

# 1 Corinthians 15:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

## Analysis

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**If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus** (εἰ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθηριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ)—The verb ethērioachēsa (ἐθηριομάχησα, "I fought with wild beasts") could be literal gladiatorial combat or metaphorical for brutal opposition. The phrase kata anthrōpon ("according to human perspective, for human motives") suggests the latter—Paul faced savage human opponents in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41, 2 Corinthians 1:8). If literal, Paul's Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25-29) should have exempted him from damnatio ad bestias.

**What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die** (τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν, αὐριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν)—Paul quotes Isaiah 22:13, a text condemning Jerusalem's hedonism before Babylonian conquest. The logic is Epicurean: if death ends existence, maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Why suffer for Christ if no resurrection? This is Christianity's wager: resurrection validates suffering; without it, hedonism is rational.

## Historical Context

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Ephesus was major commercial center with temple of Artemis, one of ancient world's seven wonders. The riot of Acts 19 (datable to circa AD 54-55) threatened Paul's life when silversmiths feared Christianity would destroy Artemis worship

and their business. Paul may have been imprisoned there ("fought with beasts" as metaphor for legal/political opposition).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. If you knew death was final, would your life choices change—what does this reveal about resurrection's importance?
2. How does Paul's Isaiah quotation connect Old Testament judgment with New Testament resurrection hope?
3. What is the difference between Christian 'dying daily' and Epicurean 'eat, drink, be merry'?

## Interlinear Text

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εἰ	κατὰ	ἄνθρωπον	ἐθηριομάχησα	ἐν	Ἐφέσῳ
If	after the manner	of men	I have fought with beasts	at	Ephesus
G1487	G2596	G444	G2341	G1722	G2181

τί	μοι	τὸ	ὄφελος	εἰ	νεκροὶ	οὐκ	ἐγείρονται
what	me	G3588	advantageth it	If	the dead	not	rise
G5101	G3427		G3786	G1487	G3498	G3756	G1453

Φάγωμεν	καὶ	πίωμεν	αὔριον	γὰρ	ἀποθνήσκομεν
let us eat	and	drink	to morrow	for	we die
G5315	G2532	G4095	G839	G1063	G599

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 22:13** (Parallel theme): And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.

**Isaiah 56:12** (Parallel theme): Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

**Luke 12:19** (Parallel theme): And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

**Acts 18:19** (Parallel theme): And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

**2 Peter 2:12** (Parallel theme): But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;