

"If-Then" Statements - Used to Evaluate False Perspectives

(A random selection of examples from the Bible.)

IF "A" → THEN "B"

Introduction

Sometimes, the word "if" can have the connotation of "since," when it is describing a *true* statement. The context would determine when this were the case and how it applied. An example would be the word "if" in Romans 8:1: For the follower of Jesus, we could say that, *since* he is in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation for him. (For those who *aren't* in Christ Jesus, this would *not* apply.)

There are other times in Scripture, in which a statement that is *false* is being examined, in order to see what the consequences would be, *if* the statement were *true*. The fact that the statement is being examined does *not* indicate that it *is* true. In such cases, the statement is *never* true, and the word "since" can *never* apply.

Below are some examples from Scripture, in which the writer is exploring the consequences of various ideas (often the views of false teachers), even though the ideas are *false*. Nothing in the context of these passages claims, or even remotely suggests, that the statements are in any way true. In fact, the "if-then" statements themselves are often part of the demonstration that what they are saying *is* false.

Note that none of these statements represents a "hypothesis contrary to fact" - a logical fallacy that also uses an "if-then" statement, but which reaches conclusions that are based on mere assumptions. In Scripture, these "if-then" arguments are based on logical reasoning and on an examination of facts, rather than on conjecture.

Examples

Hebrews 10:2

IF the law could (through sacrifices) make the worshipers perfect...

THEN the sacrifices would have stopped being offered.

[Verses 3-4 show us that they had to continue being offered, because they could *never* take away sin. (Only Christ could do that.)]

1 Corinthians 15:13, 16

IF there is no resurrection of the dead... / **IF** the dead are not raised...

THEN Christ has not been raised either. (See also v. 29+.)

[This argument is intended to show the foolishness of trusting in Jesus, while at the same time claiming that people don't get raised from the dead. However, it is an established fact that Christ *has* been raised from the dead (verse 20), and because of that, our resurrections are also guaranteed.]

1 Corinthians 15:14, 17

IF Christ has not been raised...

THEN ... various conclusions are given, ending with the fact that we would be hopelessly lost - dead in our sins (v. 17-19). [Note that these verses are connected with the verses listed the previous example. The one part of the argument focuses on the logical consequences that would affect *Christ*, while the other part focuses on the consequences that would affect *us*.]

Galatians 3:21

IF a law had been given that could impart life...

THEN righteousness would certainly have come by the law. (See also v. 18.)

[The verses that follow show us that all the law can do is make us prisoners, until we are freed by trusting in Christ for that life.]

Romans 4:14

IF those who live by the law are heirs...

THEN faith has no value and the promise is worthless.

[The problem is that we *can't* live by the law! Since we have *all* broken the law, the only thing it can give us is God's wrath. In that case, it would do no good for us to "believe" that we were going to receive the promise, for we have already all been disqualified.]