

Who's Who

Romans 8:31-34

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I. For Us v. 31

- a. God is for Us- Romans 5:5-8
 - i. For Us - *be for someone, be on someone's side.*
 - ii. What is meant is, of course, that God is on our side in the way indicated by the gospel events, that is, as our Lord, and not as a subservient ally who can be mobilized by us for the accomplishment of our purposes.
 - iii. statement that there is no one whose hostility we need fear. Enemies we certainly have, who are against us and seek our ruin; but with God on our side we need not fear them. Though they may indeed cause us to suffer grievously (as Paul well knew, witness 2 Cor 11:23ff), they cannot snatch us from Him.
 - iv. There is wide agreement that this formula is pre-Pauline, and it seems likely that it echoes the language of Isa 53:6, 12
- b. Who is Against Us
 - i. after words and expressions that designate hostile speech, accusation
 1. Compare Ps 23:4 ('... I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: ...'); 56:9 ('... This I know, that God is for me') and 11 ('In God I have put my trust, I will not be afraid; What can man do unto me?'); also 118:6 and 7.
 2. The second rhetorical question, "who is against us?" reflects the premise of biblical monotheism and the situation of believers facing antagonism or martyrdom. If the one God of the universe is "for us," nobody can finally thwart that favor. The "who" remains unspecified and thereby inclusive, implying that no power or person can prevail against the one true God. It is not that believers lack adversaries, as this pericope will go on to elaborate, but that none of them will ultimately prevail. An example of this confidence is Isa 50:9, which conveys the monotheistic confidence in the face of opposition by reduplicating Yahweh's name, "the Lord, the Lord will help me; who will harm (τίς κακώσει) me?" The succinct formula καθ' ἡμῶν ("against us") appears with its antithesis in Mark 9:40, "for whoever is not against us (καθ' ἡμῶν) is for us (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν)." As a summary of the second proof, this first question makes it clear that the traditional understanding of justification in terms of individual forgiveness is too narrow. To

participate in divine righteousness, as this entire proof has demonstrated, is to be brought by grace under God's favor and protection.

3. Its force derives from Jewish monotheism. The confidence is rooted not simply in *some* god being "for us," but the *one* God. This is why the answer to the question itself can be left open, and does not depend on the answer "No one." There may be many "against us" (cf. vv 38–39), but in relation to the one God, they are as nothing. The confidence is that of Isa 40 The phrase echoes similar expressions of confidence in the Psalms and strikes a basic chord in the theme of the suffering

II. Give Us v. 32

- a. Did not Spare Own Son
 - i. Spare - **to save from loss or discomfort,**
 - ii. Own Son
 1. While the vocabulary is ordinary, the event to which Paul alludes is extraordinary and arresting. "Not even to spare his own son" is the ultimate act that a father could perform in behalf of others; its pathos, especially in the ancient context, which assumed an ineradicable, emotional bond between father and son, is unmistakable. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate that "God is for us."
 - iii. Delivered - *hand over, turn over, give up* a person
 1. For Us All
- b. Freely Give
 - i. Freely - **freely as a favor, give graciously**
 1. A God who sacrificed his own Son on our behalf will certainly not withhold that which by comparison is merely trivial. The immeasurable greatness of God's love is seen in the infinite nature of his sacrifice on our behalf. God is by nature a giving God.
 - ii. Give
 1. Us
 2. All Things
 - a. The argument is similar both in form and content to that of 5:9–10: since God has done the unspeakably great and costly thing, we may be fully confident that He will do what is by comparison far less
 - b. but it seems more probable that 'all things' should be understood as denoting the fullness of salvation (cf. 5:10) or else 'all that is necessary for our salvation'

III. Interceded For Us vs. 33-34

- a. Who Will Bring a Charge
 - i. Charge - **bring charges against, accuse** old verb, to come forward as accuser (forensic term) in case in court, to impeach, as in Acts 19:40; 23:29; 26:2,
 - ii. who will bring charges against the elect of God?" ἐγκαλέω is a legal referring to the formal process of laying charges against someone—so also "accuse, prosecute, take proceedings against Clearly envisaged is the final judgment scene at the close of history
 - iii. a Jewish reader would think naturally of (the) Satan (in view of Job 1–2 and Zech 3:1–2), even though the role of Satan had become much elaborated in Jewish thought in the meantime; Satan is the great Accuser of the brethren.
 1. Against God's Elect
 - a. Elect - **to being selected, chosen** of those whom God has chosen from the generality of mankind and drawn to himself
 - b. God's elect." While this is the only time Paul refers to believers as the ἐκλεκτοὶ θεοῦ, the stem is directly related to the previous passage, which proclaimed that "those whom he predestined, these he also called
 - c. meshed into an allusion to Isa 53:6—"the elect of God" (v 33), the Christ (v 35), the use of Ps 44:22 (v 36),
 - d. Given the marginal social circumstances of most of the believers in Rome and their ongoing troubles with persecution, poverty, and conflict, how could anyone imagine that they would inherit the earth
 - e. By both terms St. Paul designates not those who are destined for final salvation, but those who are 'summoned' or 'selected' for the privilege of serving God and carrying out His will. If their career runs its normal course it must issue in salvation, the 'glory' reserved for them; this lies as it were at the end of the avenue; but ἐκλεκτῶν only shows that they are in the right way to reach it. At least no external power can bar them from it; if they lose it, they will do so by their own fault.
 - iv. God Justifies God *be found in the right, be free of charges* to arrange acquittal
 1. Paul continued by asking rather incredulously, Who is there who dares to bring an accusation against those whom God has chosen (v. 33)? No one! It is God himself who pronounces his people righteous

2. God is the Judge who sets us right according to his plan for justification (3:21–31). The Accuser must face the Judge with his charges.
 3. The Apostle clearly has in his mind Is. 50:8, 9 ‘He is near that justifieth men; who will contend with me?... Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?’ This distinctly favours the view that each affirmation is followed by a question relating to that affirmation.
 4. For δικαίω see on 2:13 and 8:30, the present tense once again reminding us that God’s justifying action is not a once-for-all event (at conversion or whenever), but an ongoing sustaining. And with the thought so clearly on the final judgment, the idea of δικαιοῦν as God’s final vindication and acquittal is certainly present. As is generally agreed, it must be regarded as highly likely that Paul here echoes, deliberately or unconsciously, Isa 50:8
- b. Who will Condemn
- i. Condemns - **pronounce a sentence after determination of guilt, pronounce a sentence on**
 1. God is conceived of as Judge: where He acquits, who can condemn
 2. Since it is the judge (= God) who alone can give sentence of condemnation, the question has already been answered in the previous phrase in running vv 33b and 34a together: “When God grants saving justice who can condemn?”); however, Paul’s answer serves to underline the degree to which already Christ was seen as having been given share in God’s role as judge (cf. particularly 2:16 and 2 Cor 5:10 with Rom 14:10; and see below)
 - ii. Christ Jesus who Died
 1. Who was Raised
 - iii. Who is at the Right Hand
 1. being at “the highest place of honor. (Eph 1:20; Col 3:1 Heb 1:3, 8:1; 10:12; 12:2, 1 Pet 3:22), influenced by Ps 110:1,
 2. The right hand” denotes power (see, e.g., Exod 15:6, 12; Deut 33:2; Job 40:9; Pss 17:7; 18:35; etc hence a seat at the right hand is the seat of special honor (1 Kgs 2:19; Ps 45:9; in the NT particularly Acts 2:33; 5:31; and 7:55–56).
 3. The word belongs in “the conceptual world of the ruler’s court,” where accusations and requests are heard and the person closest to the throne usually has the most influential word
 4. It is Christ who died—nay rather (*immo vero*) rose from the dead—who (καί should be omitted here) is at the right hand of God—who also intercedes for us.’ It is not a dead Christ on whom we depend, but a living. It is not only a living Christ, but a Christ enthroned, a Christ in power. It is not only a Christ in power, but a

Christ of ever-active sympathy, constantly (if we may so speak) at the Father's ear, and constantly pouring in intercessions for His struggling people on earth.

iv. Who also Interceded

1. For the thought of Christ as our Intercessor at God's right hand compare the reference to Him as our Advocate with the Father in 1 Jn 2:1, and also the reference to His intercession as our High Priest in Heb 7:25.
2. It is a bold accuser who can face God with false charges or with true ones for that matter for we have an "Advocate" at God's Court (1 John 2:1),