

What Does the Verse "If God Is for Us, Who Can Be against Us" Mean?

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Just about any list of [encouraging Bible verses](#) will include [Romans 8:31](#): “What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

But what are “these things?” Is the verse really saying that we as believers will never face opposition or failure? Any experience as a Christian will amply demonstrate that plenty of people can be “against us;” persecution is a very real problem for Christians all over the world. So what does this passage actually mean?

What do Other Translations Say?

While often [verses](#) look different across various translations, [Romans 8:31](#) actually stays mostly the same. From the traditional [King James](#) version, to more modern translations like the [English Standard Version](#) and the [New Living Translation](#), the verse remains “if God is for us, who can be against us?” Clearly, translators across the generations have seen the same meaning in these words. What then, do they mean for readers?

Two interesting ways to read [Romans 8:31](#) are:

So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? - The Message

So what should we say about this? If God is with us, no one can defeat us. - New Century Version

"Who Shall Be Against Us?" What [Romans 8:31](#) Actually Mean

In context, then, the verse is preceded by Paul’s assertion that God has good purposes for the Christian. It is followed by a statement that no one can bring a charge against the Christian, since it is God who justifies. Paul rounds it out by proclaiming that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Thus, in context, Paul's question of "who can be against us" appears to be asking who can bring condemnation against the Christian. The answer is no one. God has chosen us as His children and heirs. God is the judge. If He is for us, no one can condemn us. And, as Paul demonstrates in [Romans 8:35-39](#), nothing can separate us from that love. Therefore, we are secure in Christ.

What is the Context in Romans?

Romans is a letter that was written by the apostle Paul to the believers in Rome around A.D. 56-58, according to [Got Questions](#). At that point, Paul had never visited Rome, but Christianity seems to have been present there for a number of years. The church was well grounded and well known.

Though the intense persecution under the emperor Nero had not yet begun, only a few years after the writing of Paul's letter, Christians would be blamed for the burning of Rome. Sentiment against them was already an issue. Most of the early Roman Christians were of Jewish descent, and would have been slowly returning after Jews were exiled from Rome in A.D. 49 under the emperor Claudius, an edict that didn't lapse until his death in A.D. 54, writes [Kenneth Berding](#).

Therefore, out of context, the declaration that "if God is for us, who can be against us?" would have seemed just as confusing to the original readers. They might have replied, "All of Rome is against us!" Luckily, for them and for readers today, there is context.

"If God is For Us" The Context of This Passage

[Romans 8](#) begins with the statement, "Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" ([Romans 8:1](#)). Paul goes on to expound upon life in the Spirit. "But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness" ([Romans 8:10](#)). He explains that we are God's children.

He then transitions to suffering. "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" ([Romans 8:17](#)). Paul explains that our current sufferings pale in comparison to the coming glory. The Spirit will be with us to help us, and God works all things for good. The Christian is destined to be conformed to the image of the Son – called, justified, and glorified ([Romans 8:29-30](#)).

This is when the verse in question appears. "What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" ([Romans 8:31](#)).

Paul continues his rhetorical questions after this. “Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies” ([Romans 8:33](#)).

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” ([Romans 8:35](#), 38-39).



What Does this Verse Not Mean?

As was discussed earlier, claiming that no one can be against the Christian makes no sense. Both human and spiritual forces war against us. We will face opposition, and many verses warn us of just that. For example, [2 Timothy 3:12](#) states, “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

The verse also does not say that that nothing can ever overcome a Christian. Christians can still lose — sports, jobs, even their lives. Losing isn’t a matter of “not having enough [faith](#)” or “not trusting God enough.” This verse makes no claim that everything will work out in this life if we have faith.

Rather, in a cosmic courtroom, no evidence can be held against us. God is in the process of sanctifying us. Those who trust in Christ can no longer be condemned.

Encouragement for Today

This verse gives us hope, not that we will always prevail, but that our eternal destiny and the love of God are secure. Though we may suffer, we will not be destroyed. No matter how bad things seem, we must remember that “God is for us;” He loves us deeply. We are His children, with Jesus as our oldest brother ([Romans 8:29](#)).

The verse is compelling on its own, but in the context of [Romans 8](#), the passage is a powerful reminder of God's great love and excellent plans for us.

A Prayer to Remember God is For You

Lord, your Word reminds me that I am chosen, a royal priesthood, a child of the King. Help me remember that you have called me out of darkness and have already gone before me in victory. Today I want to walk in your presence knowing that you will fight for me against my enemies. I surrender my doubt and insecurities to you. In all these things I am more than a conqueror through you. In Jesus' name, amen.