

1 Corinthians 15:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

Analysis

For if the dead rise not (εἰ γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται)—Paul repeats his premise, driving home the logical connection. The verb egeirontai (ἐγείρονται, "are raised") is present passive, indicating ongoing divine action. Resurrection is God's action upon the dead, not self-generated resuscitation.

Then is not Christ raised (οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται)—The perfect tense emphasizes Christ's resurrection as completed event with continuing results. Paul's logic is relentless: general resurrection and Christ's resurrection stand or fall together. Christ is not exception to natural law but inauguration of new creation. His resurrection is the "firstfruits" (v. 20)—if the firstfruits exist, the harvest follows. You can't have firstfruits without harvest.

Historical Context

Jewish apocalyptic theology anticipated general resurrection at the end of the age (Daniel 12:2, Isaiah 26:19). Early Christians' radical claim was that one man had been raised *within* history, ahead of the general resurrection—inaugurating the age to come while the present age continued. Christ's resurrection is 'already/not yet'—the future breaking into the present.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's resurrection being 'firstfruits' guarantee believers' resurrection?
2. What does it mean that resurrection is God's action (passive voice), not human achievement?
3. How does the 'already/not yet' tension of resurrection shape Christian life in the present?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	γὰρ	νεκροὶ	οὐκ	ἐγήγερται·	οὐδὲ	Χριστὸς	ἐγήγερται·
if	For	the dead	not		then	not Christ	is
G1487	G1063	G3498	G3756		G3761	G5547	G1453

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