans (v. 19-20):**

- **Obedience:** Paul commends the Romans for their obedience, noting that it is known by all. This is a key theme of the letter. Keener uses the example of a fire to show the relationship between belief and action.
- **Reversal of Adam:** The Romans are encouraged to be wise in what is good, but innocent in what is evil, which is like Adam and Eve before the fall.
- **Triumph over Satan:** God will soon crush Satan under their feet, alluding to Genesis 3:15, where the seed of the woman will crush the serpent and connecting that to Christ as the new Adam.
- **Satan's Role:** Keener touches on the common Jewish understanding of Satan as an accuser, tempter, and deceiver.
- **Satan's Methods:** Satan has a range of methods including false prophets, signs, deceptive wonders, and even working through people. Keener touches on examples of this found in multiple epistles.

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Keener's lecture provides a rich and detailed analysis of Romans 16:7-20. He unpacks the cultural and historical contexts to show a more nuanced understanding of the passage, challenging traditional views and providing a thought-provoking picture of the early church. The lecture highlights the importance of understanding the social structures of the time, the roles of women, and the ever-present danger of deceptive teachings.

This detailed summary should provide a solid overview of Dr. Keener's key points. Let me know if you need anything else!

## 4. Romans Study Guide: Session 17, Romans 16:7-20

### Romans 16:7-20 Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the significance of Junia being called an "apostle" in Romans 16:7, and what does this indicate about the term "apostle" in Paul's writings?
2. According to Keener, how does Paul's use of the term "apostle" differ from its use in the Gospels and Luke-Acts?
3. Name three women in the Old Testament who are mentioned as speaking for God in a prophetic way, and what is the significance of these examples?
4. What are the two main arguments that are typically raised from scripture against women taking leadership roles in the church and how does Keener respond to these arguments?
5. What is the context in which women were told to "keep silent in the churches," and what is Keener's interpretation of these passages in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2?
6. What were some of the cultural reasons that women may have been told to remain silent in the church?
7. What is significant about the inclusion of Ampliatus and Urbanus in Paul's greetings in Romans 16:8-9 and what does it reveal about the early church?
8. How does Keener explain the common practice of referring to people with the name of the household in which they lived and what does this practice suggest about Roman culture?
9. What is the significance of Paul's statement about the Roman Christians' obedience in Romans 16:19, and how does it relate to other themes in the letter?
10. How does the promise of crushing Satan under the feet of believers in Romans 16:20 connect with the theme of the reversal of Adam, and what does it suggest about the nature of evil?

## Quiz Answer Key

1. Junia being called an apostle suggests that the term "apostle" in Paul's writings extends beyond the original 12 disciples, encompassing a larger group of leaders; this recognition of Junia as a female apostle challenges the view that only men were considered apostles.
2. In the Gospels and Luke-Acts, the term "apostle" usually refers to the 12 disciples of Jesus, but Paul uses the term more broadly for others like himself, James, and potentially Silas and Timothy, indicating a wider group of recognized messengers of Christ.
3. Miriam, Huldah, and Deborah are mentioned as prophetic women who spoke for God, demonstrating that women held positions of spiritual leadership and authority in the Old Testament.
4. The main arguments against women's leadership roles are found in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, where they are instructed to remain silent, but Keener interprets these passages as addressing specific cultural situations rather than as blanket prohibitions on women speaking or leading.
5. The context of these passages, especially in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, suggests they are addressing specific situations of women interrupting gatherings with unlearned questions and false teaching being spread among untrained widows; Keener argues these commands should not be interpreted as a general prohibition on women speaking or teaching in church settings.
6. Cultural reasons for women's silence in churches may include conservative Greek customs where women were not expected to speak openly, the potential for causing others to stumble in mixed settings, and a shortage of education among women which left them vulnerable to false teaching.
7. The inclusion of Ampliatus and Urbanus, both common slave names, suggests that the early church was a diverse community with members from all social classes, including slaves and freedmen, who were accepted into ministry positions.
8. Referring to people with the name of their household, such as "the household of Aristobulus" or "the household of Narcissus," was a common practice indicating social connections and the level of prestige associated with certain families and individuals of power in Roman culture.



9. Paul's statement about the Roman Christians' obedience in Romans 16:19 is significant as it reaffirms the practical outworking of their faith and highlights obedience as an essential aspect of Christian life, tying back to previous discussions about faith and obedience in the letter.
10. The promise of crushing Satan under their feet in Romans 16:20 echoes the promise in Genesis 3:15 where Eve's seed will crush the serpent, symbolizing the ultimate triumph over evil through Christ, and reversing the effects of the fall.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Paul's greetings in Romans 16, focusing on the various individuals and groups mentioned. What do these greetings reveal about the social makeup and structure of the early church in Rome? How do these greetings provide clues to Paul's broader message and purpose in the letter?
2. Analyze Dr. Keener's arguments about women in ministry, contrasting the examples of female leaders and prophets he mentions with the passages that restrict women's roles. How does he interpret the seemingly contradictory evidence, and what conclusions does he draw? Do you agree or disagree with his conclusions and why?
3. Explore the theme of unity in Romans 16. How does Paul address potential divisions and false teachers within the church, and what measures does he take to promote reconciliation and unity? How does he link the issue of divisions with teachings about faith, obedience, and the victory over sin and evil?
4. Examine the concept of "slavery to the belly" (Romans 16:18) and deceptive rhetoric in the context of the cultural and philosophical ideas of the time. How does Paul use these ideas to warn against false teachers, and what are some of the ways in which these concepts remain relevant today?
5. Discuss the role of Satan and demonic forces in Romans 16:20. How does Paul's understanding of spiritual warfare influence his encouragement of the Roman Christians and how does it relate to his view of the ultimate triumph over evil?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Apostle:** In the context of Paul's writings, a term not exclusively limited to the original twelve disciples of Jesus, but also used for individuals who are sent by Christ with a special mission or authority to proclaim the Gospel.
- **Diakonos:** A Greek word that can mean "servant," "deacon," or "minister," used in the New Testament to describe various types of ministry; it is not restricted by gender.
- **Sunergos:** A Greek term meaning "fellow worker" or "co-laborer" used by Paul to describe individuals, including women, who partnered with him in ministry.
- **Fictive Kinship:** A social construct where people are treated as family members despite not being biologically related; it was used in early Christian communities to express strong bonds of affection and loyalty.
- **Kerygma:** The core message or proclamation of the Gospel, centered on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the call to faith and repentance.
- **Didache:** The teachings or doctrines passed down from the apostles, forming the foundation of Christian belief and practice.
- **Crestologia:** Smooth, plausible, and seemingly sophisticated speech used to deceive and persuade; often associated with false teachers.
- **Eulogia:** Eloquent, flattering speech used to win over an audience and lead them astray; a deceptive form of rhetoric.
- **Metonymy:** A figure of speech in which something is referred to by the name of something associated with it; for example, "slaves to their bellies" implies any form of self-indulgence, not just gluttony.
- **Polytarchs:** The name given to city officials in Thessalonica. The term refers to a specific kind of magistrate or leader.

## 5. FAQs on Keener, Romans, Session 17, Romans 16:7-20, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on Romans 16:7-20 and Related Themes

1. **Who were Andronicus and Junia, and why are they significant?** Andronicus and Junia are identified in Romans 16:7 as being "outstanding among the apostles." While some have argued that "Junia" might be a male name ("Junias"), textual and historical evidence overwhelmingly shows that Junia was a woman's name. This suggests that Paul recognized Junia as an apostle, expanding the definition of "apostle" beyond the traditional Twelve. This challenges the notion that women were excluded from leadership roles within the early church. Paul's usage of the term "apostle" is more expansive than in the Gospels and Luke-Acts, applying it to others like himself and James. This shows the term was not limited to the 12 original disciples of Jesus.
2. **How did Paul's view of women in ministry compare to cultural norms?** Paul's inclusion of women like Junia as apostles and Phoebe as a "diakonos" (minister or deacon) in Romans 16, along with other women mentioned in Philippians 4 and elsewhere, suggests that Paul's view was more progressive than many of his contemporaries. While the culture of the time, especially in Greek regions, often limited women's public roles, Paul recognized and affirmed the ministries of women who served alongside him. He also acknowledges the roles of women in prophetic speech, and that this ability is not limited by gender.
3. **What are the key issues surrounding the passages in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy that seem to restrict women's roles?** The passages in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, which discuss women remaining silent in churches, are complex and have been interpreted in various ways. Dr. Keener suggests that the silence in 1 Corinthians 14 might be referring to disruptive questioning during services rather than a prohibition on all speaking, including singing or prophesying, and that the prohibitions are situation-specific rather than universally applicable. The restrictions in 1 Timothy 2 may be related to false teachers specifically targeting women who were often less trained in doctrine and more susceptible to misinformation. There are a range of interpretations by scholars on this topic.

4. **How did the social context of Rome influence the roles of women in the church there?** Rome, along with Philippi, was one of the more gender-progressive areas in the Roman Empire. This environment seems to have allowed women more opportunities to participate in ministry, and perhaps even influenced the higher proportion of women commended by Paul in Romans 16. It may be that women pursued ministry more readily where their contributions would be better welcomed.
5. **How does Paul address issues of division and false teaching in Romans 16?** Paul warns the church in Rome about divisive and exploitative teachers. He identifies them by characteristics like being "slaves of their bellies," which denotes self-indulgence and greed, and by using "tricky rhetoric" to deceive and exploit others. He emphasizes the importance of adhering to the teaching the church had already received to be able to recognize false teachings. He urges them to be wise in what is good, and innocent of evil.
6. **What does Paul mean when he says believers should be "wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil"?** This phrasing in Romans 16:19 echoes the innocence of Adam and Eve before the fall. Paul urges believers to pursue a deep understanding of what is good, while remaining unacquainted with evil on an experiential level. This ties into the broader idea of living in obedience and focusing on the positive aspects of faith rather than dwelling on sin or engaging with harmful influences. It also emphasizes the importance of recognizing and resisting harmful things, but not necessarily in experience.
7. **What is the significance of Paul's statement that "God will soon crush Satan beneath your feet"?** This statement in Romans 16:20 alludes to Genesis 3:15, where God promises that the seed of the woman will crush the serpent (often equated with Satan). Paul frames this promise as something that the Roman Christians will participate in, rather than it being exclusively a future or messianic event. This connects their obedience to the ultimate victory over evil and sin that was promised in scripture, giving them agency to live that victory out. He also relates this to ideas that Satan is an accuser and a deceiver. He uses the term "satan" in other places to describe things from a lack of self control, to messengers of persecutors and opponents.

8. **How does Paul use the idea of slavery in Romans 16, and how does it relate to other ideas in the letter?** Paul uses the concept of slavery both literally and metaphorically. In Romans 16, he identifies false teachers as slaves of their bellies, indicating a submission to base desires. This contrasts with his earlier teachings in the letter about being slaves to God, which represents obedience, righteousness, and spiritual freedom from sin. He is making a distinction between two different ways to live. He also connects this idea of being a slave to things to the idea of being a stumbling block for others and causing harm to the Body of Christ. He is encouraging believers to be discerning.