

Romans 16:7-20

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Session 17

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Abstract

This lecture by Dr. Craig Keener focuses on Romans 16:7-20, concentrating first on the identity and role of Junia as a prominent female apostle alongside Andronicus. Keener analyzes various New Testament and Old Testament texts regarding women speaking for God and the cultural contexts behind restrictions on women in ministry. He then examines the historical backgrounds of several individuals and households mentioned in Romans 16, such as Narcissus, Aristobulus, and Rufus. Finally, Keener addresses Paul's warnings against deceptive teachers and the promise of Satan being crushed under the believers' feet.

Outline

I. Introduction to Romans 16:7-20

A. Lecturer: Dr. Craig Keener

B. Session 17 Overview

II. Andronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7)

A. Junia's Identity as a Woman

1. Ancient texts consistently use "Junia" as a woman's name
2. Grammatical and linguistic arguments against the male "Junias" contraction

B. Junia's Status as an Apostle

1. Paul uses "apostle" more broadly than just the twelve (e.g., Barnabas, James, Silas, Timothy)
2. Early church fathers like John Chrysostom recognized her apostolic status

III. Biblical Precedents for Women in Ministry

A. Old Testament Figures

1. Miriam (prophetess)
2. Huldah (prominent prophetess during Josiah's reign)
3. Deborah (judge and prophetess)
4. Isaiah's wife (prophetess)

B. New Testament Figures

1. Anna paired with Simeon
2. Philip's four daughters (prophetic speech)
3. Phoebe (commended as diakonos and fellow worker)
4. Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila
5. Euodia and Syntyche (Philippians 4)

IV. Contextualizing Passages on Women Keeping Silent

A. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

1. Custom of interrupting lectures with questions in antiquity
2. House church dynamics (public vs. private settings)
3. Short-range solution: asking husbands at home

B. 1 Timothy 2:11-12

1. Background of false teachers targeting uneducated women and widows
2. Widows as church hostesses going house-to-house spreading nonsense

C. Modern and Historical Hermeneutics

1. Holiness and Pentecostal movements (e.g., William and Catherine Booth)
2. Varying contemporary church traditions and interpretations

V. Roman Households and Slaves (Romans 16:8-15)

A. Common Slave and Freedman Names (Ampliatius, Urbanus)

B. The Household of Aristobulus

1. Association with a prince from the line of Herod the Great

2. Status and wealth of slaves of powerful people in Rome

C. The Household of Narcissus

1. Claudius's powerful freedman secretary
2. Historical background of Narcissus and political fall under Nero

D. Sisters and Twins: Tryphena and Tryphosa

E. Persis (rare Greek name suggesting slave import from Persia)

F. Rufus and His Mother (Romans 16:13)

1. Fictive kinship language ("his mother as also my mother")
2. Connection to Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21) and the Antioch church leadership

G. Leaders of House Churches (Nereus, Julia, Olympas, Quartus)

VI. Unity and Warnings (Romans 16:16-20)

A. The Holy Kiss (Romans 16:16)

1. Cultural background of greetings and intimacy
2. A sign to promote unity among divided factions

B. Warnings Against Deceptive and Exploitative Teachers (Romans 16:17-18)

1. Divisions and stumbling blocks (Didache as standard)
2. "Slaves of their bellies" (spiritual slavery and self-indulgence)
3. Rhetorical deception: crestologia (smooth speech) and eulogia (flattery)

C. Reversal of the Fall (Romans 16:19-20)

1. Staying wise in good and innocent/unlearned in evil
2. The promise: "God will soon crush Satan beneath your feet"
3. Allusions to Genesis 3:15 and Jewish traditions of Satan as accuser/tempter
4. Pauline references to Satan's work (1 Cor 5:5, 2 Cor 12:7, 2 Thess 2:9)

VII. Conclusion of Session 17