

Who Can Be Against Us?

Romans, Part XLII

Romans 8:31-39

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I. Athanasius Against the World

One of the great heroes of Church history is Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria from AD 326 to 373. Actively involved in the Nicene Council in 325, Athanasius became the foremost defender of the Trinitarian faith in his day.

Romans 8:31-39

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is God who justifies.* ³⁴Who is he who condemns? *It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.* ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* ³⁶As it is written: *"For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."* ³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

II. What Shall We Say to These Things?

A. [Intro] If God is for us, who can be against us? (31-32 cf. 5:6-11)

Where is our confidence in the face of opposition? It is in the _____ of God manifest in the gift of His Son, Jesus. Paul introduced chapters 5-8:

⁶For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

B. [Justification] Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? (33-34)

Paul reminds us of our *justification* which is the fruit of our *election*. All those *whom God foreknew, He also predestined* for calling and justification (cf. 8:29-30). So if God has *justified* us, then who can possibly *condemn* us? Through faith in Jesus, we who are by nature and by our own deeds *guilty* in God's sight, are no longer *condemned* but *justified*, forgiven of our sins and reconciled to God.

¹Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

C. [Glorification] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (35-39)

And if God has *justified* us, has reconciled us to Himself through the death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son, then He shall most certainly _____ us.

An Outline of Romans

- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live (1:18-11:36)
 - A. No justification by our own righteousness (1:18-3:20)
 - B. Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone (3:21-4:25)
 - C. All those that God justifies, He shall also glorify (5-8)
 - 5:1-11 Having been *justified*, we rejoice in hope of *God's glory*
 - 5:12-19 Adam failed to lead to glory; Christ shall succeed
 - 5:20-7:25 The law failed to lead to glory; Christ shall succeed
 - 5:20-21 The law failed because of sin; Christ succeeds by grace
 - 6:1-7:25 Answering questions. *Since the law cannot justify...*
 - 6:1-14 *Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*
 - 6:15-7:6 *Shall we sin because not under law but grace?*
 - 7:7-12 *Is the law sin?*
 - 7:13-25 *Is the law to blame for my sin?*
 - 8:1-39 All those whom God justifies, these He also glorifies
 - D. The Universality of God's Righteousness (9-11)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith" (12-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

III. Who Can Be Against Us?

A. God is for us (cf. Jn 6:35-40; Rom 5:10)

How do we know that God is for us? Because He sent His Son to die for us.

³⁵... *"I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst..."* ³⁷*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.* ³⁸*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.* ³⁹*This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.* ⁴⁰*And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."* (Jn 6:35-40)

B. Many are against us (Is 51:12; Mt 10:24-25; 1 Pet 3:13-17)

What does Paul mean, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* It seems that precisely because God is for us, many *are* against us. As our Lord Jesus warned (Mt 10:24-25):

²⁴*"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!"*

So what does Paul mean, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* Paul is urging us to view the criticisms of men in the context of God's _____. In the midst of a rebellious people, we must get used to handling criticism and remember, in the face of it, that God's good opinion is of far greater significance than man's.

God's enemies cannot *condemn* us because God has already *justified* us (cf. Num 23:8).

"I, even I, am He who comforts you, Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die, and of the son of man who will be made like grass?" (Is 51:12) Peter reminded his audience:

¹³*And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."* ¹⁵*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

C. God's love overcomes all opposition (Ps 44)

How do we *sanctify the Lord God in our hearts* while suffering? Paul points us to Psalm 44 which was written that we might face persecution in faith. The more we suffer, the more we need the _____. Psalm 44 teaches us to depend completely upon God (1-3), to boast in Him all day long and to praise His name forever (4-8), to describe to Him our pain and suffering knowing that He will hear us (9-16), to remember Him and remain faithful to Him in our distress (17-22), and to cry out:

²³*Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord? Arise! Do not cast us off forever. ²⁴Why do You hide Your face, And forget our affliction and our oppression? ²⁵For our soul is bowed down to the dust; Our body clings to the ground. ²⁶Arise for our help, And redeem us for Your mercies' sake.*

IV. Conclusion