

1 Corinthians 15:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

Analysis

But if there be no resurrection of the dead (εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν)—Paul constructs a **reductio ad absurdum** argument. He assumes the opponents' premise (no resurrection) and demonstrates it leads to absurd, unacceptable conclusions. This is sophisticated Greco-Roman logical argumentation, showing Paul's rhetorical training.

Then is Christ not risen (οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται)—The logic is inexorable. If resurrection is metaphysically impossible, Christ couldn't have risen either. The Corinthians' position—Christ rose uniquely, but believers won't—is philosophically untenable. Christ's resurrection is either the **firstfruits** (v. 20) guaranteeing the harvest, or it didn't happen. There's no middle ground. Resurrection is not Christ's private miracle but the inauguration of new creation.

Historical Context

Paul's argument structure reflects his rabbinic training under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Jewish rabbinic debate employed similar logical reductions. Yet he writes in Greek rhetorical style for a Gentile audience, demonstrating his missional adaptability (1 Corinthians 9:19-22).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why is Christ's resurrection inseparable from our resurrection—why can't Christ's be unique?
2. How does Paul's logical argument demonstrate that Christianity stands or falls on historical claims?
3. What does this teach about the importance of defending the faith with reason and evidence?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δὲ	ἀνάστασις	νεκρῶν	οὐκ	ἔστιν	οὐδὲ	Χριστὸς
if	But	resurrection	of the dead	no	there be	not	Christ
G1487	G1161	G386	G3498	G3756	G2076	G3761	G5547

ἐγείγερται·

is
G1453

Additional Cross-References

Romans 8:11 (Resurrection): But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

1 Thessalonians 4:14 (Parallel theme): For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

Revelation 1:18 (Parallel theme): I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

1 Peter 1:3 (Resurrection): Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

