

Greek Salads and English Muffins:

Understanding the Various Uses of the Condition *If*

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[Audio Link](#)

Please note that all the bullet points found in the transcript below were added for the sake of bringing clarity to the reader. In addition, links have been added so that the reader can read all the definitions from the Oxford English Dictionary for his or herself. Lastly, a list of resources for the further study has been provided at the end of the transcript.

What I'm going to talk about this morning is something I've been wanting to talk about for a while. I've talked about it in bits and pieces in many different settings, and I continue to get questions about this material in private messages on Facebook and also through emails that people have sent the church. So I've had it in my mind for a while to teach a whole lesson on how conditions work.

Obviously you know that there's been somewhat of a controversy regarding Romans 8:17 and the conditional statement there, and my involvement in that led me into a consideration of these things, and when I first taught this stuff, both in the paper and also last year here at the church, I taught them relying pretty heavily on using some Greek to do that. I don't necessarily apologize for that; I don't think that anything I said was wrong. I don't think that anybody that has taken exception with anything that I've said, proved that anything I said was wrong, but I also have since looked at some of these things with respect to English, and want to kind of go over some things that I think are pretty critical to understanding how these conditions work.

Folks, if you don't understand the conditions properly, you're running the risk of really misunderstanding and therefore misapplying a lot of things from the scripture. And so what I want to do is look at this.

Now, what I think I'm going to do, I've got papers spread all over here because I don't have one hard set of notes; I'm kind of drawing here from four or five different things that I've done in pieces in other places. So what I want to do is talk about this.

Look at Colossians 3. Now I'm going to try to intentionally stay away from talking about this within the context of the verses that are creating some controversy. We'll touch on them shortly in one spot, but I want to kind of not look at those on purpose because I want this to be about understanding how the conditions work more so than trying to answer any particular position or teaching on any specific verse.

Colossians 3:1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

Now if you look at that verse, how do you understand that *if*? Is he saying, “Maybe you’re risen with Christ and maybe you’re not”, or is he saying, “On the basis of the fact that you are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above”?

I think it’s pretty clear, it should be pretty clear for most people that *protasis* word *if* means something different depending on how it’s being used. Just to clarify that go back to chapter 2 of Colossians at start at verse 10.

Colossians 2:10-12 *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: ¹¹ in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: ¹² buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

Does chapter 2:12 state as a fact that a believer is risen with Christ? So when you come to chapter 3 verse 1, it says, *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above*, is he now all of a sudden questioning whether the believer is risen with Christ or not? Well, obviously he’s not.

So every conditional statement contains two parts. Now what I have here on the top, the [protasis](#), this is a word of English grammar. The *antecedent* is a word of logic and philosophy, but they’re referring to the same thing. The [apodosis](#) is also a word of English grammar, meanwhile the *consequent* in parentheses is a word of logic and philosophy.

So every conditional statement has a *protasis* and a *protasis* contains the *if* statement, or the *antecedent*, and a *apodosis* contains the *consequent*, or the main result of the condition up here in the *protasis*.

- *Protasis* (English Grammar) = *Antecedent* (Logic & Philosophy)
- *Apodosis* (English Grammar) = *Consequent* (Logic & Philosophy)

Now before we go any further, does everybody understand that? So this statement contains...let me read the definitions. This is from the Oxford English Dictionary. First, the definition of [if](#), this is the English definition of *if*:

Introducing a clause of condition or supposition, the protasis of a conditional sentence.

That’s the dictionary’s definition. So for Colossians 3:1, that would be this statement right here [*If ye then be risen with Christ*]. That’s the *protasis*; it contains the word *if*. The dictionary goes on to say:

Introducing a clause of condition or supposition, the protasis of a conditional sentence; on condition that, given or granted that, in the case that, supposing that, or on supposition that.

So every conditional statement has a *protasis* and a *apodosis*; those are words of English grammar. These two words are words of logic and philosophy (*antecedent* and *consequent*). So every conditional statement has this.

The dictionary definition of *protasis*:

a proposition, the major premise of a hypothetical clause

Which would be what? *If*, right? So that's this portion of the conditional statement. The definition of *apodosis* is:

The concluding clause of a sentence as constructed with the introductory clause, or protasis, now usually constricted to the consequent clause in a conditional sentence.

I'm not trying to be overly technical here, but we have to be somewhat technical if we're going to be defining these things properly. In other words, this part of the verse here is the consequence of what? This, *if ye then be risen with Christ*, is he saying, "Maybe you're risen, maybe you're not"? I think we all agree that that's not what he's saying.

- *Protasis*—*if ye then be risen with Christ*—contains the *if* statement
- *Apodosis*—*seek those things which are above*—contains the consequent

So on the basis of the established fact that you're risen with Christ, what's the consequence? *Seek those things which are above*. So this first part contains the condition, and in grammar it's known as the *protasis*; this part (*seek those things which are above*) is the *consequent*, and that's why I've got these two words in here because you might be more familiar with them, so in other words, because this, then this.

A statement like this, folks, is what we call *modus ponus* logic. I understand I'm giving you the big words here. *Modus ponus* logic – it's basically, if P then Q. So this (pointing toward *if ye then be risen with Christ*) would be what? That's P. This is what (pointing toward *seek those things which are above*)? Q.

So *if ye then be risen with Christ*, if some such thing, then what? *Seek those things which are above*. So this is basic *modus ponus* – *if P then Q*. It gets its name from a Latin word which means, a way of affirmation, so I'll summarize it here for you:

If, some such thing, *then*, some such thing. So *if ye then be risen with Christ*, then *seek those things which are above*. So that's the basic structure of this. In logic you'll see this referred to

as *affirming the antecedent*, because here's the antecedent (pointing toward *if ye then be risen with Christ*), here's what the consequence of that antecedent is (pointing toward *seek those things which are above*).

I want to stop there for a minute and I want to go back and just touch on something I've already taught you before. When we looked at these things in the past, as I said, we've looked at them with respect to Greek. Greek grammarians identify by four different types of conditions:

The first one is called a First Class Condition. The First Class Condition is identified as the condition followed by a verb in the indicative mood. Do we have a condition here?

If ye then be risen with Christ, then seek those things which are above.

Where's the next verb after the condition? Right there, *be risen*. That verb is in what mood? The indicative mood. This is what we call in English grammar, therefore, an indicative conditional statement.

In philosophy and logic it's referred to as a hypothetical syllogism. Let me read to you what that means. A hypothetical syllogism is a construct of a conditional major premise and an unconditional minor premise leading to an unconditional conclusion. In other words, even though one of the premises is hypothetical, the conclusion is not.

So when you read this statement is Paul saying, "*Maybe* you should seek those things which are above"? No, he's saying, "On the basis of this, you should *seek those things which are above*." That's the consequence.

So the first kind of condition that Greek grammarians identify is exactly that kind right there. A First Class Condition is identified as the condition followed by the verb in the indicative mood. We can think of that as equaling, "If, and it's true."

The second type of condition would be in the form of *if* followed by the imperfect tense and/or sometimes also the indicative mood would apply here; but they call this the Second Class Condition.

Luke 7:39 *Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.*

When the Pharisee says *this man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him*, what is the function here of the condition? It's more, "If it's true, but it's not." So in other words, if he were a prophet, he should have known.

So is the guy questioning or not whether he's really a prophet? Yes. Is that clearly a different function than this over here? It's obviously a different usage of the word *if*.

Let's look at one more in this category. There's a bunch of them we could look at.

John 11:32 *Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*

What's she saying? You weren't here so my brother died. So in other words, if you were here it would be true that he wouldn't have died, but the fact is he did die.

We can also identify a Third Class. This is the condition *if* followed by the subjunctive mood. This is not *subjective* mood; in fact, the word *subjunctive* in Microsoft Word, it automatically wants to switch it to *subjective*. It's not subjective.

Romans 7:2 *For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.*

Where's the condition? *If the husband be dead*. So the wife being bound by the law to her husband is subject to whether he's alive or whether he's dead. So if the husband is alive is the wife subject to the law of the husband? Yes. The only way the wife is loosed from the law of the husband is if the husband is dead.

So it's subjunctive. In other words, the root word here is the word subject. It is subject to the circumstances. As long as the husband is alive is the wife bound to the husband? Yes. If the husband is dead is the wife loosed from the law of the husband? Yes.

So clearly, is that the concept Paul is conveying in Col. 3:1? Is Paul saying, "Well if ye then be risen with Christ, not really sure if you are, we need to wait and see if you are, then seek those things which are above"? Is that what he's saying? No. So the Third Class is summarized by, "Maybe it is, maybe it isn't."

There's a Fourth Class that is recognized, and this is *if* followed by what's known in Greek, as the Optative mood.

Acts 17:26-27 *and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; ²⁷ that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*

Now is he saying there that they will for sure on the basis of an established fact, seek after the Lord and feel after him? No. The definition of the English word *haply*: by chance it may be so; by accident or by complete coincidence.

So when he says *if haply they might feel after him*, is he saying they definitely will? No. Is he saying, “If it’s true, but it’s not?” It’s even stronger than that; it’s even stronger than *maybe it is, maybe it isn’t*. The equivalent of it is saying *maybe it’s true, but it probably isn’t*.

Do we know from Romans 3 that *no man seeketh after God*? Has God left the situation where if haply, by coincidence or chance somebody seeks after God, that God has left himself a witness in Creation and other things? Yes. So this would be, as I just said, *maybe it’s true, but it probably isn’t*.

So these are the four types of conditions that the Greek grammarians will discuss, and they’re all functioning based upon the relationship between the conditional statement and the mood of the verb following the condition.

The two most common conditions that you’re going to run into are the First Class and the Third Class. So this is material that I have taught previously. When we went through 2 Timothy 2 and we were studying that faithful saying and we looked at:

2 Timothy 2:12 *if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:*

I talked to you a lot about the difference between the First and the Third Class Condition. That material that I covered there was criticized in some quarters quite heavily because it was very Greek reliant and my commitment, if you will, to the KJB in English was called into question because I was daring to refer to some Greek to make a couple of points.

So further study on my part has revealed something quite significant, and that is in English the conditions work exactly the same as they do in Greek. So with all that as a backdrop, let me read to you further from the Oxford English Dictionary on the word *if* (This is the dictionary, it’s not me, it’s the English dictionary):

With the conditional clause or protasis in the indicative, the indicative after *if* implies that the speaker expresses no adverse opinion as to the truth of the statement in the clause and is consistent with his acceptance of it.

What does that mean? That’s the same thing as saying, “If and it’s true.” So when Paul says here, *if ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above*, is he saying, “Maybe it is, maybe it isn’t?” No. Is he saying, “If it’s true, but maybe it’s not?” No. Is he saying, “Maybe it’s true, but it probably isn’t”, or is he saying, “If and it’s true?”

If is followed by indicative and when you read that in English is that not the obvious meaning of what that should tell you? Seems to me that it is.

Then I get the Oxford English Dictionary and I look up the word [indicative](#). This is what it says:

In grammar the indicative points out, states or declares, applied to the mood of a verb of which the essential function is to state a relation of objective fact between the subject and the predicate, as opposed to a relation merely conceived, thought of or wished by the speaker. The indicative is the form of the statement having the verb in the indicative mood is assertive of objective fact.

What does that mean? It means, *if and it's true*. So the English dictionary is telling you that any time that you have an English condition *if* followed by the indicative mood attached to that condition, what is the function of that condition? Is that function of that condition to call anything into question or to state the objective connection between the two things?

It's saying, *if P then Q*. Therefore, if it is in English grammar, an indicative conditional, what? There's a reason why it's called that in English grammar because of the function of indicative even in the English.

Let's go back to the dictionary definition of *if*:

With the conditional clause or protasis in the subjunctive, and the principle clause or.....the subjunctive after *if* implies that the speaker guards himself from endorsing the truth or realization of the statement and is consistent with his doubt of it.

What's that? That's, *maybe it is, maybe it isn't*.

Go back to Romans 7:2. Is Paul stating as the objective fact that the wife is loosed from the law of the husband? No, he's not because he doesn't know if the husband is still alive or not. If the husband is still alive, is the wife bound to the law of the husband? Yes. If the husband is dead is she loosed from the law of the husband? Yes, but it's completely contingent on what, or subject to what? Whether or not the husband is alive or dead. So in that case the satisfaction of the condition is up in the air because it is not yet determined, the circumstances are not yet, what?

So in English does the [subjunctive](#) serves the same function after *if* that it does in Greek? According to the English dictionary the answer is yes.

Let me read you the definition of subjunctive.....oh, let me show you this too. So this is the English dictionary: (27:24)

With both protasis [again that would be that statement, not for this specific statement, but that first part] and apodosis in the subjunctive, the expression means to express a hypothesis which is admittedly not true or realized, and stating what would be the logical or natural consequence of its truth or realization.

So if you have a double subjunctive in English, no it's saying it's not true, it's not the case. So again, folks, these are all working, these English conditions are working the same. Let me read you the English definition of subjunctive:

That which is subjoined or dependent... grammatical term was used variously with its meaning subjoined.... [Okay, here it is] Designating a mood, the forms of which are employed to denote an action or a state as is conceived and not as fact; therefore, used to express a wish, command, exhortation or a contingent, hypothetical or perspective event.

So looking into how the conditions work in English, what we learn is the conditions in English work virtually the same way they work in Greek, and all you need to do is get an English dictionary and look these words up to figure this out. So what you need to do when you're reading your Bible and you come across a condition, you don't have to go to Blue Letter Bible or some other program and look at the parsing, all you have to do is ask yourself, "What is this condition trying to convey? Is it trying to convey the absolute objective relationship between two things, or is there something in some way, shape, manner or form that is subjunctive, up in the air or not yet known or determined?" If there is, then it cannot be a statement in the form of, *if, and it's true*, it has to be a statement in some other type of form like, *maybe it is, maybe it isn't*.

With that in mind, that fits what I read to you earlier about the function of a hypothetical syllogism. Let me read it to you again:

A hypothetical syllogism is a construct of a conditional major premise and an unconditional minor premise leading to an unconditional conclusion.

In other words, even though one of the premises is hypothetical, the conclusion is not. If I say to my sons, "If you're my son then act like it." Am I saying, "I'm not sure you're my son"? You get the point, right? I'm not saying, "Maybe you're my son, maybe you're not." I'm not calling that into question, I'm saying that on the basis that you're my son then act like it.

Romans 8:17 *and if children, then heirs;*

What kind of statement is that? Is that a *modus ponens* statement? If P, then Q; *if children* (P), *then heirs* (Q). Is he saying, "Maybe you're a child, maybe you're not?" How do you know he's not saying that? What did the verse before it say?

Verse 16 said, *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* So when he gets to verse 17 and he says, *and if children then heirs*, he's not now all of a sudden saying that, "Hmmm, I'm not sure; maybe you're a child, maybe you're not." Is that what he's saying? No, he's saying, "On the basis of the fact that you're a child [if P, if some such thing, then you're Q, what?], then you're heirs.

So is that a statement of, "If and it's true" or "maybe it is, maybe it isn't?"

(Class Member: Sometimes it's easier just to substitute another word for *if*; for example, *since* {since it is true}.)

You can't do that, Mike, if you do that you're undermining, you're changing the KJB. You can't do that. Now I'm being facetious with you to make a point.

(Class Member: English changes over the years.)

But that's where some people are at with this. If you even suggest, for example later on, that *if so be* carries the force of the English word *since*, well now you're undermining the KJB. I understand what you're saying, but the translators, I do believe that the translators render these words *if* for a reason, and I believe that the reason they did it this way is to force you to follow the logic of the statements of the argument that he's making.

Now let's look at the other one:

And if children then heirs;

See, that one's easy, right? That one's easy; that's clearly a statement of logical fact based upon the previous verse.

heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;

So when it says there:

And if children then heirs; [semicolon] heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;

What that middle part is doing is just elaborating on what kind of an heir you are. If you're an heir, well what kind of an heir am I? I'm an heir of God.

and a joint-heir with Christ; [semicolon] if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

So let's talk for a minute about *if so be*. I've heard it said in the not-to-distant past by a particular Bible teacher; he said the following about *if so be*: "*If so be* means, if it be so, if the condition exists, then it's true."

Let's say I take that interpretation, what does *if so be* mean then? *If so be that we suffer* – what kind of statement is that again? That's another hypothetical syllogism. That's another statement of basic logic.

If so be that we suffer with him [P], that we may be also glorified together.

- *Protasis*—"if so be that we suffer with *him*," = P
- *Apodosis*—"that we may be also glorified together." = Q

If you don't understand that as a statement of fact, now you're calling into question whether or not you're going to be glorified with him. If I look at that statement, *if so be that we suffer*, where is the first verb after *if so be*? *Suffer*. What mood is it in? Just read the statement.

if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

It's if and it's what? If what I have to do now is to maintain a particular theological position, is to then say, "Well, this phraseology has to mean the same thing every time." You think that's a good idea or not a good idea? It's not a good idea.

Matthew 18:11-13 *For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*

Who's that? Who's the Son of man? Christ.

¹² *How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?*

There's 100 sheep, how many of them go astray? One. Is he going to leave the 99 and go look for the one? Yes.

¹³ *And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.*

What is the meaning of *if so be* in that verse? *If so be that he find it*. So, *maybe he'll find it and maybe he won't*, and whether or not he rejoices is going to be contingent upon whether or not he finds it. So it would be a mistake to say that *if so be*, that phraseology, means the same thing every time it's in the Bible. That would be a mistake, because in this case, guess what the mood is? And you can see that in English because he's only going to rejoice if he finds the sheep. If he doesn't find the sheep he won't rejoice, because it's contingent upon and subject to the circumstances. If the sheep is found he'll rejoice, if the sheep's not found he won't.

So in Romans 8:17, is Paul saying, "Maybe you suffer with him and maybe you don't; we'll have to wait and see how it turns out." Is that what he's saying there? That's not what he's saying. But is that what the construct is conveying in that verse?

So what I'm saying is *if so be* is a form of a conditional statement because it has the word *if*. And by the way, let me commit some real sacrilege for you – in Romans 8:17, the phrase *if so be*, that is a translation of the Greek word *eiper*. In Matthew 8, the phrase *if so be* is a compound word taken from two separate Greek words, but you're not supposed to look at that, because that's undermining....but my point is, it does not help you, it does not help me in order to try to defend some entrenched position that I have to paint with a broad brush and say that all these conditions mean the same thing every time they occur. That's just silly, right, because you just

know not only from what we did see here by looking at some Greek stuff, but more importantly, from the English dictionary, that there are different conditions that are being expressed by the use of the word *if*, and the function of the condition depends on the mood on the verb that follows the condition.

Ephesians 4:17-22 *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*

Is that the way Paul wants them to walk? No.

¹⁸ *having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: ¹⁹ who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But ye have not so learned Christ;*

What does that verse mean? Is verse 17-19 what Paul taught them about Christ and how they should walk? No. It says, *but ye have not so learned* – what tense? Past tense, so is Paul talking about something that he’s already taught them?

²¹ *if so be that ye have heard him,*

What tense is that? So have they already heard him in this manner? Yes.

and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

So which way should we read *if so be* here? Should we read it as in Matthew 18 where maybe he’ll rejoice, maybe he won’t? Is the sense here, maybe they’ve been taught this, maybe they haven’t? Or should we read it in the sense of Romans 8 on the basis of the established fact that I’ve taught you this, here is how you should walk? Yeah, that one. Is there a difference? There’s a difference

²¹ *if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

So in this case the function of the *if so be* is more in line with how it’s being used in Romans 8. The *if so be* here is not being used the same way the *if so be* is being used in Matthew 18. My point is, when you’re considering these conditions you need to ask yourself in each individual occurrence, “What is the point of this condition?” Given the context, given what’s being discussed in the passage, and how each one of them is structured in a grammatical sense, what does it mean in this particular case?

(Class member: I just think that general 20th Century, 21st Century Americans are not used to being so precise....English. They don't think that precisely and they don't take words to mean exact things. Our language has deteriorated.)

I don't know how anybody could deny that, and so your point then is what? That this type of precision in understanding the words is overlooked?

(Class member: It doesn't come natural to Americans....and unfortunately the newer translations take the preciseness out so that even if you study you can't find it.)

Romans 8:17 *and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him,*

A modern version will take the *if so be* and translate it *indeed*. Does the word *indeed* carry the sense of what that underlying word means? I would say yes it does, but by changing it to *indeed* they're doing exactly what you said: they're taking out the precision; they're doing the hard work for you and not forcing you to think about what you're reading and study what you're reading so you can get to the bottom of it and really get an understanding of it.

So while you might be able to read that and you maybe will have more familiarity with the word *indeed* or the word *since*, there is a sense that that is sort of cheating you out of a richness of study that you would get if you really looked into this like we just did.

(Class member: But at the time the KJB was translated, English was a more pure language, and everybody that spoke English, just from having spoken this their whole life, knew exactly what the King James meant.)

That's also undeniable.

(Class member: So grammatically, is that how we're supposed to approach the KJB the, because is the grammar correct in the KJB, or do we ultimately have to go to the Greek?)

That's why I'm spending all this time showing you that this stuff works the way it works in English because I think you can trust what you have in English. I think that if you look at that structure, *if so be that we suffer with him*, and you understand that as an indicative conditional statement, and I don't have to change it to *since* or *indeed* or whatever, then it causes me to really understand what's going on in that verse on a level, I believe, that I would not get if that had been switched out for me.

I do not think looking into any of this is wrong; I did it, in the Greek, but I didn't do it with the intention of correcting this in English. I did it with the intention of trying to gain a better understanding of what I had. When I was criticized for it I took it a step further and looked at all this stuff in English and discovered that it works exactly the same way.

(Class member: I think a lot of the controversy, knowing some of the background, is somewhere along the line there were those who completely rejected the Greek, saying that we correct the Greek from the English.)

Yeah, that was Ruckman's position. You're absolutely right, Ruckman's got a whole chapter in his book on manuscript evidence about how the English corrects the Greek, and so that's where that idea is coming from.

(Class member: So my assumption is I can trust the KJB in its grammar.)

Yes, assuming you know English grammar, you can trust your English Bible.

(What about translations like Weymouth who says the reason.....read my translation is to help you understand the Greek rules and tenses and so forth because....)

I've never seen that one.

(Class member: I think the purpose of it is to.....translate the Greek tenses and moods so the English reader can understand it better.)

I think the English reader can understand the English KJB just fine if they know English grammar, but you cannot say that the English grammar doesn't matter. It's just fascinating to me how some of the same folks that are upset with me for even daring in their mind to even look at anything in Greek, will then turn right around and say the English grammar doesn't matter and all these things mean the same thing all the way across the board. It's like, are you serious? I mean is that really what you want, is that really your position, or is that just a position that you're adopting to support your pet doctrinal issue or whatever?

As soon as somebody says this is this way all the time, you better question that statement and look into it for yourself, because it is very rare (sometimes it is) but it is very rarely a certain way every single time, because of exactly what Ronnie's talking about – the nuances of the English grammar.

Another example would be verse 9:

Romans 8:9 *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit*

So are the believers in Rome in the flesh or in the Spirit?

if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Is he saying, "Maybe the Spirit of God dwells in you and maybe he doesn't?" If that's what he's saying then how can he make the first statement (*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit*)? How can you not be in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God doesn't dwell in you?

But if you're going to take that *if so be* and you're going to say that means the same thing the one meant over in Matthew 18, you're going to be in real trouble because what you're going to end up saying in that verse, as some have as we've already seen, that God the Holy Spirit does not necessarily indwell every believer unless they meet whatever they say the conditions are. That is trouble folks, and you end up in that trouble for precisely *not* paying attention to the English grammar.

(Class member: Just to make it easier for us, the Holy Spirit, through Paul (both in verses 9 and 16), he just spells it out and the suffering verses (yeah, *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy*), if you just keep reading you can't get a heresy out of it.)

I appreciate you saying it that way. But when you don't understand the grammar here in this statement and you want to twist it or disregard it or not pay attention to it because you want to say something else.....you can trust the English that you have in your English KJB assuming you know English grammar.

(Class member: And so these guys that you're criticizing are just avoiding English grammar?)

They have stated, they've adopted an absolute statement about the meaning of *if so be*, and they are unwilling to budge, because if they budge a little bit and they allow an inkling that they may not have understood it right, then they're calling into question whether or not they've understood it right in that verse that they're making their big stand on. So what happens is they've entrenched their position around what I perceive to be an improper grammatical understanding of this phrase and saying it means this all the way through, when I've just shown you that it does not and it's not practical to say that, so in order for them to maintain the position that they've adopted they have to remain consistent on this point, because if they don't remain consistent on this point then they're opening up the flood gates that they may not have understood it right.

(Class member: Back to the comment earlier about the context, when I was a young Christian I sat for a long time under a succession of bad teaching that was cultic, and to overcome that I started to just read my Bible, and then arising things that I found interesting, and I used to say I learned the Bible in self-defense. But preachers will pull one verse, and you do it too, everybody does it [Bryan: Everybody does it.], and my practice for most of my life now has been, and I highly recommend it – look up those verses and read the context because anybody can run amuck with their own pet doctrine.)

Anybody can do it, I can do it, Brother Jordan can do it....that's Richard's statement: "A text without a context is a pretext." Yes, he says that all the time. So you should be a Berean; you should not just believe me, some other preacher or anybody just because they say it, and go check out what's being said. That to me seems to be like a principle.

Let's sum all this stuff up. I understand that I threw a lot of big words and technical jargon at you. I hope that that did not confuse you; I felt like I had to do that so you guys would understand what's going on here as you think about this. This is a somewhat complex issue, it's a technical issue and you have to pay attention to the details in order to really get an understanding of what's going on.

I think you can trust your English Bible. I think that you do need to pay attention to the grammar and all these sorts of things as we've already mentioned, but what we need to do is we need to not adopt things that are so stringent that we can't take into account the individual occurrences of words and phrases and what they mean in a particular passage or context.

So I hope all that makes sense. I appreciate you paying attention to this. I am glad that we got this recorded and I was kind of able to collect some of my thoughts on this and have some good interaction with you saints about it.

(Class member: One of the things that threw me many years ago was even the Greek thing, if you assume that the Greek grammar does not change, it does, and different teachers will throw you different curves, too, and make that sort of grammar law and change it. Bullinger was great for that – that Sharps Granville Law, he changed that thing over and over again, and that always bothered me; that it was a law and that was the concrete, the foundation on which we stand, based on....changes too.)

We've already seen that in our study of Sonship Edification teaching of Romans 8:17 because they'll say, *if children then heirs*, and say that's a First Class Condition; and then they'll go down to *if so be* and say that's not a First Class Condition.

Wait a minute here. If the first one is, then on what authority when you get to the next one and just say it's not when it has the exact same structure as the first statement? It's an interpretation of convenience, that's what it is.

Resources for Further Study

[Inheritance](#)—message from the 2015 Grace School of the Bible Summer Family Bible Conference.

[Foundations Under Fire](#)—message from the 2014 Soldier Training for Service Conference at Shorewood Bible Church. For a copy of the PowerPoint [click here](#).

[*Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17 2nd Edition*](#)

[*The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2: An Overview*](#)

[*The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2: If Statement Number 2*](#)

[*The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2: If Statement Number 3*](#)

[*The Faithful Saying of II Timothy 2: If Statement Number 4*](#)

[*Sonship Edification Origins—PowerPoint File*](#)

[*Sonship Edification: Distinguishing Characteristics, Part 3 \(Indwelling Holy Spirit\)—PowerPoint File*](#)

[*Sonship Edification: Distinguishing Characteristics, Part 4 \(Conditional Nature of Joint-Heirship in Romans 8:17\)*](#)