

Conditional Sentences

It all depends!

A lesson for the *Paideia* web-app
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What is a conditional sentence?

- An "If...then..." sentence
 - States that something will happen *if* some condition is fulfilled
- Parts of a conditional sentence

Protasis (condition)	Apodosis (result)
If I run out of milk...	...then I will go to the store.
If I had been there...	...then I could have helped.
If she says yes...	...then we will get married.



Four kinds of conditional sentence

- Classified based on
 - The word introducing the protasis (which "if"?)
 - The tense and mood of the verb in the protasis
 - The tense of the verb in the apodosis
- The fourth never fully appears in the NT
 - So we'll focus on the first three classes



First Class Conditional Sentences

- Classified based on

- Protasis

- introduced with εἰ
 - Indicative verb (any tense)

Protasis

εἰ + indicative verb

- A “condition of fact”

- Protasis is treated as true

- This is only from the speaker/writer’s perspective
 - This may only be for the sake of argument

- A condition that is not really hypothetical

- “If my mother loves me, she won’t forget my birthday.”
 - “Since I have to pay my taxes, I won’t be buying that new TV.”



First Class Conditional Sentences

- Classified based on

- Protasis

- introduced with εἰ
 - Indicative verb (any tense)

Protasis

Εἰ + indicative verb

- Greek Example

- Εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. (Mat 12:28)
 - "And if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come to you."



Second Class Conditional Sentences

- Classified based on

- Protasis

- Introduced with εἰ
 - Verb indicative (past tense)

- Apodosis

- Usually starts with ἄν
 - Indicative verb (same past tense)

- A “contrary to fact” condition

- Protasis is treated as untrue

- The apodosis (result) is false

- A hypothetical condition

- “If I were an alien, then my kids would be too.”

Protasis	Εἰ + indicative (past tense)
Apodosis	ἄν + indicative (same tense)



Second Class Conditional Sentences

- Classified based on

- Protasis

- Introduced with εἰ
 - Verb indicative (past tense)

- Apodosis

- Usually starts with ἂν
 - Indicative verb (same past tense)

- A “contrary to fact” condition

- Εἰ γὰρ ἔγνωσαν, οὐκ ἂν τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης ἐσταύρωσαν. (1Co 2:8)
 - “Because if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

Protasis	Εἰ + indicative (past tense)
Apodosis	ἂν + indicative (same tense)



Third Class Conditional Sentences

- Classified based on

- Protasis

- Introduced with *ἐάν*
 - Subjunctive verb

- Apodosis

- Verb in any mood or tense

- A “possible condition”

- Protasis is treated as possible, but uncertain
 - Less hypothetical than 2nd class, but less certain than 1st class
 - “If the sky is clear, then it isn’t raining.”
 - “If I stay up too late, I’ll be tired in the morning.”

Protasis	<i>Ἐάν</i> + subjunctive
Apodosis	any mood and tense



Third Class: Future More Probable

- Protasis possible but uncertain

- A definite event in the future

- English example

- "If I stay up too late, I'll be tired in the morning."

- Greek example

- Καὶ ἐὰν ἀπολύσω αὐτοὺς νήστες εἰς οἶκον αὐτῶν, ἐκλυθήσονται ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ. (Mark 8:3)

- "And if I let them go to their homes even though they are hungry, they will perish on the way."

Protasis	Ἐὰν + subjunctive
Apodosis	any mood and tense



Third Class: Present General

- Protasis is a general possibility
 - No particular occasion in mind
 - Apodosis results whenever condition is true

Protasis	Ἐάν + subjunctive
Apodosis	present tense

- English example
 - "If the sky is clear, then it isn't raining."

- Greek example
 - Καὶ ἐὰν κρίνω δὲ ἐγώ, ἡ κρίσις ἡ ἐμὴ ἀληθινὴ ἐστίν... (John 8:16)
 - "But if I judge, my judgment is true..."



Summary of Conditional Sentences

	Protasis	Apodosis	Meaning	Negated with
First class	εἰ + indicative verb (any tense)	Verb in any mood (any tense)	Apodosis is true (at least for the sake of argument)	οὐ
Second class	εἰ + indicative verb (past tense)	ἄν + indicative (same tense as in protasis)	Apodosis is false (at least for the sake of argument)	μη
Third class	ἐάν + subjunctive verb	Verb in any mood (any tense)	Apodosis is a genuine possibility but not certain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - may have specific future event in mind - may describe general cause/effect pattern 	μη



"Gotchas" with Conditional Sentences

- First class conditions aren't always *actually* true
 - The speaker may just be assuming its truth temporarily, for the sake of argument or effect.
 - Εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ χριστὸς ἐγήγερται. (1Cor 15:13)
 - "But if there is no resurrection from the dead, then neither has Christ been raised."



Keep Learning

- You can learn more about conditional sentences here:
 - Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek* (3rd edition)
 - Ἐάν and the subjunctive, 31.15 (pp. 293—4)
 - Conditional sentences, 35.5—35.9 (pp. 328—9)
 - Wallace, *Basics of New Testament Syntax* (1st edition)
 - “Conditional Sentences” (pp. 303-315)

