

1 Corinthians 15:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

Analysis

Thou fool (ἄφρων)—The word *aphrōn* (ἄφρων, "senseless, foolish") is harsh but not cruel. In Hebrew wisdom literature, the fool is morally and intellectually deficient, refusing God's truth (Psalm 14:1). Paul's rebuke targets willful blindness to observable natural analogies that answer the objection.

That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die (σὺ δὲ σπείρεις, οὐ ζωοποιεῖται ἐὰν μὴ ἀποθάνῃ)—Paul introduces agricultural metaphor. The verb *zōopoieō* (ζωοποιέω, "make alive, give life") appears throughout this chapter. A seed must *apothanē* (ἀποθάνῃ, "die")—lose its original form, decompose in soil—before germination. Death precedes life. Resurrection is not resuscitation (returning to old form) but transformation (new form arising from old). The seed analogy demonstrates continuity (same plant) and discontinuity (radically transformed) simultaneously.

Historical Context

Ancient agricultural societies intimately understood seed-death-harvest cycle. Paul uses common experience to explain mystery. Jesus used similar seed imagery (John 12:24: 'unless a grain of wheat falls into earth and dies, it remains alone'). The natural world testifies to resurrection logic: death-to-life transformation.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the seed analogy answer both continuity (same identity) and transformation (new form)?
2. What does it mean that resurrection involves death—why is death necessary for resurrection life?
3. How does observing natural cycles prepare us to accept supernatural resurrection?

Interlinear Text

ἄφρον	σὺ	ὃ	σπείρεις	οὐ	ζωοποιεῖται	ἐὰν	μὴ
Thou fool	thou	that which	sowest	not	is	G1437	G3361
G878	G4771	G3739	G4687	G3756	G2227		

ἀποθάνη·

it die

G599

Additional Cross-References

John 12:24 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

Luke 11:40 (Parallel theme): Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?