

## Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 17, Romans 16:7-20

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session 17 on Romans 16:7-20.

In Romans chapter 16 and verse 7, we've been looking at Andronicus and Junia.

Well, here it says that they were outstanding among the apostles. Now, some people have argued, well, Junia was a male apostle along with Andronicus. And they have said that it's really Junias, but it doesn't work in the original language.

Junia is clearly a woman here. Against some translations, Junia was always a woman's name in ancient texts. We have no exceptions to that in ancient literature.

The proposed contraction of the male Junianus doesn't work because that's a contraction that doesn't occur anywhere for Junianus, partly because with a Latin name, it's not supposed to work. You don't contract a Latin name like that from Junianus to Junias. It's Junia.

So, most scholars conclude that she's an apostle alongside Andronicus, partly because Paul nowhere appeals to the opinion of the apostles as a group. And partly because even John Chrysostom, in a period where women's activities were more restricted than they'd been even in an earlier time, recognizes her as being called an apostle here. It seems to express surprise, but he says, look, she's even called an apostle by Paul.

Grammatically, it has been argued the other way, and I believe it can be argued the other way if you have reason to argue it the other way. But because Paul nowhere appeals to the opinion of the apostles as a group, I think this is what it means, most likely. We can't arbitrarily reduce or limit the significance of the apostle here.

In the gospels usually, and in Luke-Acts, certainly except for a passage in Acts chapter 14, where Paul and Barnabas are called apostles, the label apostles seems to be restricted to the 12. But Paul in his writings, of which this is one, does not limit the term apostle exclusively to the 12. Paul uses the term for himself, which again, Luke does only a couple of times in Acts chapter 14, but Paul uses it for himself in Romans 1:1, Romans 11:13. Those are the only other two uses of the term apostle in Romans.

He uses it elsewhere for James, Galatians 1. He uses it for Silas and Timothy, probably in the Thessalonian correspondence. 1 Corinthians 15, he speaks of Jesus

appearing to the 12 and then some others, and then to all the apostles. So, for Paul, it's a larger group than the 12.

And Junia may have even been one of that larger group earlier, although if he's thinking in terms of the 70 that were sent in Luke, probably, well, she could have been sent out with her husband, but that would probably be the only way it could have been done. But in any case, Paul uses the term more broadly. Now, whenever it's used as apostles of the churches, he always says apostles of the churches.

There are a couple of places where you have that as messengers of the churches, but here he doesn't limit it. They're just outstanding among the apostles. And if you don't have it, if you're not using it in the narrower sense of just the 12, if you're using it in the Pauline sense, we have no reason to reject her as being an apostle in the Pauline sense, unless we're starting with the premise that a woman can't be an apostle.

In which case we may be assuming what we were claiming to be proving because it's kind of circular in that case. My reason for bringing that up is that Romans greets twice as many men as women, but he commends twice as many of the women as the men. And I'm not really suggesting we establish a quota, but this isn't unique to Romans chapter 16.

We have other texts involving women speaking for God. We have women speaking for God in a prophetic way. In the Old Testament, we have Miriam, Exodus 15.

She's a close prophetess. Huldah, Second Kings 22. She seems to be the most prominent prophetic figure of that part of Josiah's reign.

Later on, Jeremiah is very important. Jeremiah was already around at this point, I think. But Huldah, is sent to give the word of the Lord, just like Isaiah. Isaiah was a century earlier by Hezekiah to give the word of the Lord in a similar situation.

Deborah, Judges 4:4, judge over all of Israel. And of course, it was distinctive. It wasn't common.

The Hebrew even specifies she was a woman judge, emphasizing that. And prophetess wasn't quite as unusual. But you think back, how many people were both prophets and judges? You've got Samuel, you've got Deborah, and maybe you could consider Moses that way, but that's it.

So, in terms of prophetic judges who speak the word of the Lord and rule God's people by the spirit of God, that's probably the closest model we have in the Old Testament for New Testament apostles, 2 Corinthians 3 with Moses and so on. But you have Isaiah's wife in Isaiah chapter 8, where he goes into the prophetess. In the New Testament, you have Anna paired with Simeon in the temple, Luke chapter 2.

You also have Philip's four daughters in Acts chapter 21, who are in a way paired with Agabus.

Agabus also appears earlier in Acts, but Luke likes to emphasize this because what is the prophecy that is so central in his programmatic Acts chapter 2 verses 17 and 18, your sons and daughters will prophesy. On my male and female servants, I'll pour out my spirit. And he goes on and adds in line to Joel, they'll prophesy.

So, this outpouring of the spirit for prophetic speech in once Jesus has come and once the spirit has been poured out is to all genders, both genders, all flesh, young and old, and so forth. And we have probably that in Acts chapter 21. Paul mentions women prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11.

So long as their heads are covered, they're allowed to pray and prophesy. Despite the passage that say that they have to remain silent in the church unless he's talking about lip-syncing, chances are he's not saying that they can't pray and prophesy. He's talking about something else.

They can pray and prophesy as long as their heads are covered, which is another issue that I would get into in great detail and have written on in some detail, including dictionary articles and so on it, if I were teaching on 1 Corinthians 11. But that would be too much of a digression. So I'm not going to get into that here.

So, we have a woman judge. We have apparently here a woman apostle. Elsewhere in this chapter, we have women as Paul's fellow workers and diakonos in the case of Phoebe, which is some sort of ministry used for the same label for Paul and his fellow ministers.

Again, those are the most two common ministry terms that are used by Paul's fellow ministers in his writings, diakonos and synergos. Well, against this, we have a couple of texts that talk about women keeping silent in the church. 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35 and 1 Timothy 2:11 and 12.

Now in your church, I don't know, are women allowed to participate in congregational singing? If they are, your church is not following this to the letter about women keeping silent in all ways, but you don't have to feel bad about it because we do have women speaking for God in some other passages. They're a minority, and that's not surprising given the culture, some of the things that I mentioned about the culture in general earlier. But how much silence do these texts involve? Well, on that, scholars disagree, and church traditions disagree as well.

Part of this also will depend on how much value you give to subsequent centuries of church tradition as well, although there are some churches where in recent centuries, they have like Salvation Army founders, William and Catherine Booth,

were very much adamant in favor of women in ministry, preaching. Some of the early Methodists allowed some women preaching, but especially in the 19th century, that became much more common. And in the 20th century, in the 1920s, you have a woman who's pastoring a megachurch in California.

Sometimes people think this started in the 1960s. Actually, in the 1860s, there was a real revival of support of women in ministry in the holiness movement. And to this day, it's been argued, I haven't seen the basis for the statistics, but it's been argued that the majority of women ordained in history have been ordained in the holiness and Pentecostal movements.

But whatever the case may be, in terms of whatever church tradition you're from, all of us, whatever church tradition we're from, if we allow women to sing congregationally in the church, wonder what it means that women have to keep silent? What does it mean that Junia was an apostle if in fact, that's how we interpret it? What does it mean that Phoebe was a diakonos? What does it mean that Prisca and Aquila were both Paul's fellow servants? Well, maybe it's different if it's a ministry team. Maybe it's different if maybe she's ministering mainly to the women, and he's ministering mainly to the men. There are a lot of details that we don't have.

But whatever the case, how does that fit with the women keeping silent, at least for congregational singing? Well, in 1 Corinthians 14, he says they need to keep silent. If they want to ask anything, ask their husbands at home, and then he comes back to the issue of silence. What I've argued, and there are a whole bunch of different views in 1 Corinthians 14, but if I go into all of them, then I'm really digressing from Romans 16.

There are a whole lot of different views in Romans, on 1 Corinthians 14, including Gordon Fee's argument that it's not part of the original text. I don't really buy that myself. I think D.A. Carson's argument that it is part of the original text is more persuasive, at least to me.

But people, text critics are actually divided on this. But my argument is, okay, unless he's changing the subject and changing the subject back again, and he's already doing a digression, then you see me doing that because right now I'm digressing from a digression, right? So, Paul, unless he's changing the subject and changing the subject back again, probably the issue there about silence is not congregational singing. Probably the issue about silence there, and elsewhere he says, all of you, because these were house churches, each of you can bring some gift.

You can bring what you've heard from the Lord. You can bring a song for the Lord. You can bring something.

Probably what he's referring to is the asking of questions. Why would that be an issue? Why were people asking questions? In any kind of lecture setting in antiquity, Jewish, Greek, or Roman, it was customary for people to interrupt the lecture with questions. Now, some questions were appropriate.

Some questions were just to try to make the teacher look bad. That would be inappropriate in a church context unless the teacher was saying something really stupid. But I did do that one time in a Sunday school class when the teacher was saying, you know, it's not like, you know, the Exodus when God turned back the sea, you know, it wasn't like these liberals say that it was just by wind.

And he was thinking like Cecil B. DeMille. And so, I opened Exodus chapter 14 and I read, what then does it mean, sir, when it says that God blew back the sea by a strong east wind? And he said, well, well, well, just, I mean, he used wind, but it was still God. Well, no, no argument there.

I just, probably was being rude. I probably shouldn't have done that. But anyway, they would sometimes interrupt with unlearned questions.

And that was that that was the worst thing of all. Well, why would women interrupt with unlearned questions? Well, most of them were unlearned. And so short-range solution would be, to let them ask their husbands at home.

The vast majority of women, especially Greek women, were married at an early age because, you know, there was a shortage of women and it was expected. Actually, you got tax breaks in the Roman Empire if you were, for Roman women certainly, if you married early and remarried quickly and so on as a widow or whatever. But also it was an issue because there was still a more conservative culture in which women weren't supposed to speak openly.

That was especially true among Greeks. It was, it was in some cases in very conservative Jewish culture as well. It wasn't as much the case in Rome or Macedonia, as we'll see.

So that may have been an issue culturally. House church is kind of a mixed setting. Are you in public or are you in private? I mean, you're in a house, but it's a gathering and women were not supposed to speak in front of other women's husbands according to very conservative tastes that not everybody shared.

But so those may have been some issues about not causing people to stumble, whatever. But even in those cases, even Greeks recognized inspired speech is different. You let them say whatever they need to say.

First Timothy chapter two, verses 11 and 12, let women keep silent. Well, what does that mean? In terms of the situation, the first and second Timothy are in the only set of letters and the only, the where we specifically know that false teachers were targeting women with their false teaching. Second Timothy chapter three says, talks about these false teachers as worming their way into women's households to, to lead astray these, these women who were ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

So, they were specifically targeting women. Well, why were they targeting women? Maybe one reason was the women weren't trained. Even, even the Jewish women didn't, didn't know the Torah as well as the men did.

Also, first Timothy chapter five speaks, of women going from house to house, spreading, being, being busybodies, and spreading gossip. Now, one of the terms there actually probably means spreading nonsense. Gordon Fee showed this in, in teaching contexts that can have to do with spreading false teaching.

In other contexts, at least it means spreading nonsense. And, and I said, can you, can you show me the Greek texts for that? So, he sent me a printout of every example of the word in Greek literature. I said, okay, I believe you.

But in any case, these were, these were widows. Why, would widows be used by false teachers to spread false ideas? And especially in 2 Timothy chapter three, why were they targeting women, but probably especially the widows? Well, the widows, there was no man there. And the homes that were owned by women were usually owned by widows.

And where did churches meet? In homes. So, it makes sense of the situation there. Now, Paul goes on in 1 Timothy chapter two, verses 13 and 14, to ground it in something in creation.

And that's, that's where it really becomes an issue about how far we take this. So you have a division, between those who will allow women to have almost any ministry and those who will restrict their ministry. Although I, tend to support, well, no, I support women having a wide range of ministries.

I don't want to restrict their ministry. I see more cultural influence here on some points, but I have very good friends who hold the opposite view, including very good friends who write very good commentaries in Romans. So, this is one of the issues where I think Christians can hold different views.

It often depends on which texts we start with. We start with the women prophesying. We start with Deborah and so on.

Some people say, well, we don't have any women named as pastors in the New Testament. That's true. We also didn't have any men specifically named as pastors either.

The main terms that Paul uses for his fellow ministers are *sunergoi* and *diakonos*. And at least in one case, we have that used for a woman in each. So how do we, how do we resolve the differences? It depends sometimes on which texts we start with, and which texts we view as more normative.

So, some people do it this way. You have a rule, 1 Corinthians 14, 1 Timothy 2, but you make exceptions in certain cases. Some people will do it this way, women are allowed to do these things except in exceptional circumstances.

And that's how I view these passages in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2. And you have others who say it refers to different kinds of ministries. They're allowed to do certain kinds, but not other kinds. But then I say, if they can be a judge over all of Israel and an apostle, why restrict it? So, I'm giving you my view.

I'm also trying to give you the other views. But at least wherever we come down, all of us can agree that women can continue in congregational singing, right? So, we can all still be friends. Philippians chapter 2, quoting here the NIV, I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche, these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

He's going to go on to talk about their division with each other. But here were women also who were engaged in ministry alongside Paul, ministry of some sort alongside Paul in Philippians chapter 4. Notice where we find the clustering of women mentioned being involved in ministry in Paul's writings, Romans chapter 16 and Philippians chapter 4. I don't think that's a coincidence. Rome and Philippi were two of the more gender progressive locations, two of the most gender-progressive locations in the empire.

And of the cities that Paul wrote to, they were probably the most gender-progressive places in the empire. Is it possible that women were more apt to pursue ministry where it was more open for them? And at least I want to ask the question, is it possible that more women would pursue ministry where their ministries would be more affirmed, where their ministries would be more welcomed? So you can think about that and may the Lord give us all wisdom as the church is moving forward in his work. Romans chapter 16 verses 8 through 10, Ampliatus 16:8, and Urbanus in 16:9. These were both common slave names.

If Paul met them in the Eastern Mediterranean, probably these were freed persons which would explain how they could move to Rome. Paul hadn't met them in Rome, obviously, because he hadn't been there yet. Urbanus is a Latin name.

So maybe he was named and then freed by a citizen. If he was freed by a Roman citizen, he would be a Roman citizen himself. So, he would be one of the Roman citizens on the list, even though many of them appear not to be.

But again, there's a lot we don't know. 16.10, the household of Aristobulus. This one's interesting.

Households could include slaves. That's the way they used the term household back then. So maybe slaves and freed persons from the household of Aristobulus.

Now, Aristobulus was a prince from the line of Herod the Great. And we know that he lived in Rome. He may be dead at this point, but in his household, it would be prestigious to mention people who belong to that particular household.

And in verse 11, we're going to have somebody named Herodian, who also could be a member of that household. That could be where he got his name. 16.11, slaves of powerful people could themselves be powerful and even rich.

They could control an enormous amount of wealth. It's again, very different. Household slavery in Rome was very different from most of the slavery that we know about in the Americas, even for the most part, very different from household slavery in the Americas, although women could get sexually harassed either way.

But the slaves of the powerful could be powerful and rich. And certainly, when they became freed persons, freed persons of powerful people often were very powerful. Sometimes slaves of Caesar and certainly freed persons of Caesar wielded more power than Roman senators did.

Herodian, his name, again, from what we know of names in antiquity, his name may suggest that he was a slave or a former slave from the family of the Herods, who had certain members of the family staying in Rome and their households staying in Rome. Also, the household of Narcissus. Now, given the size of Rome, it's very possible that there were, there were probably multiple people named Narcissus, but it might be particularly prestigious to name members of this household.

You may not be able to mention their individual names, but to say members of the household of Narcissus. That was fairly prestigious. Narcissus was Claudius's freedman secretary.



He wielded great power. As far as how much he owned, he had 400 million sesterces, pretty rich. That would, I guess, take an average person, what, 400 million years to earn, 400 million days to earn, sorry.

So maybe just a million years. But Pallas was the freedman of Antonia. He was a different freedman and he supported Agrippa II.

Well, we call her Agrippa Jr. We call her, to distinguish her from Germanicus, the wife of Agrippa. See, this is why I need to stick to my notes because being ADD and having all this other information, I keep, I keep going off on tangents. The one nice thing about tangents is it keeps you from circular reasoning, right? Okay, sorry.

So, Pallas, Antonia's freedman, supported Agrippina to marry, but my students think it's very entertaining, supported Agrippina to marry Claudius. This was after the execution, well, or the forced suicide of Messalina, his first wife who tried to have him killed and take over the throne and so on. But Narcissus was rooting for a different woman.

So, when Claudius married Agrippina, then Narcissus fell from power and this other freedman, Pallas, became the person who had so much power. Pallas, you may have heard of his brother, Felix, who was appointed as governor of Judea, even though he was a freedman. He wasn't technically supposed to be in the class that could become governors.

But Agrippina won out, so Pallas won out, and Narcissus lost a lot of his role, but he continued to be able to do things to have some role until in the year 54, shortly after Nero came to power, well, Narcissus was forced to commit suicide because Nero's mother really didn't like him because he had advocated a different wife for the previous emperor, Claudius, whom she then helped to expire so that her son Nero could become the next emperor. She also helped with the expiration of Britannicus, who was the other potential heir to the throne. But anyway, that's going off the subject.

So, if it's referring to the same Narcissus, he would be dead at this point, but recently dead, but his household would still have some prominence because of the association with his previous prominence. It could be a different Narcissus, but it could be the famous, the well-known one. Chapter 16 and verse 12, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis.

All of these are women's names. Tryphena is a known name. Tryphosa, well, they just needed a name to go with Tryphena.

The fact that they apparently were named together probably suggests that they were twins. At least they would have been sisters. They would have come from the same household.

Persis, a very rare Greek name. Most often when it was used, it was used for slaves and freed persons, and it was especially used for slaves who had been imported from Persia. So she may be a slave or a freedwoman from Central Asia, from a background in Asia.

Rufus and his mother, 1613. Now, when Paul speaks of Rufus's mother as also my mother, he's not literally, physically Rufus's brother, most likely. It's fictive kinship language, of which we have a good bit in the New Testament.

Nothing wrong with fictive kinship language. It's like when we say brother or sister. It did get the Christians in trouble with their detractors in the early second century where you have critics of the Christians saying they commit incest because they're saying things like, I love you brother, I love you sister.

Also, they were accused of cannibalism for eating the Lord's supper and saying they were eating the body and blood of the Lord. But calling people your brothers and sisters in Christ, we are that literally in a sense, spiritually, but it's fictive in terms of genetically. So, when people spoke of somebody as their mother who wasn't their genetic mother, it was somebody that they really respected and somebody they were really close to.

Now in my wife's culture, often you can call many people who are older mothers or whatever, but this was used as a special title of intimacy. It was a close bond. This was somebody that Paul had been close to.

So, this is somebody that Paul knows. Presumably, she's widowed. That's an argument from silence and I think it's a stronger argument from silence than some because the husband isn't mentioned, but it's not for sure.

Probably she's widowed and she's somebody known to Paul since he hasn't been in Rome yet. Presumably, Rufus and his mother are people that he's known from elsewhere. Now maybe Rufus is the son of Simon of Cyrene and this is the widow of Simon of Cyrene that you may remember from Mark 15:21. Because Mark 15:21, possibly written to the church in Rome, many scholars think it was written to the church in Rome, Simon of Cyrene is identified as the father of two people that the church, receiving the gospel of Mark first, knew by name.

He's the father of Alexander and Rufus. Well, there were many diaspora Jews in Jerusalem, like in Acts 6:9, which could explain the Roman name, although it wasn't limited to Libertines or even Roman citizens. Persecution scattered many of the

Cyrenian Jerusalemite believers, which presumably could have included Simon of Cyrene.

Since he's mentioned by name in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, chances are the church knew who he was. It wasn't just he carried the cross and they never saw him again. This was somebody who became a follower of Jesus, and became part of their movement.

So, persecution scattered many of the Cyrenian Jerusalemite believers to Antioch. They're scattered in 8.4 and 11.20. It says many of them were scattered to Antioch. Well, Paul ends up in Antioch.

He could have known of Simon of Cyrene when he was the one scattering people from Jerusalem. He could have known of Simon of Cyrene when he got to Antioch. One of the leaders of the church there in Antioch is from Cyrene, Lucius of Cyrene.

So, Paul was also on the leadership team of the church in Antioch after Barnabas came to Tarsus and got him. So, Acts 13:1, Paul is on that leadership team. So, if Mark is written for Rome, this very strong church tradition is that Mark got his message from Peter, apparently in Rome.

He presupposes that his audience knows Rufus, Simon's son. It could be the same, Rufus. This could be the son of Simon of Cyrene.

So, it's interesting. This is not something we can say with certainty, but it's interesting. Cyrene was in North Africa.

Now, we don't know the ethnicity of people in Cyrene just from where they are. Simon was a common Greek name. It was also used very commonly by Jewish people because it's very similar to the patriarchal name, Simeon.

Simon Appelbaum wrote a whole book on Cyrene, what we know of Cyrene, especially Jews in Cyrene. It may have been about one-third Greek, one-third indigenous Libyans, and one-third Jewish. So, Simon of Cyrene, presumably if he's there for the festival of Passover or if he's moved there, which is even more likely, Simon of Cyrene was probably, well, he was Jewish in his faith.

What his background ethnicity was, we don't know. But anyway, he's from North Africa. Many leaders are named in Romans 16 verses 14 and 15.

In this case, it's not clear that Paul knows very much about them. He speaks of the brothers and the sisters with them. So, clearly, these are leaders of house churches.

He knows the names of the leaders, but he doesn't know all their names. So, he names as many as he can, but he mentions Nereus and his sister. She's the only one unnamed.

But it's helpful to greet all of them. And the reason I say he didn't have to name everybody, that he seems to be trying to name as many as he can. It's helpful to greet them all before he comes, especially if factions exist.

And he knows directly only the people in this faction. It's helpful to name also the people in the other faction to send them greetings as well. And of course, one danger is once you start, where do you stop? That's something I struggle with sometimes.

But it's helpful to greet all before he comes, especially if factions exist. And he's trying to unite the church in Rome. Some of the others that are mentioned here, Olympas, is probably an abbreviation of the Greek male name Olympiodorus.

Also, we have some Roman names. One Roman name here, Julia. Earlier, Rufus was a Roman name, and later Quartus is a Roman name.

By Roman name, I mean in the Latin language. He finishes listing the people he's greeting, and he says, greet one another with a holy kiss, verse 16. Now, sometimes teachers and pupils would greet one another with kisses, maybe a kiss on the forehead or something.

Judas greets Jesus with a kiss in the Gospels, and that's not surprising because kisses were used that way, except it's what others, the people that are with Judas, want him to mark out the person. It's very dark. They want to make sure if people get away, they get the right person.

Regularly, however, kisses were used for relatives and close friends, and it was usually a kiss on the mouth. Now, different cultures are different in how they express greetings, and different cultures are different that using kisses as greetings and how they do it. In my wife's culture, people could kiss on either cheek.

In some Russian culture, from what I understand, you can kiss on the lips. In my culture, you can hug, but kissing on the lips, just the sense of hygiene seems to be very difficult, unless it's, of course, your wife or your husband. But in any case, it was normally a light kiss, not a passionate kiss.

Later on, this was abused in the church, and so the church limited it to the same gender, apparently assuming that most of the people in the church were heterosexual. But in any case, it was a light kiss on the lips. There's probably a reason why Paul specifies a holy kiss, but Paul does mention the kiss like five times.

Well, actually, one of those is 1 Peter, but he mentions it a number of times in his writings. I was in one culture where they practiced head coverings, and I was teaching the cultural background of head coverings, and not telling people they shouldn't wear head coverings, just teaching, explaining what the background was, why it was done in this first-century culture, and what was covered. It had to be all the hair, although if you went further east, it was even more than that.

You know, the other students, they were debating each other on how far to take this, whether it was necessary in all cultures or just necessary in their culture because it was part of their culture. One of the students insisted, any woman who goes to church in any culture and doesn't have her head covered will go to hell because the Bible says they must wear head coverings. I said, yes, but it commands holy kisses five times as often as it commands head coverings, and none of you greeted me with a holy kiss when I came into the room.

Nope, too late now, don't do it now. But I said earlier, I wasn't going to talk about head coverings, but just, you know, it was part of, it was considered part of modesty for women in that culture, and if a married woman went out in public with nude hair, it was considered to be an attempt at seduction in the eastern Mediterranean and more in conservative circles. I mean, a lot of upper-class women didn't do it.

That may have been part of the, there may have been a class conflict issue in the church, too, but anyway, I'm digressing. So, the kissing, the background of kissing. There may have been some, custom of secondary kissing.

I haven't found it very widely in ancient letters yet, but I haven't looked in the papyri yet, but Phrantos says, pass on my kiss to this person. So, Paul could have been saying, greet one another with a holy kiss from me, but probably he's just saying, just greet one another. Either way, it's something that would help unify the believers who are divided.

You know, if he's talking about unity, that's a good way to do it. And he also says, the churches greet you, the churches from the east. He's going to give more specific greetings from some of his co-workers in verses 21 to 23, but here he throws in general greetings from the churches.

And then he gets to some serious issues. Beyond the greetings, he gives some warnings, some final warnings to the church, and encouragements to the church. Verses 17 and 18, watch out for deceptive, exploitative teachers.

Watch out for these agitators. And the two things that he says to watch out for them first, he says, watch out for those who cause division and those who cause stumbling blocks. Well, division, that's kind of relevant to what we've seen in especially Romans

14:1 through 15:7. And stumbling blocks, well, he specifically mentioned those in 14:4, 13, and 21.

Now, he hasn't mentioned opponents earlier in the letter. He did mention people slandering him in 3:8, but he didn't mention specifically opponents earlier in the letter. And that gets me thinking that maybe this is a potential danger he's warning them about rather than people are already there doing it.

Although it may say something to members of the churches who may be divisive or being a stumbling block to one another. Philippians 3:2, he says, beware of dogs, beware of the circumcision, beware of those who mutilate the flesh. What's he talking about in Philippians 3:2? Have people come there doing the same thing as opponents in Galatia? There's a debate about whether they've actually come there or Paul's warning, they may be on their way.

But this might be potential, but either way, it's a serious warning. And he says, use as the standard, so you can recognize false teachings, so you're not led astray. Use as the standard, the teaching that you've already received.

He also mentions that teaching that they've received, is the only other use of Didache in Romans back in chapter 6 and verse 17. Well, the teaching that they've received would be the message by which they were saved. The basic kerygma and some of the teachings beyond it about Jesus and so on.

The apostolic message, the apostolic teaching. Paul hasn't been there to give them a lot of it, although he has given them a lot of it in his letter. And they seem to have been very interested in Paul when he shows up in Rome in Acts 28.

Before he shows up in Rome, believers from Rome come out to meet him and escort him on his way to the city. And they come in two separate groups, maybe because they were divided or maybe because of their work schedules, we don't know. But anyway, they seem to receive him well.

Although even in Rome, when he's under house arrest in Philippians, assuming it's written from Rome, which the majority of scholars think, including myself, if it's written from Rome, he does have some detractors that he mentions in Philippians chapter 1. And probably not the same people he's mentioned in 3:19 in Philippians. But anyway, apostolic teaching was a way to distinguish between true and false teachers. And the New Testament canon functions that way for us.

I mean, we don't have everything Paul said to the church in Rome once he got there, but we do have what Paul wrote to them in advance. And with the New Testament together, we have so much of the apostolic teaching that we can also, with the canon of Scripture that they had available to them, the Old Testament, plus what we have

from the New Testament, when we put that together, we know a whole lot that can help us distinguish between truth and error. Now these false teachers, he says in verse 18, are slaves of their bellies.

Well, Paul has spoken a lot about spiritual slavery throughout Romans, a lot, especially in chapter 6, but he alluded to it later on, how we should be slaves to God, not slaves to our passions, not slaves to sin. And also, he's talked about the passions of desires, 1:24, 1:26, 6:12, 7:5, 7:8, 13:14, and so on. Now, what does he mean by slaves of their bellies? He's just warned against those who cause others to stumble.

Maybe he's talking about those who are so much slaves of their bellies that they don't mind causing others to stumble with what they eat. However, it doesn't have to be in any way restricted to that. He uses similar language about their God as their belly in Philippians 3:19, or in 1 Corinthians 6:13, he speaks of the belly, but in context, what he's really implying is spiritual slavery in 1 Corinthians 6:12d, right before 6:13. In context, what he's talking about there in 1 Corinthians is sexual, not gastrointestinal.

So, slaves to their bellies actually was like a metonymy. It was used for a lot more than that. Originally it meant gluttony, but it had come to be used for any kind of self-indulgence.

This is all over the place in ancient philosophers, especially all over the place in Philo. Philo really uses that a lot. Philo of Alexandria, the Jewish philosopher in Northern Egypt.

Sometimes ancient writers, other ancient writers besides Paul, even use the same expression we have here, slaves of their bellies, for those who just were interested in themselves and not interested in something higher than themselves. There are people like that today, and some of them come in the name of the Lord, exploiting God's people, and we have to be careful about that. And their tricky rhetoric, also mentioned in chapter 16, verse 18.

Rhetoric was amoral. It could be used for good, it could be used for evil. That's why in this period many rhetoricians were more respectful towards philosophy, saying, well, we do need to think about virtue and vice, what's really the right way to use things and the wrong way to use things.

But rhetoric itself, people often tried to persuade people to do things that weren't right. I think I mentioned earlier about *rhetorica ad herenium*, giving instructions on how to lie under oath, trick people, or to do it without really lying, but to put it in such a way, you say something under oath, and then you say something, but this part isn't really under oath. And so, to try to sneak around things, Paul built rapport with people.

Paul, even in this verse, is going to use some nice phrasing. Paul isn't against being persuasive at all. We've seen that already.

But Paul avoided flattery. He talks about that in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 5. Back in chapter 15, verse 15, he talks about being bold. Well, moralists often warned against those who used flattery to tell people what wasn't really good for them.

You should instead boldly tell people what is good for them. And Paul has been doing that. He has been saying things, even controversial things, but he says them in a loving way.

Well, I talked about him using language here that would be appealing rhetorically. He uses these two terms for these people who use deceptive rhetoric, *crestologia* and *eulogia*. So, both of them end with *logia*, the kind of rhyme.

B. Dag, Bauer, Danker, Art, and Gingrich speak of *crestologia* as smooth, plausible speech. These people are smart-sounding. They make you want to believe them because they sound persuasive.

*Eulogia*, is eloquent, flattering praise kind of speech where they win you over. But they're deceitfully playing on their hearer's desires, these slaves of their bellies. We read about that in 2 Timothy 4.3, 2 Peter 2.1-3, 2 Peter 10-14.

They are doing evil and they're ready to exploit the potential for evil in their hearers. So, we need to watch out that they're not just appealing to things that are in us that shouldn't be in us. Just as sin deceives, they're deceiving.

Earlier in 7:11, Paul uses language like this to speak of sin deceiving and exploiting the law. Well, here people are deceiving and they're agents of sin. Some see Romans 7 as recalling the fall, Romans 5:12-21. And I don't see Paul doing that deliberately, but if they are correct, it's interesting because we're going to come up with probably an allusion to that in 16:20 that I do think is very likely.

And so maybe there's some of the other ones that people have seen. So, 16:19, the beginning of the verse, he's encouraging them to stay obedient. When I'm warning you about these people, I'm not saying you're doing anything wrong.

I'm just giving you a warning. Everybody's heard of your obedience. Your faith, he said in 1:8, toward the beginning of the letter, your faith is being announced everywhere.



And now he says, everybody's heard of your obedience. Well, Paul says that elsewhere about the Thessalonians. Everybody knew about the Thessalonians' faith, 1:9. They had suffered.

They'd seen him suffer and they had suffered. And word had gotten around, not only in Macedonia, he says, but everybody's heard of it. Well, that's hyperbole, not everybody in the whole world, in Nubia and China, and so on.

But in other words, word had gotten around. Well, even more so with Rome. Rome was the capital.

People were always traveling to and from Rome. So, news was always spreading from there. And people were saying, wow, this message of good news has even gone to the capital now.

Paul is going to say something that will excite the Christians in Philippi, a Roman colony, when he says in Philippians 4, by the way, those of Caesar's household greet you. Probably referring to some of the Praetorian guard who are with him, but he's talking about how it's spreading in the palace, spreading among probably the Praetorian guard. Paul's mission was to promote Gentile's obedience of faith.

Chapter 1, verse 5, 15, and 18, to promote Gentile's obedience. 16:26, promote Gentile's obedience of faith. So, everybody's heard of their obedience.

What has already been happening among them is the very thing that Paul wanted to encourage all the more. He also spoke of obedience in terms of Christ's obedience in 5:19, how we should be slaves for obedience to God in 6:16. He spoke about being obedient to the teaching in 6:17, which is relevant to this context because he's also talked about the teaching in 16:17. It's a major theme in the letter. It's not mentioned as often as faith, but clearly faith is meant to be expressed in action.

If we really believe something, if we really believe that a building is on fire, we don't just say, okay, I cognitively recognize that this building was on fire. And I cognitively recognize that it's getting warm in this room, cognitively recognize I'm smelling smoke. No, chances are, if we really believe it, we're going to act on it.

Now in the rest of this verse and going on into verse 20, we have, I think, a reversal of Adam. He speaks of being wise in what's good and innocent or unlearned, the word can mean, in what's evil. That's like Adam and Eve before the fall.

He talks about Adam in 5:12 through 5:21. And then he goes on in verse 20, okay, be innocent, know what's good, be wise in what's good, be innocent and unlearned in what's evil. Sometimes people will have heard me talk about what the Bible says

about demons or some subject like that. And you'll hear me say, I really don't like this topic.

Well, I really don't. And more than what the Bible says and more than what we've experienced, I really don't like to delve into that. I love to delve into Jesus.

We have to know something about those things but focus on Jesus. So, he also tells us elsewhere in scripture we're told and elsewhere in Paul, we're told not to be naive about those things. But if we focus on learning what's good we don't focus on learning evil, especially experientially, which was how Adam and Eve learned it by disobeying God.

Thus, he says, God will soon crush Satan beneath your feet, chapter 16 and verse 20. Well, the serpent was often, not always, but often identified with Satan in Jewish tradition. It's identified that way in Revelation 12:9. And that's probably true in Paul's thinking as well.

Second Corinthians 11:3, says, I don't want you to be deceived like Eve was deceived by the serpent. And in 11:14, Paul says, Satan comes even as an angel of light. Well, I think those are probably connected.

Certainly, they were connected in Jewish tradition. Paul is probably not referring to the example of that in Jewish tradition in what may even be a later document that's debated the life of Adam and Eve. I think he's probably referring to Eve being deceived by the serpent back in Genesis.

But in any case, I think Paul probably is thinking here about Satan also in terms of the serpent because Eve's seed was to crush the serpent, Genesis 3:15. And you also have the seed of the woman in Revelation 12 where you've got the serpent there. So, whether he thinks Satan was actually the serpent back then or Satan just used the serpent is also in some other Jewish tradition. And it's an analogy.

I'll leave that to the Genesis professors as much as I love Genesis and probably do think it was Satan myself. But anyway, whatever the case, Eve's seed will crush the serpent. Well, here they all belong to the new Adam.

He has triumphed. It's the already-not-yet. They're still awaiting the fullness of the triumph, but soon Satan will be crushed under their feet.

And Satan in early Judaism was an accuser. We already see that in Job 1 where he's Hasatan. He's the adversary and he comes and accuses Job.

And then more as a name in Zechariah 3.1 where he's accusing the high priest Joshua. In early Judaism, continued this thought of Satan being an accuser and a

tempter and a deceiver and developed these. I could give you stories about that, including there was this one man named Palimo in rabbinic literature who was cursing Satan.

The Dead Sea Scrolls also do that. And Palimo was going around saying, an arrow in your eye, Satan. And one day Satan actually showed up in person and chased him into a bathhouse.

And Palimo said, I surrender, I surrender. And Satan said, let that be a lesson to you, left him in the bathhouse. But we have stories about that in Jewish literature.

But that's just to show that people still continue to think a lot about these things. In Pauline literature, I'm just giving you examples where it actually uses the name Satan. There's also a couple that mentioned the evil one and so on, and the devil in Ephesians.

But handing over to Satan in 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 1:20 when the person is being excommunicated, so to speak. 1 Corinthians 5.5, handing him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of judgment.

Tempter, 1 Corinthians 7:5, lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

1 Timothy 5:15, deceiver. 2 Corinthians 2:11, we're not unaware of his schemes. And 11:14, a messenger of Satan is a thorn in the flesh.

2 Corinthians 12:7, what does that refer to? Well, the thorn in the flesh was a phrase from Numbers 33:55. I think it also is in Judges. I was going to say Joshua, but I think it's Judges. But in any case, a thorn in the flesh was an expression for the Canaanites who were left in the land.

In the same way, Paul has this thorn in the flesh. There's something that's still left there that the Lord hasn't delivered him from. And this is a messenger of Satan.

What does that refer to? Well, that's a big debate. Again, one of the bigger debates in 2 Corinthians studies. But one of the ideas is that it's a sickness.

Some people have said, it's eye sickness based on Galatians, but I've argued against that because that was a common figure of speech to be willing to give people your eye as a way of sacrificing for them. Some people have said that it was a psychological issue or depression or something. It could have been a physical problem.

It could have been a psychological problem. But I think most likely from the context, it was the persecutions that he faced. Some people also think it was the opponents

in Corinth, whatever it was, it was something that was motivated by Satan against him.

Also, Satan opposed Paul's return to Thessalonica, 1 Thessalonians 2:18. There are multiple things that could be, but probably it's the polyarchs decree against him back in Acts chapter 17. He couldn't come back until that expired when the polyarchs office when they retired from their office. So he'd been wanting to come back to Thessalonica.

He couldn't. He said Satan hindered us. But whatever that was, Satan can work through different things.

And then in 2 Thessalonians 2:9, Satan is being active in a very clear way through false prophets, signs, and deceptive wonders. It's not just God who has signs and wonders. Also, there are satanic signs and wonders.

Well, in the rest of this, the question is, should this be a long session and I run over or should I do a short session afterward? Maybe verses 21 to 27. I guess I can do a short session afterward. It won't hurt.

The next session will probably be a bit shorter than this one.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session 17 on Romans 16:7-20.