

Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 6, Romans 3 :24-5 :11

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session number 6 on Romans 3:24-5:11.

In the last session, we talked about how everyone is equally lost, whether Jew or Gentile.

Therefore, Paul is going to argue that all of us come to God in the same terms, and God has provided those terms for us as a gift in Jesus Christ. Now, there's some debate as to whether verses 24 and 25 are pre-Pauline tradition, but either way, it's certainly something Paul believed because he uses it. He speaks of being made righteous as a gift, as a favor from God by grace, a term that could mean different things, but often meant generosity.

It was something that a benefactor would give, and your response to grace would be to give the benefactor honor. Verse 24. He also speaks of redemption here.

He's got a concentration of a lot of terms here that have a lot of important Old Testament background. Redemption was used for the liberation of slaves and therefore evokes what God had done in the Exodus. We'll talk about the concept of the New Exodus more when we get to chapter eight.

There's a related verb in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It sometimes includes a ransom price, which typically was implied in earlier Greek. It wouldn't have to be implied here, but the context here might suggest Jesus' blood as such a price.

You have that idea in Hebrews 9:14 and 15, 1 Peter 1:18 and 19, and perhaps Revelation 1:5 and 5:9. So, an idea that's fairly widespread in early Christianity. Redemption. Our liberation is completed in the future, in Romans chapter eight and verse 23, where we're groaning, awaiting the full redemption of our body.

We clearly don't have our resurrection bodies yet, especially when you get to my age, you're well aware of this, but it's completed in the future. Ephesians 1.14 uses it that way. Ephesians 4:30, Luke chapter 21, verse 38, look up, your redemption draws near.

But here it's already done. I think we've talked about the already-not-yet. We have a foretaste of our future inheritance.

The price has already been paid, certainly. God has already accomplished what needs to be done to bring this to fruition in our lives. So, we don't have the redemption of our body yet, but in principle, yes, we have our redemption because we've already accepted Christ, and especially the work has already been done.

He's already liberated us from what he needed to do. You can note the language of freedom in chapter six, verses six through 23, also 7:25, 8:15 and 21. Redemption means you've been set free.

He speaks of the cover of the Ark of the Covenant in verse 25. He uses the term hilasterion, which is cognate, hilazmos, and some other terms that often are cited in this context. But specifically hilasterion in verse 25, it refers to the cover of the Ark of the Covenant.

You find it used that way in the Greek translation of Exodus 25:17-22. You find it with reference to the Ark of the Covenant in Hebrews chapter nine in verse five. This translation was recognized by Origen, Luther, and Tyndale, so it has a long history behind it. What's the point of the comparison? In what way is Jesus and the cross like the cover of the Ark of the Covenant? Well, the Ark of the Covenant was the locus of the divine presence, but it was also used for the Day of Atonement ritual.

This is following the mention of Jesus' blood, and so this probably has to do with the place where Jesus' blood is spilled. Crucifixion wasn't always bloody, although Colossians and the Gospels mention that Jesus was nailed to the cross, so there would have been blood in his case. But crucifixion wasn't always bloody, although actually with the scourging it probably normally was.

The Gospels use blood, however, to describe the meaning of Jesus' death more than the event of his death. That is, yeah, his blood was shed, but what was his blood shed for? With regard to the Day of Atonement, the annual consecration of this holy place took place through sacrificial blood, Leviticus 16 verses 14 and 15. Jesus is where forgiven people meet God because God has provided the atonement for us.

Well, C. H. Dodd, a very good scholar, many good ideas he had, but he doubts that it has the meaning propitiation in the Old Testament. Actually, I've seen some scholars cite all the examples where it doesn't mean that and leave out all the examples where it does. But anyway, sin and atonement offerings did propitiate wrath.

That was true both in the Old Testament and in the ancient Near East. I mean, the Hittites had rituals for this and so on. It also fits the context of the Tabernacle, blood as sacrificial death.

Also, this appears elsewhere in early Christianity, propitiation and purification, 1 Peter 1:2.19, 1 John 1:7. Jesus' sacrificial blood inaugurates the covenant. We have

this language from Exodus 24:5 and 8 in the passages about the Last Supper where Jesus is speaking, 1 Corinthians 11:25, Mark 14:24. We also have his blood, sacrificial blood, inaugurating the covenant in Hebrews 9.18-20, 10.29, 12.24, 13.20. Hebrews is a rather bloody book in that sense. Some others used hilasterion figuratively.

4 Maccabees 17:22, probably from the first century, speaks of atonement offered by human death to turn away God's wrath from people and uses the same language, hilasterion. The context in 4 Maccabees, the preceding verse, speaks of ransom. So, a payment that's offered.

There's a different term, but the idea of martyr atonement appears earlier than this already in 2 Maccabees 7 and also in 4 Maccabees 6. The idea is that one person's suffering or a number of people's suffering can turn away God's wrath from the people because they take the suffering in another's place. So, this idea already was available in Judaism at this time. There have been a number of studies on this in terms of the background of this, including by Jinte Kim, who's published a number of articles, published his dissertation actually, on the concept of atonement in various ancient Jewish circles.

Martin Hengel has dealt with some there, especially in Greek circles, but Jinte Kim has developed it, particularly in Jewish circles. Well, the idea of it being an atonement fits Romans. It fits the present context of God's wrath.

Romans 1:18, 2.5 and 8, 3:5, 4:15. He's been talking a lot about wrath in this context. One of the reasons some theologians today don't like to talk about propitiating God's wrath is they don't like the idea of a wrathful God. But you're going to have to explain away a whole lot of scripture if you say that God doesn't have wrath.

Now, you can say that his wrath is different than ours. His wrath isn't just losing his temper. His wrath is based on justice.

You can say that. It's of a different category. Maybe our way of conceiving of wrath is different, but you can't say that it's not wrath that can be propitiated, that that understanding was there.

We find it also in Chapter 5, verses 9 and 10, where it says that Jesus' blood turns away God's anger from us. Chapter 8, in verse 3, uses language that also it's *peri hamartias*, but given the way that expression is used in the Septuagint, what it translates there, it may also express Jesus' death as sacrificial in chapter 8, in verse 3. And it's not limited to Romans. I mean, Paul speaks of Jesus' death as Christ, the Passover lamb being sacrificed for us in 1 Corinthians 5:7, I believe, and so on.

And the Passover was understood as a sacrifice in this period. You can see it in Josephus. You can see it in Exodus, I believe.

But in any case, Paul says that God had previously passed over sins rather than giving them the punishment that they justly deserved, verse 25. Paresis meant postponing or neglecting punishment. Didn't mean it wouldn't come, but postponing or neglecting it because he knew he was going to provide something later on.

So now he demonstrates his righteousness. He's both righteous and the one who would put his people right with him because the sentence of judgment has already been executed on Jesus by his atoning death. God's righteousness includes both justice and covenant faithfulness, 1:17 and 18, chapter 3, verses 3 through 8. God is just to punish sin.

God is also just to forgive sin and to be true to his covenant because God is so faithful that he's provided a way for us to be forgiven. Now, if we reject that way, then that's not God's fault. He's allowed us to accept him or reject him, but he's made the way for us.

Therefore, no self-boasting, Chapter 3, verse 27. If the law's goal was works, well, one might boast, but the law's goal is faith. And we see that here and we're also going to see it later on in Romans where the law's goal is faith and righteousness through faith.

Throughout Paul's argument, the law attests to God's righteousness, not humanity's, 3:21 through 23. He says he's going to go on in verse 31 to say faith establishes the law. Faith doesn't undermine the law.

Rather, faith establishes the law. And we'll talk more about that when we get to verse 31. We have analogies in the law itself, in the Torah itself, such as redemption and atonement.

Paul addresses these in 3:24 and 3:25 with the redemption and the hilasterion, the mercy seat of the ark, where atonement can take place on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. Thus, we are righted by depending on God, not by our own merit, 3:28. Well, this idea of contrasting approaches to the law, by what law are we made right? Some people translate this by what principle are we made right? But in the context, nomos means law and there's no reason to change its meaning here. It makes sense, especially in Paul's larger argument where he uses the language elsewhere in Romans.

By what nomos, by what law? Is it by the law of boasting, the law of works, the approach to the law that has to do with works and achieving righteousness? Or is it by the law of faith, the faith approach to the law, the proper response to God that the law teaches about, for example, in Genesis 15:6, which will be the subject of Romans 4. Contrasting approaches to the law, chapter 8 and verse 2, the law of the

spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death. When the law is written in the hearts by the spirit, as Ezekiel 36 talked about, verse 27, that is what keeps it from being the law of sin and death. It is simply what passes the verdict on us that we haven't kept God's standard.

Chapter 9 verses 31 and 32, chapter 10 verses 5 through 8, all these talk about two different approaches to the law. And the approach that Paul is recommending is the approach by which we can be saved and not simply condemned. The point, despite the law, Jew and Gentile come to God on the same terms, 3:9 and 22.

There's just one God. This is 3:30. That's the cornerstone of Judaism, the Shema. Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad [Deut. 6:4]. Here, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. But Paul draws a theological implication from this. He cites this elsewhere.

Jesus cites it in Mark chapter 12. Paul cites it elsewhere, for example, in 1 Corinthians chapter 8 verses 5 and 6, where he applies it to the deity of God the Father and Jesus. But he applies it here theologically to say there must be one God for all of humanity.

He's not the God of Israel alone. He's not the God of the Jewish people alone, verses 29 and 30, but he's the God for all people. Many cited God's supremacy for Israel's soul or end-time exaltation, but Paul applies it to God's care for all humanity.

So, is there a separate means of writing? Jews from faithfulness, *ek pisteos*, from God's faith or faithfulness, Gentiles *dia* faith or faithfulness in 3:30, because he uses a separate preposition for each one. Jews will be *ek* faithfulness, Gentiles will be *dia* faithfulness. Actually, stylistic variation was very important in rhetoric and was very common in rhetoric.

And probably it's just another way of saying the same thing. Exegetes sometimes toil over these kinds of details, but you read other ancient literature. Sometimes these things were used interchangeably, especially in Koine Greek, the Greek of this period.

The context is that for both Jew and Gentile, it must be Jesus' faith, 3:22, not law works, 3:19 through 20. 3:31 provides a pivot in Paul's argument. The law supports the faith way of God's righteousness, as he said back in 3:21 and 3:22. And he's going to show this from the law, from the Torah, which included Genesis when people spoke of the Torah with a foundational example, namely the example of Abraham in chapter four, verses one through 25.

And that's where we turn next because there were no chapter breaks in the original. Thank God for chapter breaks, though, and verse breaks now, because otherwise I wouldn't be able to say turn to such and such passage. I would just have to quote

part of it like Paul and his contemporaries did and expect you to know what I was quoting.

Romans chapter four. Abraham is righted by faith. It's hard.

There's no word in English I can use that captures its full semantic range, so I'm sort of making up one saying that Abraham was righted with God by faith, 4:1 through 8. 3:31, faith establishes the law. He also pointed that out in 3:21 where the law and the prophets testified of faith. Now he's going to do a midrash on a key text here, a very significant text that was commonly cited.

Abraham is a common model. He shows that even Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, even Abraham could not boast in his works. Going back to 3:27 it's not by boasting in chapter four in verse two, that Abraham couldn't boast in his works.

Even he was put right with God by trust rather than by personal merit. 3:28, 4:3 through 5. The one God had a purpose for uncircumcised Gentiles as well as for circumcised Jews. He's been saying that 3.29 and 3.30. He's going to come back to that 4:9 through 12 and 16 through 18.

It's a key issue here and it's probably no accident that it's in these letters that deal especially with Jew and Gentile such as Romans and Galatians and to some extent Ephesians, that you're going to have this emphasis on justification by faith. Not that it didn't matter anywhere else, but this is where it is a particular matter of emphasis to show that the Gentiles also have access. Abraham is a key moral model.

He was the defining ancestor of Israel as 4:1 points out. Later rabbis sometimes spoke of the merits of the ancestors. There may have been some thought in those terms at this period.

You have some of that in Mekilta, the Mekilta of Rabbi Ishmael, the Mekilta on Exodus where debates about by whose merits the sea parted for Israel. But probably they weren't thinking in quite such precise terms mostly in this period. But Abraham was also a model for Israel.

Later rabbis portrayed him as the model Gentile convert. So, if Paul's writing to Gentiles, hey, here's the one that you've been told about probably is the model convert for Gentiles. In the model witness to Gentiles, a lot of rabbinic Haggadah, rabbinic stories.

I love these stories but talk about Abraham and Sarah being model witnesses to the Gentiles by how they lived. And Sarah was nursing children of all these nations and so on. Many appealed to the model of Abraham's works, including his faith, which was considered one of his works.

But faith was the foundation for Abraham's obedience. Genesis 15:6, he was counted righteous when he believed. And yet this saving faith of Abraham is fairly elementary because it was pretty imperfect.

I mean, in Genesis chapter 12, God promised Abraham that he would have land that God would show him. And also, he would have descendants because, in his descendants, the nations would be blessed in him. So, this has to go beyond Abraham's own life.

God would make of him a great nation in contrast to the Tower of Babel where they wanted to make a name for themselves in chapter 11. In chapter 12, God will make a great name for Abraham. Well, now chapter 15, Abraham is complaining to God, I don't have descendants.

God promises to him he's going to have descendants like the stars. Abraham believes him and it's counted him as righteousness. Well, what does Abraham do in the very next verse? He starts saying, okay, no, God, that takes care of the seed.

What about the land that you mentioned before? So, God confirms that promise to Abraham. And what does he do in the very next chapter? It's not to say that this is the very next thing that happened in his life, but the very next thing that Genesis chooses to narrate. In the very next chapter, Sarah proposes Hagar as a kind of surrogate mother.

Well, can't blame them too much because God hadn't said yet explicitly that it was through Sarah. But in any case, they're following the cultural method. God is going to bless Ishmael too.

But his faith is very imperfect in this section. It's quite different by the time you get to Genesis 22. Abraham has been walking with God over the years.

Abraham knows God's faithfulness. Abraham knows God has said that in Isaac will be your seed. There are reasons, I think, why he says to the young man, I and the lad will return to you.

Or he says to Isaac, God himself will provide the land for the burnt offering. As Hebrews 11 says, he believed that if it had to be, God could raise up his son from the dead. That's to make a nice parallel with Jesus.

But the point is, he had really strong faith by the time you get to Genesis 22 because he'd seen God's faithfulness and therefore, he was ready to have that kind of thing. But this is elementary faith here, Genesis 15:6. This is before all these other years,

but he's shown faith already by going forth where God told him to go. So, faith was expressed in obedience.

But saving faith, doesn't have to be like Genesis 22 faith yet. We grow. We should grow.

But Genesis 15.6 is basic faith, saving faith, and that's what he has. And it contrasts with law works righteousness. Law works.

What a proselyte might experience as a demand. Well, you've got to do this, this, and this. For a Jewish person, if you're raised with that, that may just be your culture and a lot of things are just normal.

But for a Gentile convert, you're going to have to make a lot of changes. Well, Abram was not credited with righteousness due to righteous deeds, it says in verses 4 and 5. This isn't something he earned. These weren't his wages.

If you want to know what wages are, chapter 6 and verse 23 talks about wages of sin. But instead, Paul emphasizes the word reckons or accounts, *logizomai* in Greek. It's a bookkeeping-type term.

It's an accounting term. If you're an accountant, you might smile at this, but God reckoned righteousness to Abraham's account. He credited him with righteousness.

And this term credited is used 11 times in chapter 4. It's something that God has done. In verse 5, Paul uses deliberately provocative language when he says, God acquits the guilty. Exodus 23 and verse 7, you're never supposed to acquit the guilty, but God acquits the guilty.

How does he know? He cites David as the psalmist, as a witness. David was believed to be the author of many of the Psalms, especially where the superscription says that. So, he cites David as a witness and he uses a Gezer HaShavah, linking together texts in verses 4, 6 through 8. God reckoned righteousness to Abraham's account.

Psalms 32, how happy is the one to whom iniquity will not be reckoned, whose deeds are forgiven. Psalm 32, 1 and 2. The psalmist clearly had sinned in the context, of verse 3, but the psalmist is forgiven. So, well, how can that reckoning happen for us? Follow the model of Abraham, by faith, trusting God's promise, which ultimately leads to the promise of God's son, the Messianic son.

Abraham is not only the father of the Jewish people ethnically, Romans 4:1, but he's also the father of Gentiles who believe. God writes both Jews and Gentiles by the same means. Abraham was the model Gentile convert, so we can follow his example here.

The context was also an ancient hermeneutical technique. We can be happy about that since it's a good hermeneutical technique. Genesis 15:6 happened over 13 years before circumcision.

So, it preceded Ishmael's conception in 16.4 and Ishmael was circumcised at the age of 13 in 17:25 of Genesis. So, somebody could raise the objection, well, you know, Abraham's justified by faith, but to be part of the covenant, you have to be circumcised. And that would be justification.

Paul says, no, this happened at least 13 years before Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised. He speaks of this blessing. What does he mean by this blessing in verse nine? Well, how blessed is the person whose sins are forgiven? Going back to chapter four, verses six through eight.

Ethnic versus spiritual ancestry. The rabbis said that ancestral, at least later rabbis said that ancestral merit was, you could have ancestral merit for blessing. Your ancestors did well.

You get some of that merit, but that's unavailable to proselytes. But Paul is not speaking of Abraham that way. He's using Abraham only as a model.

People often spoke of spiritual ancestors. These were people you acted like, people you imitated like parents. Abraham's spiritual heirs are more by faith than by merely the outward seal of circumcision, Paul says in verses 11 and 12.

Some later rabbis do speak of circumcision as a seal like Paul does here in Tosefta Barakot. You also have something like this in the Epistle of Barnabas. But circumcision was a covenant sign, Genesis 17:11. Some think that Paul here replaces circumcision with baptism, but Paul doesn't mention baptism here.

It just mentions faith. The seal of the spirit, some people go over to 2 Corinthians 1:22 and say the seal of the spirit, must be baptism, but it doesn't mention baptism. You have a connection in Hermas in the second century, but I don't think we should read that back in here.

So, you just leave that out of the discussion. But he does speak of faith. He'll speak of baptism in chapter six, but let's wait till we get there for that.

Potential objection that can be raised. Well, the righteous can be a God-fearer, but for a proselyte, you have to be circumcised. And that makes sense based on Genesis 17.10-14. In fact, there was a time as a young Christian when I was looking at this and thinking, hmm, I don't know if Paul interpreted this rightly.

And if I can't make sense of something that is either in Paul's argument or something that works like Paul's argument, I'm going to have to convert to Orthodox Judaism. And the best I can keep of my faith is one God and Jesus, but I'm going to have to keep the Torah. Well, Paul says that even the promise of the land was given to Abram while he was uncircumcised.

And that was centuries before the law, Romans 4:13. By the way, I should finish what I said I was reading Deuteronomy and just saw how salvation was by grace and in needing to have the law in your heart and so on. And then going back and forth between that and Paul, I was convinced that Paul actually does get the heart of the law right and that Paul's message is right. And actually, I heard a rabbi expounding on this and Paul answered the rabbi's objection.

The rabbi didn't know that Paul had answered his objection. But in any case, circumcision, he says, verse 11, is merely the external sign or seal of his faith, 4:11, but it's not inherently essential to the spiritual circumcision, the gift of the spirit back in 2:25 through 29. The language of seal, when he speaks of it as a seal, this circumcision, a seal could be used as a symbol.

That's how it's used in Exodus 28:11, 21, and 36. The sign of the covenant, well, the rainbow was a sign of the covenant in Genesis 9:12, 13, 16, and 17. But as a sign of the covenant, the rainbow wasn't the deliverance itself.

It was a reminder of it. Circumcision wasn't the covenant itself. It was a mark of the covenant.

But if God accepts the heart without that, as Paul argues, we have the promise through faith, verses 13 through 25. God's original plan of promise contrasts with the Israel-specific law. God's original plan was wider than that.

Paul argues that in Romans 4 and Galatians 3. Charles Talbert, who also wrote a very good short commentary on Romans, notes that various Jewish thinkers highlighted some biblical covenants while playing down others. Paul's treatment here is no more idiosyncratic. He's highlighting the covenant that is most relevant to his argument, and that's the covenant with Abraham.

The land here, the promise of the land. In Hebrew, *eretz*, the land could refer either locally to the land, or it could refer to the world, the whole land. And by Paul's day, normally the promise of inheriting the land was applied to the whole world, or inheriting the world to come.

So, Paul doesn't have to worry about making an argument here because it was already widely accepted. The language of inherit, often it's used in idioms of the life of the coming age. Romans 8:17, talking about that we will inherit with Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10, those will inherit the kingdom. 15:50, what will inherit the kingdom? 5:21, these will not inherit the kingdom if they commit all these sins.

So, the language of inherit was often used that way. It's not just Paul, by the way, it's elsewhere in Jewish literature as well. Inheriting the coming world, evoking the language of the Jewish people coming in, and inheriting the land when they would come into the land of Canaan.

Paul says faith doesn't void the law. He said that back in 3:31. And he says the law can't void faith and the promise that was given earlier, 4:14. The law's function here, is not to say this is the only function of the law, but in 4:15 he says the law's function is to reveal failures, not to reckon righteousness. It's a standard insofar as we're treating it that way, rather than it being a gift written in our hearts.

It's a standard and it lets us know when we fall short. It's not only for those of the law but also for those of faith, the Gentiles, 4:16. The wording may allow for a continuing plan for the Jewish people ethnically, which's developed in chapter 11, but he doesn't cite the blessing of all nations in Abraham, as he does in Galatians 3:8, which appears often in Genesis, Genesis 12:3, 18:18, and 22:18. But he rather cites Genesis 17 verses four through six here in Romans 4:17. Abraham is the father of many nations. Well, in Genesis, who could that be? That would be the Midianites, Midianites, and other ethnic descendants.

Some Jewish traditions, though, said it was the world. But not all physical descendants inherit the covenant. That's clear in Genesis 17:7 and 8. Paul develops it in Romans 9:6 through 13 and 25 to 29.

So, he's emphasizing Abraham. His being the father of many nations actually looked forward to something greater. If we take it just as the Jewish people, the numbers of the Jewish people, might not be seen as the stars of heaven in the same way as if it includes all those who come to the one true God through Jesus, the King of Israel.

N.T. Wright has a number of contrasts between this passage and earlier what was said in Romans 1. This will prepare us for the Adam language in chapter 5. Humanity failed to recognize its creator. Abraham trusted the creator. Humanity ignored God's power.

Abraham trusted God's power. Humanity did not give God glory in chapter 1. Abraham gave God glory. Humanity dishonored their bodies.

Abraham found new strength in his body. Humanity used their bodies in non-productive same-sex relations. Abraham and Sarah conceived a child miraculously being fruitful and multiplying.

Also, we can compare Abraham with what Paul says about believers because that's his point. He's going to apply this to believers. Abraham believed God who raises the dead, creatively calling things into being, 4.17. Well, resurrection faith is faithful for subsequent believers, 4.19 and 4.24. Faith to surmount what he calls the deadness of Sarah's womb, 4.19, is also resurrection faith, 4.17. Abraham maintained hope despite the hopelessness of the situation, verse 18, just as believers must in chapters 5 and 8. Abraham was strong in faith, 4.19 and 4.20. Well, some believers are weak in faith, so we need to learn from him.

Abraham was fully persuaded, and in chapter 14 Paul used that language for believers, that we should be fully persuaded. Abraham refused to doubt, *diakrino*, and believers in 14:23 should refuse to *diakrine*. The semantic range of this is a bit wider than it is in English.

So, in one case it means to doubt, in another case, it means something different, but it's the same term and it has an association there. Abraham avoided unbelief, *apostia*. Well, Paul notes the unbelief of much of contemporary Israel and he notes it as an implicit warning to believers, lest you be cut off through unbelief.

Abraham glorified God before the fulfillment of the promise. Some refused to glorify God, this is speaking especially of Gentiles in 1:21, even after his works. Believers must glorify God for his mercy, 15:6 and 9. Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.

That's a model for believers. Here, looking at the object of our faith, in Abraham's faith, it's the promise. He speaks of the promise in 4:20 and 4:21. Also, he spoke of this in 4:13 and 4:14 and 4:16. Paul has earlier used this language of the promise in 1:2-4 for the Messiah, the son of David, the son of God, who was promised in the prophets.

Inheriting the world, 4:13, foreshadowed the kingdom, those who will reign in life, 5:17, and the language of Daniel 7:14-22. The promised seed may be foreshadowed by a more particular seed. Paul is going to make that argument in Galatians 3:16. He's going to speak of Isaac as the child of promise, chapter 9 and verse 8. But his lineage also included a later promise, like the promises unfolding with the seed of David, Romans 1:3, looking back to 2 Samuel 7:12, which in context is not referring to one Messiah, it's referring to David's line. But ultimately, this promise continues to unfold as the prophets speak of this one from David's household who's going to reign as Isaiah 9, the promised seed, and in the resurrection as a model for 4:24. So, he's setting things up for the application of this.

In 4:23 and 4:24, we have the application for believers in the climax of this. These events happened for those who were involved, but they were written for us to learn

from. Paul says that in chapter 15 in verse four, he speaks of that in 1 Corinthians 10:11, speaking of Israel's disobedience in the wilderness.

These things are examples for us so we shouldn't do what they did. In chapter four in verse 25, Paul summarizes, and he uses parallel clauses with the accusative usually means on account of, but he uses these parallel clauses simply for rhetorical effect. The first clause is a cause requiring Jesus' death.

The second is the goal or the ultimate teleological cause of the resurrection. God writes believers because of Jesus' death, 4:25, and because of his resurrection, chapter five in verse nine. There are different aspects that Paul emphasizes at different points for rhetorical balance.

4:24 and 4:25 may allude to Isaiah 53 verses five through 12. And I'll just make a brief comment about this. Isaiah 42 through 49, you've got these passages explicitly referring to Israel as the servant of God.

Isaiah 42 verses 18 and 19, who is blind but my servant, or so deaf as my messenger whom I send. Israel was God's servant, but all of Israel didn't always fulfill the mission. And Israel is being punished in the context for her sins.

And so, God raises up one within Israel to suffer on behalf of Israel. And you have this in Isaiah chapter 49, where one suffers on behalf of Israel. And again, 52:13 through 53 in verse 12, where one suffers on behalf of Israel.

You can see this maybe as the righteous remnant, or maybe ultimately, well, retrospectively, we can see it as fulfilled by Jesus. And then Jesus' followers are also to be light to the nations. We're supposed to fulfill the servant's mission in that way.

But the one who suffers on behalf of Israel, says he hasn't done anything wrong. Israel back in chapter 40, they're being punished double for their sins. But in chapter 53, no unrighteousness was found in his mouth and he suffers on behalf of his people.

And actually in 52:13 through 15, you'll sprinkle many nations and so on. But anyway, so we have links in this passage to the following argument. The word *paraptoma*, transgression that we have here, prepares for six uses of that in the next chapter in 5:15 through 20.

Dicaiosis or acquittal prepares for 5:18, where it contrasts with *paraptoma*, is opposed to the transgression. We have acquittal from God. The following unit, 5:1 through 11, but then going beyond that, the following unit fleshes out the meaning of Jesus' death on account of sin.

Turning away God's wrath in 5:9 through Jesus' death. In 5:18 and 19, Jesus' perfect obedience, even to the point of death, reversing Adam's disobedience. Well, we have been righted and reconciled by Christ.

Chapter five, verses one through 11. Here, Paul continues to apply Abraham's example from chapter four. That's why at the beginning you have therefore in 5.1. Believers have been righted by faith.

He's already said that in 4.25 and spoke of those who believe in 4.24. Well, now he says that we have peace with God. Now there's a textual variant. There's a debate about whether it means we have peace with God or let us have peace with God.

But in the context, it's much more likely that it's saying we have peace with God. It's something that God has already accomplished. We are no longer enemies, chapter five and verse 10.

We've been reconciled to him, verses 10 and 11. So we're no longer at enmity with God. We now have peace with God.

This was accomplished through Jesus' death and resurrection in 4.25. Chapter five and verse two. Jesus has ushered believers into grace by faith, giving us this grace in which we stand. Grace and faith echo things that he's been saying all along, 3:22, 3:24, 4:3, and 4:16. I know I sound repetitive giving all the verse numbers, but what I'm trying to do is just to show you how closely connected the argument is.

Paul is really brilliant in how he ties these things together and the way his mind works with scripture. Well, through Jesus, we have this grace in which we now stand. There's some debate again about verb tenses, but we may understand that the perfect tense of this means that we remain in God's grace.

In contrast with falling in 11:20 and 14:4, we shouldn't think of ourselves as moving in and out of a state of grace. Like, oh, I sneezed. Oh, I hope I didn't fall out of grace.

Paul does speak of falling out of grace sometimes. I mean, he does speak of the need for perseverance. Galatians chapter five and verse four.

You've fallen from grace. You've been cut off from Christ. You seek to be justified by the law.

We'll see some of that in Romans 11:22 and so on. But it's not like we are in a tenuous situation. We have believed in Christ.

We've been baptized into Christ. The Holy Spirit lives in us. We are a temple for the Holy Spirit.

So as long as we don't turn away from Christ, we are in Christ. Unfortunately, some people do turn away. And whether they were not saved to begin with, according to a Calvinist approach, or whether they were saved and they fell away, according to the Anomian approach, we have to deal with at this point.

Although I might say that it probably depends on which text you're looking at, because some texts deal with it from God's eternal standpoint, and some texts deal with it from the standpoint of human experience. And I think that actually both may be correct. We just need to figure out which standpoint we're looking from, but be that as it may.

Boasting. Well, you've got a false boast in God, *kaukaumai*, in God, or in the law back in 2:17 and 23. But in chapter five and verse two, in Jesus, believers can boast in hope.

And also we boast in our sufferings, joyfully boast in our sufferings, 5:3-5. Ultimately, he's going to summarize this in chapter five and verse 11, we boast in God. It's the same Greek word in each of these three cases, although it's not always translated the same way by all translators. I do not know why.

The word hope. What does it mean to boast in hope and hope being perfected through suffering? Well, in Jesus, suffering leads to hope. And it follows the example that he's just mentioned of Abraham's resurrection hope back in 4:18. The focus of our hope is eschatological salvation, end-time salvation, chapter eight, verses 20, 24 and 25.

Hope for sharing God's glory, chapter eight, verses 18, 21 and 30. What was lost in Adam is now restored in Christ, the glory being restored. Hope during suffering.

Like Abraham in 4:19, we trust God's promise, even facing impossible obstacles, 5:3. We boast not only in hope directly, 5:2, but an affliction that ultimately reinforces hope, 5:3, and then again in chapter eight. Some philosophers and apocalyptists, and apocalyptic Jewish authors talked about rejoicing, even though you were suffering. Paul uses a rousing rhetorical chain.

It's a rhetorical device of climax or *sorites*, it's sometimes called, where one thing leads to another, leads to another. He says that our suffering, our tribulation leads to endurance and ultimately leads to hope. Endurance is a necessary expression of faith for eternal life.

He's mentioned that back in chapter two in verse seven. Faith doesn't save if it's not persevering faith. Both Calvinists and Arminians agree on that point.

The people who don't agree on that point are mixing and matching parts of Calvinism and Arminian that they want to and coming up with something that is convenient. There were people I met in the streets. They told me that they were, I asked them if they knew Christ if they knew for sure where they were going.

They said, yes. And you ask them why. They prayed a prayer with somebody 15 years earlier, never had been to church, didn't really think about God, wasn't an important part of their life.

That's not saving faith because saving faith means we come to God. We come over to God's side. We're saved from a rebellion against him.

So, endurance is necessary. Faith didn't save without endurance. You have that in 11:22. Lest you also be cut off.

First Corinthians 9:27 where Paul says, lest I myself become a castaway or become unapproved. Second Corinthians chapter 13, we'll test yourselves to see if you're in the faith. Trust you'll realize that we're not adakamos, unapproved.

Galatians 4.19, I'm in labor until Christ is formed in you again. 5.4 I already mentioned and I could keep going. Certainly, when you get to Hebrews, but even James chapter 5 verses 19 and 20, 2 Peter chapter 2, and Revelation a number of times.

In any case, the texts that say, if you continue in the faith. Now again, I'm not going to get into the debate between Calvinists and Arminians, but both agree you need to persevere. So, he speaks of affliction, bringing about tested character, dokime, what has stood the test, 5.4. Faith is shown to be genuine through the pressures of life.

It doesn't have to be perfect, but it grows. We can contrast adakamos, one who failed the test back in chapter 1 and verse 28. This is dokime.

It stands the test. And you have similar ideas in James chapter 1 verses 2 through 4 and 1 Peter 1:6 and 7, and so on. Genuineness is proved there and by the help of the spirit in 5:5 that vindicates one's hope of eternal life.

If you've been walking with the Lord and trials have come and you're still walking with the Lord, that gives you assurance. Paul says that in Philipians 1. He says, you know, I believe that you will persevere. And the context is because of all the things you've already, you know, you've stood the test of time.

Hebrews chapter 6 is something similar. Unashamed of hope, 5:5. Well, some of that language may evoke Psalm 119, verse 116, where a person could be ashamed if their hope proves false. But we will not be ashamed of our hope.

Believers will not be put to eschatological shame. You have that in 116. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel.

And in 9:33 and 10:11, where whoever trusts in him will not be put to shame. What is the basis of our confidence here in verse 5? The basis of our confidence in God's spirit attesting God's love for us. What does he mean by the love of God? You know, here we have the same thing with the genitive construction.

Is it God's love for us our love for God or our love for one another? Believers' love for God appears in 8.28. God's love may be through us. At 15:30, we're loved by the spirit for one another. But the context here is God's love for us.

Just like you have in 8.35 and 39, nothing will separate us from God's love. In 5.8, God demonstrated his love for us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us. So the love of God here is God's love for us.

The spirit of God has come into our hearts and assures us of a good outcome because God's spirit attests that God loves us and that God is with us. When we talk about hearing God's voice, you know, there are different ways that God can speak. Certainly, you know, in Acts, he often spoke about evangelism.

That's a theme of Acts. So those are the things that are recorded. The spirit says, go up and join to this chariot, or go down and receive these men who have come to you.

But I think one of the things God speaks to us most often and most deeply, the deepest core of our being, is the reminder that he loves us. Sometimes we may not be ready to listen to that because of our legalistic background or something like that, but that's what God is speaking to us, is his love for us and that we are his children. We'll see that in chapter 8. When I was a really young Christian, you know, I'd have these feelings and impressions, and sometimes it would help me in terms of ministering to somebody.

But sometimes, you know, it was just due to what I had for dinner, indigestion. But one day I was out praying and I just felt that God, I felt in my heart that God was going to give me what I asked him. And God knew what I wanted most.

I wanted to hear him. And I asked him to open my ears to hear his voice. And I expected him to say something like Keener, I'm going to tell you you've been doing this wrong, this wrong, this wrong.

But instead, it was the most beautiful love I'd ever heard. And every day I'd go out to hear him again. Not that the place mattered, but, you know, I was a young Christian, I didn't realize.

But this was a place where I'd met with God. And so, it was a meaningful thing to go back and listen to him again. But the first thing I heard him say was my child, I love you so much.

And I've been waiting so long for you to realize that. Because you're busy doing this thing and that thing because you think it pleases me. And it's not that I don't value those things.

But most of all, I love you. Why do you run from my embrace? From that day on, I began to learn about his love more deeply. And one day, it was my first time ever being in love.

I said, God, how much do you love me? Kind of mushy, like a teenager, first in love, perhaps. And he said, my child, look at the cross. Look at the nails in Jesus' hands.

Look at the nail in his feet, the spear in his side, the thorns in his brow. See the blood. My son, that's how much I love you.

And I could tell more stories about that. But I began to realize nobody could really know what God is really like and not fall madly in love with him. And most of the world just doesn't know how gracious God is.

I didn't even realize that's what this text was talking about. But this text talks about God poured out his love in our hearts. Through the Holy Spirit, it was given to us.

The next three verses define that love in terms of the cross. So, it's like the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, pointing to the cross and saying, that's how much I love you. That's the price I paid so that you would be mine.

And nothing can separate us from the love of God. And that's our assurance. That's how we know that we'll be with him because he loves us that much.

He says the love of God is poured out through the Spirit, echoing the language of the Holy Spirit being poured out like in Joel 2:28 and 29 and some other texts, Isaiah 32, Isaiah 44, Ezekiel 39. And it's also like, because the Holy Spirit was often associated with inspiration, the Spirit just inspiring us with that knowledge. And he speaks of the Spirit as a gift.

Of course, the prophets spoke of the Spirit being poured out on all God's people in the end time. But there were some Jewish traditions that said, well, you know, nobody's really worthy of the Spirit in our generation. Or maybe Hillel was worthy of the Spirit, but his generation wasn't worthy that he should receive the Spirit.

But Galatians chapter five and verse five, to all of us, we've received the Spirit from God as a gift. And God's love, the Spirit points to the sacrifice of Christ in verses six through nine. Christ was delivered over for our transgressions, 4:25.

And now Paul is going to elaborate on that point. Rarely would a person die for another and then only for somebody good. Death for friends was a Greek value, but who would die for their enemies? But Christ died for us while we were his enemies.

Sinners, 5:8 he says. Wrath-worthy in 5:9. God's enemies in 5:10. 5:6 through 11 explains Jesus dying because of our transgressions. 4:24 says it's because Jesus died because of our transgressions.

Well, no, 5:6 through 11 explains what it means that Jesus died because of our transgressions. You have different aspects of Jesus' death treated elsewhere, like in 5:18 and 19, or 6.3 through 10. But here we have in 5:9, Jesus' blood propitiates God's wrath.

Again, crucifixion wasn't primarily bloody. That wasn't the central feature of that kind of death. But the mention of the blood there is for theological reasons.

Modern theology is often uncomfortable with God's wrath. Unlike Paul, who speaks of it, Romans 9:22, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 3:17, 8:10, 11:30-32, Philippians 1:28, 3:19, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 2:16, 5:3, 5:9, and in Romans 1:18, 2:5, 2:8, 2:12, 3:5, 4:15. Look, if you don't want to believe in wrath, the God can be angry with sin. It's going to be a lot of scripture you're going to have to deal with.

But that highlights the depths of Christ's sacrificial love here. It fits some biblical and other ancient conceptions. If you want to see blood linked with the atonement, Exodus 29:36, 30:10, 34:25, Leviticus, a few passages there.

Blood appeasing God's wrath, Numbers 16:46. Sin offerings are often linked with atonement. A whole paragraph of examples there. Guilt offerings also.

You have vicarious atonement in Canaanite and Hittite rituals. You have it in Greco-Roman paganism. You have this understanding in early Judaism.

Jinte Kim talks about it. So, people should have understood the point that is being made here. But we have a section summary in chapter five, verse 11, or at least I believe it's probably a section summary.

Concluding summaries were very common. Salvation also depends on the resurrection. We see 5:9 and 10 and 4:24 to 5:25. Boasting in 5:11 climaxes what we have in 5:2 and 3. And he says, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that frames the paragraph. It's what's called an inclusio, where you start and end on the same note, but you don't necessarily have inverted parallelism in between 5:1 and 5:11. So, the next time we're going to look at the running contrast that Paul makes between Adam and the one that he portrays as a new Adam, as Christ. But as we continue to do this, let's remember that what we have, the eternal life we have, our existence as created beings we owe to God, but our salvation we owe to God.

And it costs God a very great price. Never forget how much God loves you because that's what the cross proves.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session number 6 on Romans 3:24-5:11.