

It Is Written

*A weekly publication of the
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.*

Vol. 3

October 17, 2021

No. 42

WHO CAN CONDEMN US? (ROMANS 8:33-34)

By Ken Green

“Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies” (v. 33).

Our passage starts with a question that is very relevant. Who brings a charge against God's elect? First, who are God's elect? “Elect” in the passage does not have the definite article. Scholars of the biblical Greek tell us that this means it is more of a description of people who are God's elect than a definition of who is elect. Paul will go on in the next few verses to describe them as a people whom God justifies. These are true believers.

Justification and condemnation are opposites. God justifies. Who then shall condemn him whom God justifies?

Well, several responses might be offered: the conscience; the law; Satan; many people will condemn these. But the point is: what does it matter who condemns? If God declares us just; if the Supreme Court of the universe has acquitted us, then there is no further appeal to be made.

Paul is not suggesting that no one is able to bring a charge against God's people (as the NASB renders it); rather, it just does not make any difference who accuses us. Why? Because God is the one who declares that we are justified.

We sometimes use these theological terms without letting the truth of them sink into our souls. Justification means to declare righteous. When we are saved; when we respond to the gospel and accept the free offer of grace based on the facts of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; when we obey the Lord in scriptural baptism and our sins are forgiven (Acts 2: 338; 22: 16) then we are declared righteous in Christ. So it does not matter who accuses us. God's declaration stands.

Jesus is the only One who really has the authority to condemn us. All judgment is given to Him (Jn. 5:22). But will He condemn His faithful disciples? Response to that question is given in verse 34: “Who 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.”

He says four things of Christ. First, He died. He died for us and in that death, righteousness was provided (3:24ff). The only one who can condemn us died for us.

Secondly, He is risen again. If He had died without the evidence of resurrection, His death would not have meant anything to us.

Thirdly, He is now at the right hand of God. When Scripture pictures Christ at the Father's right hand, it usually does so with Christ seated, symbolic of one who has finished his work (Luke 22:69; Eph. 1:19-20). When Christ cried out, “It is finished” as recorded in John 19:30, His work was finished, atonement for sin had been made, and He sat down at the Father's right hand.

And fourthly, He also makes intercession, or prays and pleads for us. He is our advocate who represents us in Heaven. The writer of Hebrews links Christ's “once for all” sacrifice with His intercession. “Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:23-27).

As I understand it, Christ's current intercession is for our sake, so we can know that His “once and for all” gift of grace is always available. He will never repeat His “once and for all time” sacrifice of atonement. Now He intercedes, through the Spirit, while seated at the Father's right hand, in the position of power and authority.

Historical & Literal

By Cougan Collins

Those who attack the authenticity of what the Bible says about creation will say that Genesis 1-11 is mythology. In other words, they say it did not really happen and it is nothing more than a fairy tale. They understand if they can convince people that it is mythology, they can destroy the credibility of the Bible and promote their man-made teaching of evolution with its billions of years.

Let's see what the Bible says. In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus quotes from Genesis 1 & 2 as being true. In John 8:44, Jesus called Satan the "father of lies" referring back to Genesis 3:4. In Matthew 23:35 Jesus spoke of Abel in Genesis 4:2-10 as a historical person. In Matthew 24:37-38, Jesus spoke of the Flood of Noah in Genesis 6-9 as a historical event. If Genesis 1-11 is a myth, then Jesus was mistaken in all of these instances.

In 1 Corinthians 11:8,12, Paul states that man was created first, then woman just as Genesis 2:18-23 states. In 1 Timothy 2:13, Paul called Adam & Eve by name, and in Romans 5:14 he says "death reigned from Adam to Moses." In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul says, "The first man Adam became a living being." If Adam was only a mythological character, then everything Paul said is false. In 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul says, "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted." I am afraid many minds have been corrupted by believing that Genesis 1-11 is nothing but a fairy tale.

The New Testament shows that the first 11 chapters of Genesis are historical and literal. In fact, there are more than 100 references in the New Testament that refer back to the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Besides this internal evidence, there is ample proof of the global flood as described by the Bible because over 100 cultures historically record a global flood. Also, the fossil record proves that every mountain on earth was covered by water. For example, marine fossils have been found high in the Himalayas, the world's tallest mountain range. When one begins to examine the internal and external evidence of Genesis 1-11, one will be overwhelmed with proof that the Bible is true and not mythology.

Preparing for the Storm

By Greg Gwin

We've seen it many times: the report on the news tells of a big storm approaching. Predictions are made of wide spread damage and devastation. Images of people boarding up their homes and evacuating threatened areas flash across the screen. But, did you notice? The sun is usually shining brightly while all of this is taking place. The skies are wonderfully blue. Why all the fuss? The answer is simple, of course. You can't wait until the storm hits to make your preparations. So, while the storm is yet hours, even days away; the necessary precautions are being taken.

There's an important spiritual lesson to be learned from this. Life is a constant cycle of periods of relative calm followed by often violent storms. It is essential that we prepare for these turbulent times, even when it appears for the moment that all is well. If we wait for the storm to hit, it will be too late! Jeremiah said, "If you have run with footmen and they have tired you out, then how can you compete with horses? If you fall down in a land of peace, how will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?" (12:5). His point is an obvious one. If you can't stand firm when the going is easy, you'll never make it when the going gets tough.

Our strength for living comes to us through the Bible. It provides the "power" for our salvation (Rom 1:16), and gives us hope which is a sure "anchor of the soul" even in the raging tempest of life (Heb. 6:19). The question is: are you using it, learning it, so that you can endure the coming storms? Think!