

Romans 8:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Analysis

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? (Τίς ἐνκαλεσεί κατὰ ἐκλεκτὸν θεοῦ)—Enkaleséi is legal terminology: bring charges, accuse in court. Eklektōn theōû ("God's elect") are those chosen before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). Who can successfully accuse them? Satan is "the accuser" (Revelation 12:10), conscience accuses (1 John 3:20), law accuses (Romans 7:7-13)—but accusations cannot condemn the elect.

It is God that justifieth (θεὸς ὁ δίκαιόν)—This answers the question: no accusation stands because God Himself has declared the elect righteous. Dikaióō ("justify") is forensic: pronounce righteous, acquit in court. The Judge has declared "not guilty" based on Christ's righteousness imputed to believers (3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21). No higher court exists to overturn God's verdict. Justification is God's final, irrevocable declaration.

Historical Context

Medieval Catholic theology made justification a process (progressive sanctification). Luther's breakthrough: justification is instantaneous legal declaration—God reckons Christ's righteousness to believers apart from works. This provides unshakable assurance: standing before God depends on Christ's merit, not ours.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What accusations (from Satan, conscience, others) threaten your assurance—how does God's justification answer them?
2. How does understanding justification as God's legal verdict rather than moral transformation provide assurance?
3. What's the relationship between being "God's elect" and being justified—which comes first logically?

Interlinear Text

τίς	ἐγκαλέσει	κατὰ	ἐκλεκτῶν	θεὸς	θεὸς	ὁ
Who	shall lay any thing	to the charge	elect	It is God	It is God	G3588
G5101	G1458	G2596	G1588	G2316	G2316	
δικαιῶν·						
that justifieth						
G1344						

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 54:17 (Righteousness): No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

Romans 8:1 (Parallel theme): There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Luke 18:7 (References God): And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

1 Thessalonians 1:4 (References God): Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

Isaiah 42:1 (Parallel theme): Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Matthew 24:24 (Parallel theme): For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Romans 3:26 (Righteousness): To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

1 Peter 1:2 (References God): Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Galatians 3:8 (Righteousness): And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.