

Vicarious Sacrifice: Paul's Defense of Resurrection: Paul Assumes the Position of the Naysayers to Disprove Their Argument: Uses First-Class Conditional: If There Is No Resurrection then Christ Was Not Resurrected; If Not Christ then Paul's Teaching & Their Faith is in Vain, 1 Cor 15:13-14; Some Corinthians Believers Influenced by Gnostic & Platonist Heresies; If Our Hope Is in This Life Only We are to Be Pitied, 1 Cor 15:19; the Program of the Resurrections: Christ, Church, Gentiles & Israel, & Millennium

- (1) Paul assumes this false assumption as true as he continues his argument:

1 Corinthians 15:13 - But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; (NASB)

- (1) The argument begins with another first class conditional particle *ei* which assumes for the sake of argument that the protasis is true.
- (2) Paul takes the position of the doubting Thomases in Corinth by proposing, "If there is no resurrection of the dead," in order to logically disprove the idea in the apodosis.
- (3) The apodosis is introduced by the negative particle **οὐκ (*ouk*)**: "then," followed by the perfect passive indicative of the verb *egeirō*: "then not even."
- (4) The conclusion reached is, that according to their logic, not even Christ has been resurrected.

1 Corinthians 15:13 - But if, and for the sake of argument we assume it is true, there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been resurrected ... (ext)

1 Corinthians 15:14 - "...and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. (NASB)

- (5) This protasis is introduced by the third use of the first class conditional particle *ei* which asserts for the sake of argument that Christ has not been resurrected.
- (6) This demands that the logical conclusion of this assumption must follow in the apodosis, introduced by the particle **ἄρα (*ára*)**: "then," indicating a transition that logically follows the contention in the protasis.

- (7) What logically follows is “our preaching,” the noun *kērússō* again. Paul claims that if Jesus has not been resurrected then his teachings have been “in vain”: **κενός (kenós)**: “meaningless and fruitless.”
- (8) This amplifies the principle that if the resurrection of Christ is a lie, then those who teach it as truth communicate a false doctrine from which there can be no production of fruit.
- (9) And if Paul has been teaching a lie, then their faith in the work of Christ on the cross is in vain.
- (10) Note that those Corinthians who reject the doctrine of the resurrection are also believers, indicated by Paul’s use of the word “brethren” in verse 1:

1 Corinthians 15:1 - Now I make known to you, **brethren** [**ἀδελφός (adelphós)**: “brother”; **fellow members of the body of Christ**], the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which you also stand. (NASB)

- (11) Those who have rejected the idea of the resurrection had previously accepted that doctrine in the apostle’s presentation of the gospel.
- (12) Subsequently, they have been influence by false teachers, either Gnostics or Platonists, and accepted the false doctrine of no bodily resurrection.
- (13) One does not have to believe in the resurrection of Jesus in order to be saved. Salvation is the volitional decision to believe that Jesus died for one’s sins on the cross and that in doing so he is delivered from the lake of fire and imputed eternal life.
- (14) Post salvation, one may reject the idea of the resurrection and still enjoy its reality come the Rapture. However, it is extremely important to acquire the doctrine since if one believes there is no resurrection of Christ, then one must also conclude that the dead are not raised.
- (15) This can lead to the idea that one is not really saved with the result that other key doctrines are rejected or rationalized.

(16) This conclusion is advanced by Paul in verses 15–19 of the paragraph and concluded in its closing verse:

1 Corinthians 15:19 - If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied [ἐλεεινός (*elleeinós*): full of misery]. (NASB)

(17) In the next paragraph, Paul provides us with the order of the resurrections which informs us of their relationship with the dispensations.

(18) The contrast between those in a body of corruption and the body of Christ introduces the sequence of the several resurrections:

1 Corinthians 15:22 - For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. (NASB)

(1) Adam was created by the Lord in Eden which means our original forefather received human life in status quo perfection possessing a perfect body, a perfect soul, and the provision of a human spirit.

(2) When Adam fell, he lost his human spirit and assumed the status quo of condemnation:

Genesis 2:16 - The Lord God [יהוה אֱלֹהִים (*YHWH 'Elohim*): Jesus Christ] commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may freely eat;

v. 17 - “but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for the day that you eat from it you will surely [מוֹת (*moth*): the Qal infinitive absolute: dying spiritually starting the process of] die [תָּמוּת (*tamuth*): the Qal imperfect: dying physically].”

(3) Adam and Eve believed in Christ and received eternal life and the promise of a resurrection body: “all will be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

(4) However, the distribution of resurrection bodies occurs on a predetermined schedule:

1 Corinthians 15:23 - But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming. (NASB)

- (5) In verse 22, Paul writes that those in Christ will all be made alive. This indicates that believers in every dispensation will at some point be resurrected from the dead.
- (6) In verse 23, he indicates that these resurrections will occur over a period of time, each group of believers “in his own order.”
- (7) The word “order” is the noun **τάγμα (táγμα)**: “the assembly of a body of troops.” We recently observed the assembly of believers at the Rapture of the church in 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
- (8) In verse 16, the Lord, as Commander-in-Chief, issues a command to Seraph Gabriel to order the bugler to sound reveille to those Church-Age believers that have experienced physical death.
- (9) They form the initial group that will be resurrected and are lifted up – **ἁρπάζω (harpázō)** – i.e., the Rapture, to meet the Lord in the air.
- (10) The chain of command in verse 16 indicates a military-style operation which is amplified in 1 Corinthians 15:23 by the use of the word **τάγμα (táγμα)**, a body of troops.
- (11) The first to be resurrected is the Commander-in-Chief: **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (Yehowah seva’oth)**: the Lord of the Armies, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (12) Here Paul refers to Jesus as the “first fruits.” This Levitical feast portrayed the resurrection of Messiah and indicated only those who were believers would be recipients of the unconditional covenants.
- (13) The imagery of military companies entering heaven in a particular order allows us to refer to the Lord’s resurrection as Alpha Company.
- (14) Next in order come “those who are Christ’s at His coming.” The word “coming” is the noun *parousía*. It is imminent and may occur at any moment.

- (15) Believers of the Church Age will makeup Bravo Company and will be raptured in two groups: Group A, those “who have fallen asleep,” followed by Group B, those who are “alive and remain” (1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17).
- (16) The next shift is Charlie Company; all deceased believers of the Gentile and Jewish dispensations will be resurrected at the Second Advent:

1 Corinthians 15:24 - Then comes the end [Second Advent], when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father [**Operation Footstool**], when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power [Lucifer & his demons are removed from the earth].

- (1) The verse begins with the temporal adverb **εἶτα (eíta)**: “then” with the idea of order and succession. This word continues the chronological order of the resurrections, this one at the Second Advent.
- (2) This is indicated by the noun **τέλος (télos)**: “the end of a process.” This makes reference to the resurrection that concludes the intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict.
- (3) Charlie Company includes two groups of believers: **(1)** Gentiles and **(2)** Jews from the first two dispensations of Gentiles and Israel, the latter including the seventieth week of Daniel described as the Tribulation or the seven-year period between the Rapture of the Church and the Second Advent of Christ.
- (4) This third group includes those who died during the three dispensations in which Gentiles and Jews believed in Jesus for salvation: Gentiles, Israel, and Tribulation.
- (5) Believers in the first two of these three dispensations – Gentiles and Israel – are the ones who in interim bodies were transferred to heaven with the ascending Christ in Acts 1:9 compared with Ephesians 4:8.