

Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 2

Romans Introduction and Romans 1 :1

© 2024 Craig Keener and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session 2 Romans Introduction and Romans 1:1.

In the previous session, we discussed some possible background for Romans and also some of the discussions that take place about Paul, ancient letters, ancient rhetoric, and about Romans.

On this occasion, we are going to be surveying the book of Romans in light of some of that background. There's a theme that builds through Romans, it kind of climaxes in 1505 with quotations from scripture in the Old Testament. And this theme of Jewish Gentile tension or reconciliation was recognized as early as its origin.

In 2815 of Acts, you have two different groups of Christians who visit Paul at different times. And it could simply be that they had different work schedules, they were able to get off at different times. But it's sometimes been suggested that these were two different factions in the church.

Others have suggested that there were even more than two factions. But we don't actually know that it was a Jewish group and a Gentile group, but there were those with certain pro-law proclivities and those who were more comfortable just being Gentile followers of Jesus. But certainly, there's some sort of issue here.

For example, in Romans chapter 10, verses five through 13, why quote the Old Testament so much in this passage? Well, in 10, 11 to 13, scripture says, anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame. Verse 13, everyone who calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. Well, we probably expect the key terms in such verses to be something like the name of the Lord or saved.

But what Paul is linking the texts together on is based on saying everyone, anyone in Greek, these are the same. And in the intervening verse, he says, there's no difference between Jew and Gentile because Jesus is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call upon him. So, the "all" seems to point to this difference between Jew and Gentile.

That's also the case in 1:16. 1:16 and 1:17 seem to give the thesis statement of the book or some scholars will say the thesis statement of the first part of the book. I'm not ashamed of the gospel, the good news, because it's God's power for salvation for everyone who believes first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. Why is Paul

emphasizing this point? Well, if we survey the book fairly quickly, Romans chapter one, the Gentiles are damned.

It doesn't seem like a very pleasant way to start a letter, right? But that's verses 18 through 32 seem to have the main thrust of emphasizing the lostness of the Gentiles. Romans chapter two, the Jewish people are also damned. And Romans chapter three, he pleasantly summarizes, everybody's damned.

That's probably not the kind of letter you want to write home. But in any case, if everyone is equally damned, then everyone has to come to God on the same terms. So, in Romans chapter four, he's dealing with the other side of it about salvation.

Jewish people believe that they were saved because they were descendants of Abraham. And they emphasized that this was clear because they had the covenant of circumcision. But Paul points out that ethnic descent from Abraham is not what matters so much, at least with regard to salvation.

It doesn't make it that what you need is to be spiritually circumcised, to be spiritually descended from Abraham, to have faith like Abraham did. Besides, whoever is descended from Abraham, all of us are descended from Adam. Paul makes that point for anybody who wants to keep insisting, no, we're better.

We're descended from Abraham. He deals with that in 5:12 through 21. And then the thought of 5:12 through 21 carries on into chapter six, because he calls us to put off the old person.

The old person is who we were in Adam, as opposed to who we are in Christ. Jewish people believe that the law made them special. They felt that most Jews usually kept all 613 commandments as they counted them, or at least came to count them at some point in the Torah.

But most of those wicked Gentiles couldn't even keep the seven commandments that God gave to Noah. Or in this period, we're not sure exactly when they started counting them as seven, but the commandments that God gave to Noah and the commandments the person had to keep to show that they were righteous Gentiles. But in Romans chapter seven, Paul responds, I used to be alive apart from the law, but the commandment brought me death.

The problem was not the law, but me. I'm a creature of flesh. I need God's spirit.

Well, the rabbi said that the Torah gave power to overcome sin. Philosophers spoke of a struggle between reason and passion. Jewish people spoke of a struggle between the Yetzirah, the evil impulse, and the Yetzira hotov, the good impulse.

We're not quite sure when the good impulse came, but certainly, in this period, they were talking about the evil impulse and the Torah could give them the power to overcome that. Diaspora Jews also spoke of that, but I should save some of this for later when I go through it in more detail. They said that the Torah gave them power against the evil impulse.

Paul said the law informed him about what was right, but it couldn't transform him to be right. In Romans eight, again, he draws on some biblical themes. Jewish people said that God saved them at the Exodus.

In Romans eight, Paul uses some of the same language about lead and adoption and inheritance and redemption and the groaning or sighing because of bondage. He uses some of the same language differently because we have a new form of salvation in the new Exodus that's taken place in Christ. Well, so far, this is what we've seen in Romans chapters one through eight.

Romans chapters one through three, everybody, whether the Jew or Gentile, is equally lost. Therefore, in Romans four through eight, everybody can come to God only the same way, through Jesus Christ. Well, now Paul comes to the heart of his argument, Romans 9 through 11, because Jewish people believe that they were chosen in Abraham.

But Paul said, that not all who are descended from Israel are Israel, nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, it's through Isaac that your descendants will be reckoned. Some scholars like Rudolf Bultmann had thought that chapters 9 through 11 were irrelevant to the point of the book, that they were probably added in from somewhere else, which is very ironic, because today, scholars often view them as the heart of Paul's argument, because he's dealing with the relationship between Jew and Gentile, and therefore the relationship between whether you keep the law or you don't necessarily have to keep the outward parts of the law, though you need to keep the principles.

So Paul comes to the heart of his argument, Romans 9 through 11. How many sons did Abraham have before Sarah died? Well, he had Isaac by Sarah and Ishmael by Hagar. But which one received the promise? Though both were blessed, Isaac was the one who received the promise.

And how many sons did Isaac have? Well, he had two, Jacob and Esau. Which one received the promise? Only Jacob. So, Paul points to this and says, that descent from Abraham is not enough.

You can be descended from Abraham and still not receive the promise. And it's the same way with respect to salvation. Descent from Abraham doesn't save you.

So, when he talks about predestination in Romans nine, starting back in Romans eight, he wasn't speaking of it to try to enter into our modern debate between John Calvin and Jacobus Arminius or any of the other modern debates. Instead, he's responding to the notion of Israel as a people chosen for salvation. And he says, 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. Now, what people will argue about, does he choose us based on a foreknowledge of faith in Christ? Or why does he choose certain people? But that's another question. But in terms of the sweeping, overarching theme of the book, he's dealing with it in terms of the Jewish people saying, we are chosen in Abraham.

And Paul says, with regard to salvation, chosenness isn't based on your ethnicity. But lest we think that he's only lecturing the Jewish Christians, in Romans chapter 11, he begins challenging Gentile Christians as well. He says that God still has a remnant in Israel and still has a plan for his Jewish people to turn to him.

And actually, you Gentiles are just converts to our Jewish faith and heritage anyway. You were grafted into our tree. And it's easier for us to be grafted back in than for you to be grafted in, to begin with.

Paul provokes Israel to jealousy, he says, by initiating the end-time ingathering of the Gentiles. Or at least he hopes it's going to be the end time. He hopes that matters will continue to move in that direction.

And then he believes that the jealousy should bring the Jewish people in, thus Israel as a whole will be saved. Well, this seems to be the climax of the theological point of his argument in terms of how God cares for both Jew and Gentile and how he's reaching out to both Jew and Gentile in Christ. But Paul is a good pastor.

So, after he's laid such theological groundwork in chapters one through 11, he starts preaching. Chapter 12, we've got different gifts, but we are one body. So, we need to serve one another.

Chapter 13, verses eight through 10, don't disobey Romans Gentile authorities in the real heart, that's verses one through seven, but verses eight through 10, the real heart of God's law, if you want to talk about God's law, is loving one another. So regardless of our ethnicity, we need to love our fellow brothers and sisters in Jesus. And now, as preachers sometimes say, Paul goes from preaching to meddling.

He gets to where the rubber meets the road. He's going to address the down-to-earth issues of the kind of things that are really separating people. Remember the things that Romans despised Jewish people for very often in Rome, and we find this often in Roman literature.

Circumcision, food laws, and holy days doesn't mean those were the only things they cared about. Certainly, those weren't the only things that Jewish people cared about as part of the law. But there are reasons why these things come up here in Romans because these were very conspicuous boundary markers.

Romans chapter 14, don't look down on one another's food customs. Don't look down on one another's holy days. This is five and six.

Well, those were two of the three things that Roman Gentiles despised Roman Jews for. You'd already dealt with circumcision back in chapters two and four. And then Romans 15 goes on.

In the very beginning, he's finishing up what he started in Romans 14. And then he has a litany of scripture references about the Gentiles coming into the worship of God, and Jew and Gentile worshipping God together. And this climaxes the theme ultimately, I mean, Paul gives his biblical texts for this, that Jew and Gentile come together in Christ Jesus.

If we miss that theme, we miss the climax of that theme in Romans 15. And then he gives two examples of what we might call Jewish-Gentile reconciliation. Jesus, though he was Jewish, became a minister to the Gentiles.

Paul, a Jewish believer in Jesus, brings the offering from the Gentile churches to the Jerusalem church because he says Gentile believers owe this to them. And then Romans 16 includes one closing exhortation. I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you've learned.

He says a few other things there as well. But when he's speaking about divisions, what kind of division do you think might have existed in the Roman church given the foregoing survey? Well, the theme of Romans, I believe, is that Jesus is the only way of salvation. But the reason for Romans, in terms of why he gives this particular articulation of this in the particular way he does here, why it's the letter to the Romans and not the letter to someone else, is to address Jewish-Gentile division in the church or something related to Jewish-Gentile division in the church.

Therefore, Romans is very helpful in teaching us about ethnic, cultural, and racial reconciliation, as well as teaching us about how we're reconciled to God. If we're all reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, we must all be reconciled to one another as well as brothers and sisters. Well, would this theme have any relevance for preaching today? Within a lot of places.

Sometimes people don't even see it, especially if they're part of the dominant culture. But often there are minority cultures who feel alienated from the mainstream. But when we have believers from multiple cultures, we need to welcome one another hospitably, love one another, serve one another and even go out of our way to cross those boundaries because that's what Jesus did for us.

Incorporating some background now into this survey, Jewish Christians had left Rome. When Paul comes to Corinth, you can see a little bit on the map, this map is probably too small to see it very well, but Corinth is there in the southern part of what we call Greece. And Rome is here.

Aquila and Priscilla had just come from Rome, from Italy, because Emperor Claudius had expelled at least many of the Jewish people from Rome. So, they've settled here in Corinth. Later on, they're going to go to Ephesus, and then eventually they'll come back to Rome.

But by the time Paul writes his letter to the Romans, Romans 16.3, Aquila and Priscilla have come back. So, he meets them in Corinth because they've been expelled. Apparently, Jewish believers as a whole have been expelled, and many other Jewish people perhaps too.

It's not clear that everybody left, but that's another story. But many or most of the Jewish believers in Jesus had left Rome. They recently returned by the time Paul writes Romans, and then that may set the stage for the clash of cultures that you have.

You have these Jewish believers in Jesus who want to follow what they find in the Bible, coming back, finding these believers who have been in an almost entirely Gentile church for at least five years during the period of the expulsion, Claudius' expulsion. They come back and, what's that? It smells like pork on your breath. You can't eat pork.

Leviticus chapter 11. And so, you have these cultural differences. Now it may not break down exactly along Jewish and Gentile lines.

Aquila and Priscilla probably had similar views to Paul. They were Jewish, so was Paul. And you may have had some Gentile believers who, like many God-fearing Gentiles in Rome, were practicing Jewish customs and honoring Jewish customs.

So, it may not break down exactly Jewish and Gentile, but you see how it relates to the overall theme. Now, one brief excursus on Pauline theology before we jump into Romans chapter 1, and we'll do a little bit more on Paul's background in Romans 1.1. But Pauline theology wasn't just a local issue regarding the law. He's got some fundamental issues that had come up elsewhere in his writings, often with the law,

but it depends on the congregation to whom he's writing, more with some than with others.

But fundamental issues of sin and flesh. People are sinful. People need forgiveness.

People need reconciliation to God. And so you have it portrayed in different ways, in different parts of Paul's writings. Justification, forensic model.

You have reconciliation, a relational model. You have moved from darkness to light. You have moved from death to life.

You have been born of the Spirit, Galatians 4. You have so many different ways of conceptualizing what God has done, all of them true, but all of them presuppose that people go from one state to another state and that the transition is through Christ, that it's through Christ we come to God. We come to be on God's side instead of just going our own way as if we're autonomous from God, which leads ultimately to eternal autonomy from God, which is not a good thing. So salvation is by depending on Christ, not on our own ability.

That's not just Romans. That's at least presupposed everywhere in Paul. And it fits Paul's other themes about dependence on Christ.

I mean, how can we do righteousness? Well, we bear the fruit of the Spirit. God lives inside of us. God's Spirit has come to bear that fruit.

How can we minister? Well, God gifts us by his Spirit or gifts us by his grace. In other words, everything is the gift of God. We depend on God for everything, starting with conversion and going through everything that we can do for God.

So, God gets the credit. God gets the glory because he's at work in our lives. Well, there has been some discussion about how much we focus on the local issues and how much we focus on the universal issues, how much we focus on background, how much we focus on theology.

Most scholars recognize we should do both. But some have contrasted some of the new perspectives, like Dunn's focus on boundary markers. James D.G. Dunn's focus on boundary markers, circumcision, food laws, and holy days, versus Luther, who was seeing a more general principle of justification by faith.

Now, Luther was dealing with the issues of his day. He was contextualizing issues of his day where he was reacting against the medieval church and excesses in his day. Dunn was trying to focus on the cultural background, but Dunn today says he agrees with Luther's larger principle that, yes, it's Christ who delivers this.

It's not just these boundary markers. But he was simply looking concretely at how it was expressed then. So, in any case, we can learn a lot from a lot of different commentaries and commentators on Romans.

Dunn is a very good one in his word biblical commentary. Another good commentary is Jewett. His Fortress commentary is very good. Moo is excellent.

Schreiner is excellent. You have just a plethora of good resources on Romans, perhaps partly because Romans has had such an impact on people that people like to explore it, and sometimes also because of issues of debate. Now, none of these commentators agree with each other on every point, but you just take that into account.

Dunn, for example, sees Romans 7 as the Christian life. The others do not, as I've mentioned. I wrote a very short commentary on Romans, and that is why I get to do this course because I wrote a commentary on Romans, but it's not on the level of Dunn or Jewett or Mu or Schreiner or a number of others who go into such detail, grammatical detail, and citing all the authors who hold all the different views.

This is more along the lines of a survey. But having said that, we can now begin with Romans chapter 1. Romans chapter 1, well, if we go in order, Romans chapter 1, the first verse is verse 1, and it treats a number of different issues there. First, it names the sender which was standard in ancient letters.

The sender's name is Paul, and Paul was a slave, sorry, Paul is a slave of Christ Jesus, a slave of the gospel, and he's a called apostle, kletos apostolos, apostolos, and he's also one having been set apart for the gospel. So, we're going to look at some of these in terms of who Paul is or what an audience who even didn't know Paul could assume from his name. Presumably, his audience would understand that he's a Roman citizen.

Where did that citizenship come from? Well, we're going to look at Paul's ancestry and some other things, and this will be taken into account back on from the book of Acts. Paul seems to have belonged to the synagogue of the libertini, the freed persons in Jerusalem after he moved to Jerusalem, probably very young, and probably that means that he had slave, well, probably the bulk of that congregation, other people could of course attend, but the bulk of that congregation, it had been founded by freed persons. It was very prestigious in the Roman East to be a Roman citizen.

Freed persons of Roman citizens were Roman citizens, so that's where most Jewish people got Roman citizenship. Synagogues functioned as community centers. There were multiple synagogues in Jerusalem.

Rabbinic tradition later says 480. That's probably a guess, but in any case, there were some diaspora synagogues in Jerusalem. The synagogue of the Alexandrians is attested.

Rabbis mention it later. It's likely given how close Alexandria was, and this synagogue of the libertini in Acts 6-9 includes people from Alexandria. It includes libertini from elsewhere.

It also includes people from Cilicia, Calicia, the capital of which was Tarsus. Diaspora synagogues in Jerusalem seem to have included one where an inscription has been found. The inscription says that this is dedicated by Diodotus, the son of Vitainos.

Well, Vitainos, that was the against Vitaini. It indicates that Diodotus' father was a freed person, and so Diodotus presumably inherited that status of Roman citizenship. The grammar in Acts 6-9 implies a single synagogue with people from many places.

What bound them together was not their geographic origin, but that they were libertini, which suggests that they were freed persons. Now, it's very different than what you have in the United States. In the United States, less than one-tenth of one percent of slaves in the United States were manumitted or freed before the Civil War.

But manumission was very frequent in Roman society, partly because it reduced the cost of care for aged slaves. Slaves could save a peculium, that is, they could save up money on the side and they could buy their own freedom. Or sometimes they were freed as a reward, or sometimes just because, like we said, the slaveholder didn't want to support them anymore.

They had obligations to their former slaveholder, but the obligations were mutual. The former slaveholders also would try to advance them politically and socially. If they were over 30, those slaves or citizens could get citizenship themselves.

Now, citizenship was cheap under Claudius, and it cheapened over time. That's why Claudius Lysias in Acts chapter 22, verse 28, the tribune who's examining Paul, says, well, you're a Roman citizen. I got my citizenship for a large amount of money, implying perhaps that Paul got his citizenship more cheaply at a later part in Claudius' reign.

But then he discovers that Paul didn't bribe his way into citizenship. He was born a citizen, which gave him a bit higher status. There were various legal means of becoming a citizen.

You could be born to a Roman family. You could be a citizen of a city that was granted the status of a Roman colony, such as Philippi or Corinth. Sometimes municipal aristocrats, or those who benefited Rome, became Roman citizens.

An auxiliary soldier at discharge became a Roman citizen. A freed slave, who was not allowed in the army, but a freed slave could become a Roman citizen. Paul was born a citizen.

His parents were Roman citizens. That was a rare privilege in the East. Presumably, they had migrated from Rome.

Luke isn't explicit about Paul's slave ancestry. He likes to stress Paul's high status. But he incidentally provides information about his likely slave ancestry, as back in chapter 6 and verse 9. And then we see that Saul of Tarsus Paul is actually involved in the disputes of this synagogue.

So, we may trust that this isn't a fiction. This is Paul's genuine background. And Paul was a Roman citizen.

Descended from freed slaves, from when Pompey had earlier enslaved Jewish Roman citizens. Freed persons. Some grew very powerful under Claudius and Nero.

Some actually wielded more power than senators. For example, the governor Felix, whom we meet in Acts chapters 23 and 24-27. And his brother Paulus, who wielded great power in Rome.

You have aristocrats in Pompey, this time speaking of the city that was destroyed at the eruption of Vesuvius. But aristocrats in Pompey were freed persons. It fits what we know of the historical situation for Jewish people.

As we mentioned before, Pompey the general in the first century BC enslaved many Jewish people. They were brought to Rome. Roman Jews bought their freedom starting in the 60s of the first century BCE, first century BC.

Most stayed in Rome. And we read about them in Philo and elsewhere. But not all of them.

Others migrated to different cities. And from there many eventually migrated to Jerusalem. Freed status.

They had status in the eastern Mediterranean because they were Roman citizens. In Rome, roughly half of the Jewish names were in Latin. But that doesn't mean that the entire half were Roman citizens.

It depends on the particular names partly. But there were many Roman citizens who were Jewish in Rome. The primary language that they spoke was Greek.

Well, would the believers in Rome when they received this letter, would they automatically assume from Paul's name that he was a Roman citizen? It's more likely than not that they would. But some people have raised objections to Paul's citizenship. They say Paul never mentions his Roman citizenship.

That's their first argument. But that's an argument from silence. And it's not a particularly good argument from silence.

Some arguments from silence are better than others. This one's not a very good one. Paul attaches no intrinsic significance to his Roman citizenship, even in Acts that mentions his Roman citizenship.

He only made use of it when necessary to avoid being beaten or something like that. And sometimes not even then. Paul avoids boasting, in his letters, except when, as in 2 Corinthians, he says, you compelled me to do it, which was considered one of the appropriate exceptions where you were allowed to boast in antiquity.

He may even presuppose it in Philippians 1, verses 7 and 30. If he's going to boast, he boasts in his sufferings. But in Philippians 1, verses 7 and 30, he's writing to Christians in Philippi.

Well, not all of them were citizens of Philippi, but those who were actual citizens of Philippi, whatever happened to Paul during his trial before the emperor, if Paul was a Roman citizen, set a legal precedent for what could happen to them as Roman citizens in Philippi. So, when Paul is saying, you yourselves, what happens to you has bound up to what happens to me in my trial. I know I'm a trial for you as well.

It may have to do with his Roman citizenship because Philippi was a Roman colony. Luke seeks to establish Paul's high status is another objection. Some people say, well, Luke just presents Paul as a Roman citizen because he wants to establish his high status.

Well, yeah, he does want to establish Paul's status, but motivation is not proof that that's why he says it. That is, he might seek to establish it without inventing it. He could have invented something even more.

He could have said, well, Paul was, yes, Paul was not only a Roman citizen, but he belongs to the knight class. Couldn't get away with saying he belongs to the senatorial class, but you certainly wouldn't have to leave data there that might suggest that he belonged to descendants of freed slaves. It could be that he received this great honor for some great thing that he had done.

Luke isn't making this up any more than he makes up Paul's Pharisaism because Pharisaism held relatively high status among Jewish people because, in Philippians chapter three and verse five, Paul happens to mention that he was a Pharisee of Pharisees. I mean, he was a Pharisee. Luke didn't make that up.

There's no reason to think that Luke made up his citizenship either. Another objection that's been raised is that citizenship was reserved for the municipal elite and therefore was closed to Jews. The people who have argued that have seriously misread the evidence from the ancient world.

For instance, if you go through the inscriptions that have survived from Ephesus, we have not just the municipal elite who became Roman citizens, but in this city, it's not a colony, it's a free city, but in this city of Ephesus, we have, at least in the inscriptions that were surveyed at the time that I found this information, 1,173 Roman citizens there. It doesn't belong simply to the municipal elite. Further, there were various ways to achieve citizenship, including manumission.

Thousands of slaves in Rome were freed each year, making them citizens, while it was difficult for officials in the East to get that status. So, the idea that Roman citizenship was reserved for the municipal elite, that argument is based on serious misinformation. Another argument, also based on misinformation, is that Jews who were Roman citizens would have to participate in pagan practices.

That's not true. Josephus and Roman Jewish inscriptions show us that this is false. Philo and his embassy to Gaius show that an entire community of Jewish Roman citizens existed in Rome, and they were not participating in pagan practices.

In fact, sometimes Romans were complaining that too many Romans were participating in Jewish practices. Another objection that has been raised against Paul's citizenship is that Paul never uses the tria nomina in his letters, in contrast to how they function in inscriptions. But those were honorary inscriptions and official documents.

Paul was not seeking his honor the way that these wealthy patrons often did. Greek Roman citizens in the East usually gave their names in Greek ways. As far as how Jewish Roman citizens did it, we have 50 Jewish Roman citizen inscriptions in Rome.

None of them use the tria nomina. None of them use the three Roman names. Further, letters are not the same thing as inscriptions.

Paul is not writing inscriptions. He's writing letters. Well, did Roman citizens give their three names in letters? Normally they did not do so.

Pliny always uses one or two names in his letters. Correspondence often used just one of the Roman names. So, for Paul to simply call himself Paul is actually what we would expect based on the ancient evidence.

Another argument that's been raised, and this one actually is a better argument, this one is a plausible argument, although I will argue it's not ultimately persuasive. Paul mentions that he was beaten with rods, and citizens were not allowed to be beaten with rods according to Roman law. But Luke, who reports Paul's citizenship, also reports such a beating.

Further, we know that governors such as Varys, who didn't really worry about getting in trouble back in Rome, although in the case of Varys he did, inflicted such beatings on people who were known to be citizens. In fact, in Judea, at a later time, the Roman governor Florus inflicts such beatings not only on Roman citizen Jewish aristocrats, but on equestrians, that is, Jewish Roman citizens who belonged to the Roman knight class. Well, another objection that's been raised, if Paul was a Roman citizen, why not reveal his citizenship before his beating in Philippi? Well, Philippi was one of the places where they actually took Roman citizenship quite seriously because they were a Roman colony.

But to reveal it before the beating could yield a prolonged case, a long trial, which could create bad publicity. Officials could require certification from Tarsus, meaning Paul might be restricted in his ministry, restricted there to Philippi, while waiting for people to go to Tarsus and come back with the documentation. Officials might finally disguise the case against him anyway.

But after the officials have beaten him for Paul to say, hey, I'm a Roman citizen, they're the ones who violated the law. He has them in a better position to negotiate. He has the upper hand.

It's possible also that he didn't expect vindication until either the jailer in Philippi informed him, no, we take this very seriously here, or until he experienced it in Corinth, because at least from what we know of Roman governors in Judea, they often didn't take it seriously. Well, there are various arguments favoring Paul's Roman citizenship. His name favors it.

That's not an argument invented as Christian apologetic. It's argued, yes, by Joseph Fitzmeyer, who's an excellent scholar. By the way, he has an excellent commentary on Romans as well.

It's also argued by Antimon Acts, but it's also argued by Geert Ludeman, an atheist New Testament scholar. Most likely, this is Paul's cognomen. Romans, again, had three names, but normally they would go by the cognomen.

The cognomen, Paul was nearly always a cognomen in inscriptions. When it was a prenamen, the first name, usually it was a reused cognomen from the family, so it would still indicate the same thing. People usually went by their cognomen, and this is normally the name of a Roman citizen.

It's a respectable Roman name. It wouldn't prove Roman citizenship, but it would suggest it to the extent that it would be sufficient for many in the East to assume Paul's Roman citizenship simply based on the name. It would also probably lead most of the hearers of Paul's letter to the Romans to make the same assumption so that Paul has the same status as the highest among them would have for status.

Further, Paul got this Roman name from somewhere. It wouldn't be used merely as a decoration by Jewish people. It would normally be given if a person was indeed a Roman citizen.

Another argument favoring his citizenship is the final quarter of the book of Acts, the entire final quarter of the book of Acts. Only a citizen could appeal to the emperor and be sent to Rome. Well, this happened to Paul.

His letters support Acts on this point. All of his letters are before or after the sending to Rome, but when you look at them together, it supports what we have in Acts. Paul wanted to visit Rome.

He planned to visit Rome, Romans 15. He also expected Judean opposition before he went to Rome. Later, Paul was in custody in Rome.

How did he get into custody in Rome? Probably because of the trouble that he expected in Judea, and probably he was sent into Roman custody. Luke would hardly invent lengthy Roman custody, especially starting earlier than necessary, starting in Judea, because Roman custody was a matter of shame. If Luke is writing apologetically, that is, defending Paul, as most scholars think, and as I argue in my full-volume Acts commentary, then Luke is not going to invent something like this, like extra Roman custody for Paul.

Moreover, a majority of scholars agree that Luke is writing a historical monograph in the book of Acts. You're not going to make an entire quarter of your historical monograph based on pure fiction, pure fabrication, which you would have to assume if Paul gets sent to Rome in Roman custody without actually being able to appeal to Caesar as a citizen. And finally, this is the most detailed part of Acts, precisely because the we narrator is there, whom I assume to be Luke, or actually whom I've argued to be Luke.

But even for people who just say that the we represents a source that Acts is using, this was an eyewitness source of these things taking place. And as far as Paul's trials,

if there was anybody there with him, they would have access to all the legal documents, all the court documents. Those transcripts of court speeches and so on were made available to both the prosecutors and the defendants.

Further, Luke's implicit information fits the claim. Synagogue of the Freed Persons in 6:9, Luke wouldn't invent a slave background for Paul. If he was going to invent something, it would be a more honorable method, even if we want to say he invented something.

And then there are some supporting arguments that Paul succeeds in reaching Roman citizens, Paul targets Roman colonies, and ultimately he targets Rome. Paul's Roman name is first introduced by Luke, and I consider Acts to be legitimate evidence based on my work on Acts, but Paul's Roman name is introduced in Acts 13.9. It fits the name, Saul. Double names were very common.

You find them in the papyri and inscriptions. And often people would use a Jewish name that sounded like the Roman name, like Sha'ul, or in Greek Salas, and the Latin Apollos. Salas means something fairly negative in Greek, so it's not likely that Luke would have invented that name.

The tria nomina. The nomen was an inherited clan name, but the cognomen, which started as a nickname, became the primary identifying name in the empire, and often the person was named for their father or their ancestors. Paul was usually a cognomen and usually used only by citizens.

By the way, we're not thinking of a name change from Saul to Paul. It's just that when Paul gets into the Roman world, he starts going by his Roman name. New direction with Sergius Paulus.

Now, Paul claims here that he is a slave of Christ. And he also speaks of slavery often in Romans. So, not that he doesn't speak of it elsewhere in his letters too, but you can see it's very frequent in Romans.

It's 6:6, 6:18, 6:22, 7:6, 25, 9:12, 12:11, 14:18, and 16:18. He uses it in both a positive and negative way. He uses slavery in 8.15 and 21. He also speaks of serving with a more liturgical sense in chapter 1 and verse 9. He especially speaks of slavery in 6.16 to 20.

Paul isn't the only slave of God. He also expects all believers to be slaves of God, slaves of righteousness, and no longer are they slaves of sin as they were before. They've been set free from sin.

What does it mean for Paul to be a slave? Is that high status or low status? Contrary to what we might think in some other societies, slavery could be high status

depending on whose slave you were and what role you filled. Remember in the Old Testament, you have prophets as the servants of God or Moses as the servant of God. So also, Paul is a servant of God.

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.

He may be humbling himself as a slave. Philippians chapter 2, Christ humbled himself as a slave. But if we're slaves of God, that's pretty high status because we are messengers of God and God can speak through us.

We are his representatives. Paul also says that he's called an apostle, just like in 1 Corinthians 1. Called here is an adjective, but it definitely suggests he didn't choose this for himself. It's not like when he went and asked the high priests for a commission.

He initiated that in Acts chapter 9 before he became a believer. But he's a called apostle. He's a called commissioned one sent by God himself.

God initiated this. But he's not alone in being called. In chapter 1, verses 6 and 7, he speaks of the believers in Rome as also being *kleitos*, called.

Chapter 8, verse 28, he speaks of us all as being called according to his purpose, according to God's purpose. Also, the verb form, verbs and adjectives, and so on, cognates don't always mean the same thing. But here I think it's related, especially because from 828 to 830, you have that verb.

It goes from the adjective to the verb in the same context. 417, God who calls all things in the being, is the God who caused Isaac to be born, is the God who raised Jesus from the dead, is the God who makes us new. Chapter 8 and verse 30, he called us.

Chapter 9, verses 7, 24 through 26. So, this is something where Paul shares with his audience. In terms of being called apostle, what does it mean to be an apostle? Well, there were certain characteristics of apostles.

Nowhere is apostleship defined in the New Testament. And in fact, there are different writers who use the term in different ways. Luke reserves the term almost exclusively in his writings.

And the gospels tend to do this. Luke reserves the term almost exclusively for the 12 apostles, including the replacement for Judas in Acts chapter 1. He makes an

exception in Acts chapter 14. A couple of times he calls Paul and Barnabas apostles, but usually he doesn't even call Paul an apostle.

Paul calls himself an apostle and also speaks of other apostles. He uses the term in a wider way than Luke does. Maybe Luke just didn't want to confuse things from the gospel.

Whatever the case, Paul applies it to himself. He applies it to Silas and Timothy. He applies it to James, the Lord's brother.

He applies it to Andronicus and Junia, most likely, in Romans 16.7. In 1 Corinthians 15, he speaks of Jesus appearing to the 12, and a couple of verses later, and then to all the apostles, all the commissioned ones. Maybe Luke's 70 who were sent, Apostello, or something else. We don't know.

But what were the characteristics of an apostle? Well, one is they had signs, 2 Corinthians 12.12. He speaks of the signs and wonders of an apostle among you. Another is suffering. Some people today don't like to appeal to this, but you see that heavy emphasis in Matthew 10 and Luke 10, where people are sent.

Also in 1 Corinthians 4, God has set forth us apostles last of all, and speaks of being hungry and thirsty and abused and all sorts of things. Also, it implies authorization and authority. It's a special commission.

Normally it breaks ground in some new way. That's why we often think of missionary church planters. We often use the language, apostolic language to describe them in missiology because we're using kind of a Pauline sense.

But the 12 in Jerusalem, stayed in Jerusalem for a long time before they went out and did something else. So especially it has to do with an authorization that gives them authority, a particular commission to break new ground in some way, which I think happens both with the 12 in Jerusalem, that's a groundbreaking thing, and also with Paul starting basically his home Bible study groups in the different cities of the diaspora. Further, it's non-local.

That's why in Acts we see the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem. Elders were leaders of local congregations. Well, even in Jerusalem, among the Jerusalem believers, we have elders who seem to function alongside apostles, whose jurisdiction or their activity seems to be more than trans-local.

And you also see that in the Didache, which seems to use something somewhat closer to the Pauline sense of apostleship. Paul also says in Romans 1.1, he speaks of three adjectives for himself, three descriptions for himself, a slave called apostle and

one having been set apart for the good news, *aphoris menos*. This is language for being separated for God.

He uses it also for being separated from the womb in Galatians 1:15, perhaps echoing, although using a different term, Jeremiah 1:5, where Jeremiah was set apart from the womb to be a prophet. Often it's used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, with reference to consecration. It's used over 60 times there, so my initial misspeaking over 50 times was technically correct, but anyway, often used for consecration.

Paul has been set apart for this task. And as we'll see a few verses hence, we've all been set apart as believers for God's work. And therefore, we should live as those who've been consecrated, live as those who've been set apart for holy purposes.

What has he been set apart for? He's been set apart for the good news. He mentions that in verse one, and he's going to come back to that idea as his letter goes on. Verse nine, this is how he serves God in the good news of his son.

Verse 16, the heart of his message talks about the good news, the good news of salvation for both Jew and Gentile in Christ Jesus. In chapter two in verse 16, he says, people will be judged according to my good news by how they've responded to the good news that I proclaim. Chapter 10 in verse 16, alludes to the language of Isaiah, which is where Paul probably gets this good news.

Also 11, 28, 15, 16, and 19, and 16, 25, Paul is going to speak a number of times in Romans about the good news. And the cognate verb, the good news, *euangelion*, happy message, good tidings, *euangelizo*, Paul uses that for desiring to preach in Rome, to bring good news more fully to Rome in Romans 10.15. And in Romans 10.15, he's using this verb, quoting Isaiah 52.7, which I think is foundational for the background for the good news. And I'll talk about that in a moment.

And then in chapter 15 in verse 20, he also uses the verb. Now, I think foundational for this is the language in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the most common version of it that we call the Septuagint in this period. A number of uses in the book of Isaiah, Isaiah 40, and so on, but especially Isaiah 52.7, where it speaks of the good news of salvation, the good news of peace, that our God reigns in the context of the restoration of Israel, the context of the restoration where there's going to be a new creation, new heavens, and new earth.

God is going to renew all things. That's the good news. And the foretaste of that good news is what God is already doing now as we become members of his people and we are saved or begin to be saved.

If you want to look at how Paul uses the language of salvation, he uses it on multiple levels, but they're already not yet of the kingdom. We already begin to have the experience of this good news as we come into Christ and are transformed. Well, why would Paul introduce himself in this way? Well, many in Rome haven't yet met him.

We know from Romans 16 that a number of people do know Paul, but many have not yet met him. So, he's laying forth his credentials for the message that he preaches to them. And he is going to articulate this gospel more, the same gospel that he says he wants to preach to them more when he gets to Rome.

You can always go deeper and deeper into the gospel, deeper and deeper in its implications, but it always brings you back to the central message of what God has done for us in Christ, in his death and resurrection. We will continue with Romans 1 in not quite so much detail as we've done the first verse in the next session.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session 2 Romans Introduction and Romans 1:1.