

OUTLINING FIRST CORINTHIANS FIFTEEN

Below represents the original draft mixing together the Greek rhetorical structuring along with individual units of text material as reflected by the syntax of the Greek text and visually displayed in the [Block Diagram of First Corinthians](#).

At first glance it seems disjointed and, to be sure, from a modern western standpoint is rather incoherent. But it must never be overlooked that the apostle Paul was a individual in the first century world and not the modern world. He simply did not think and reason along lines that we are accustomed to. Instead, his thought patterns reflect a highly creative mixture of classical Greek deliberative rhetoric and Jewish scribal patterns of argumentation that were common place in the first century.

Paul's objective in this presentation of chapter fifteen was to expose the false thinking of the Corinthian elitists by affirming the central role of resurrection in the apostolic Gospel. The elitists depended mostly on Greek ways of reasoning in order to develop their alternative views to the Gospel preached by Paul. The apostle marvelously utilizes a superior form of Greek reasoning as his core communication vehicle to demonstrate the superiority of God's way of thinking as presented in the Gospel of the resurrection. Added to this is an equally creative use of the Jewish scribal methods that he had learned as a Pharisee. The final product of chapter fifteen is a marvelous defense of the central role that resurrection plays in authentic Christianity, both the resurrection of Christ and its connection to the resurrection of believers at the second coming of Christ at the end.

This 'crazy' outline mixture is intentionally preserved in order to highlight the different mindset of Paul from ours as a modern reader. Far too often, the commentaries and articles on chapter fifteen sacrifice this different mindset and filter Paul's thoughts through the distorting prism of a modern based outline. To be sure, this is easier for the modern reader to understand, but it also is very misleading in implying that such an outline reflects Paul's mind.

[The Gospel of the Resurrection, 15:1-58.](#)

How is the material then put together?

[Narratio, vv. 1-11](#)

- a) Core topic, vv. 1-2.
- b) Justification of the idea of resurrection, vv. 3-11
First, faithful transmission of the Gospel, vv. 3-8.
Second, Paul's indebtedness to God, vv. 9-11.
- c) Addressing the denial in the church, vv. 12-58.

[Refutatio 1, vv. 12-19](#)

- i) The denial of resurrection in the church, vv. 13-19.
Rhetorical question, v. 12.
Defense, part one, vv. 13-14.
Defense two, v. 15
Defense three, summary, vv. 16-18.
Defense four, the sad situation of believers, v. 19

[Conformatio 1, vv. 20-34](#)

- ii) The reality of resurrection, vv. 20-28.

- Thesis: Christ has been raised, v. 20.
Reasons for and implications of this resurrection of Christ, vv. 21-28.
Christ and Adam, vv. 21-24
Christ's ultimate triumph over death, vv. 25-28
- iii) Further defense of Christ's resurrection, vv. 29-34.
The example of proxy baptism in the church, v. 29.
Paul's personal experience, vv. 30-31.
Paul's experience at Ephesus, vv. 32-33.
Concluding admonitions, v. 34.

[Refutatio 2, vv. 35-49](#)

- iv) The nature of the resurrection body, vv. 35-58
The objection, v. 35.
First response by Paul, vv. 36-49.
Death for the seed is necessary for life in the plant, vv. 36-38.
God's ordered diversity in things and people, vv. 39-41.
Summing up in application, vv. 42-49.
Sowing and raising up, vv. 42-44.
Adam and Christ, vv. 45-49.

[Conformatio 2, vv. 50-57](#)

- Second response by Paul, vv. 50-57.
Affirmation of foundation, v. 50.
Role of mystery, vv. 51-53.
Heart of the coming experience, v. 51b
Justifying statement 1, v. 52.
Justifying statement 2, v. 53
Celebration of this resurrection, vv. 54-57.

[Peroratio, v. 58](#)

- Concluding praise and admonition, v. 58.

[Summary Conclusions about Chapter Fifteen](#)