Conditional Clauses in Greek

What is a Conditional" Clause in Greek?

Conditional clause = These dependent clauses can be identified in most English translations by beginning with the conjunction "**IF**".

A conditional clause is a supposition (a fact that is supposed) which may or may not be true, depending on the fulfillment of certain specified conditions.

A conditional clause in Greek is formed by combining a preposition with a certain verb mood (**Indicative mood** = fact; **subjunctive** = has some degree of uncertainty; **optative** = reflects even more uncertainty).

Conditional clauses can be grouped into two general categories:

(1). The first and second class conditional statements are used with the **indicative mood** and view the situation from a standpoint of reality, assuming the premise is either true (First Class Condition) or untrue (Second Class Condition). The speaker is simply making a declarative statement based on the assumption that what he is saying is either true or false.

(2). The third and fourth class conditional statements use the **subjunctive** and **optative moods** respectively and reflect uncertainty or doubt.

Summary of the Four
Class Conditions of "IF" in Greek:

1. First class = (If) what follows is accepted as TRUE. Could be translated "since" or "because". True statement or fulfilled condition.

- **Ei + any tense of indicative mood**

  1Peter 2:1+, Col 1:23+, Col 3:1+ Eph 3:2+; Eph 4:21+, etc

  Caveat - not every first class condition can accurately be translated with "**since**" -- see **addendum** below.

2. Second class = (If) what follows is NOT TRUE. Statement contrary to fact or an unfulfilled condition.

- **Ei + past tenses of indicative mood**

  Jn 15:19

3. Third class = (If)… and it may be true or may not be true. Supposition where the reality of the issue is uncertain.

- **Ean + subjunctive mood implying uncertainty**

  Mt 4:9+

4. Fourth class = (If) = IF… it might be true, but it is very doubtful. Same expression as 3rd class but even > doubt of fulfillment.

- **Ei + optative mood**

  1Peter 3:14+

Related Resources:

- Wikipedia - Conditional Sentences

FIRST CLASS CONDITION
AND USE OF "SINCE"

Here are some supplementary notes on whether one should use "**since**" in translating the "**if**" in a first class condition.

Let's look at a couple of examples and as a good inductive student you decide if "since" would be appropriate.

Here is 1 Peter 2:3 when in NASB reads "if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord." Look at the context? The question is had they tasted the kindness? Or was it "iffy" so to speak. Look at 1 Peter 1:22-23 - "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." So clearly **in context** his readers had "**tasted**" the kindness of the Lord. Now if you go back to the passage in 1 Peter 2:3 it seems we can accurately "paraphrase" it "**Since** you tasted the kindness..." And here is the translation by the HCSB - 1 Peter 2:3 <u>since</u> you have tasted that the Lord is good. (1Pe 2:3 CSB)

> Here is John MacArthur's comment on the "if" in 1Peter 2:3 = "Verse 3, he says, "Long for the pure spiritual milk of the Word **if** you've tasted the kindness of the Lord." What does he mean by that? You know what he means. It's a **first-class conditional in the Greek**, it means **since** or **because**." (Sermon entitled "Desiring the Word" in 1988).

Look at Luke 4:3 "And the devil said to Him, "**If** You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." In Greek the "if" introduces a first class conditional declaration by the devil to Jesus.

> "IF" could be translated with "since" in this sentence and it would be accurate.

> John MacArthur's comment on this passage "Verse 3, "The devil said to Him," all the way through the devil speaks, by the way, with a measure of truth. Deception only works if it somehow has partial truth in it. And so when the devil speaks, he starts from a point of truth. That's the subtlety of his deception. So the devil said to Him, "**If** … or probably better translated … **since**," this is a first class conditional with a particle a which is ei in the Greek, and a first class conditional does not presume doubt, it does not presume doubt. So he's really saying … "**Since** … since You are the Son of God." This is true and this is the measure of truth with which Satan launches the deception." (The Temptation of the Messiah Part 1, 2000).

Some other examples where "since" makes "sense"...

> "But **if** (**since**) ye be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law",   Galatians 5:18.

> Romans 8:31   What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

>> Paul makes a dogmatic statement that is to be applied to every Christian so clearly in this context it would be fair and accurate to translate ".**If** (First Class Conditional) with "<u>since </u>God is for us." Why? Because there is no doubt that God is for us (believers).

> 1 Cor 15:2 - "by which also you are saved, **if** you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain."

>> Here is Bob Utley's note on "**if**" - This is a **FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL** sentence, which implies that they would "hold fast" to the truth of the gospel, which he preached to them, but it adds a note of contingency by a second "ei" (unless). This seems to parallel Jesus' Parable of the Soils (cf. Matt. 13) and John's discussion in 1 John 2:19 of those who were in the fellowship, but left. There were those factions in Corinth who by their actions, attitudes, and theology showed they were never believers! They rejected Paul's gospel and Apostolic authority and merged the gospel into Roman culture, whereby the culture became dominant! Cultural Christianity is always weak and sometimes not Christian! However, please note that contextually Paul is asserting his confidence that the Corinthian believers are true believers. (1) AORIST tense, v. 1, "received" (2) PERFECT tense, v. 1, "in which also you stand" (3) **FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL** sentence, v. 2, "<u>since</u> you hold fast"

> Galatians 4:7 - "Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and **if** a son, then an heir through God"

>> Bob Utley writes - This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE, "**since** you are sons" (TEV, NIV). The Spirit removes our slavery and bondage and establishes our sonship (cf. Rom. 8:12–17). This assures our inheritance (cf. 1 Pet. 1:4–5). Here is the **NIV** which renders the "if" with "since" = "NIV Galatians 4:7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and <u>since </u>you are a son, God has made you also an heir." (As does the NLT paraphrase)

Now I am not a Greek expert but clearly some passages with a first class conditional can be translated with "**Since**" -- should every first class condition be translated with "since"? That's another question. I think what can help make that decision is examination of the context, so see if "since" makes sense or is non-sense. See the notes below from Mounce and Wallace...

Here is the note from Greek Expert William Mounce says...source = Basics of Biblical Greek: Grammar

> **First class conditional sentences**. Also called "conditions of fact." These sentences are saying that if something is true, and

let's assume for the sake of the argument that it is true, then such and such will occur.

The apodosis is introduced with **ε** and the verb is in the **indicative**.

■   Most of the time you will translate **ε** as **"if."** The protasis is assumed true for the sake of the argument, but you are not sure whether the protasis is in fact accurate. **Sometimes it clearly is not.**

ε δεξιά σου χε ρ σκανδαλίζει σε, κκοψον α τήν (Matt 5:30).

If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

>   (MY COMMENT - CLEARLY IN THIS CONTEXT "SINCE" WOULD NOT BE AN ACCURATE WAY TO
>   TRANSLATE THE "IF IN THIS PASSAGE).

ε δ νάστασις νεκρ ν ο κ στιν, ο δ Χριστ ς γήγερται (1 Cor 15:13).

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

■   **Sometimes the apodosis is true**, and you may want to translate ε as "**since**."

ε γ ρ πιστεύομεν τι ησο ς πέθανεν κα νέστη, ο τως κα   θε ς το ς κοιμηθέντας δι το ησο ξει σ ν α τ (1 Thess 4:14).

For **since** we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God, through Jesus, will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

This may be over-translating a bit, saying more than what the sentence actually means, but there are times when using "if" adds an element of uncertainty that is not appropriate to the verse.

>   **ADDENDUM TO MOUNCE'S BOOK NOTE ABOVE** - This is a copy of Mounce's article entitled **Is it "if" or "since"?** -
>
>   First class conditional sentences are formed with a protasis (the "if" clause) with ε and the indicative (any tense). Their basic meaning is to say that if such-and-such is true (and we will accept the truth of the protasis for the sake of the argument), then such-and-such will occur.
>
>   Of course, that does not mean the protasis actually is true. It could be a lie, or it could just not be true. In fact, the second class conditional sentence ("condition contrary to fact" it is also called) is identical in form to the first (except that the verb in the protasis is past time) and the protasis is clearly false. "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me" (Jn 5:46). They clearly do not believe Moses.
>
>   I have often heard it argued that you should translate the ε of the protasis as "since" and not "if" since the protasis is assumed to be true. There certainly are verses in which the use of "if" adds an apparent element of question that is not appropriate for what is being said. Satan says, "If you are the Son of God [ε υ ς ε το θεο], tell this stone to become bread" (Luke 4:3). There was no question in Satan's mind who Jesus was.
>
>   Wallace argues strongly against this practice, saying that it over-translates ε , saying more than ε actually says (pp. 692f.). Greek has a word for "since," you don't know if the speaker "would actually affirm the truth of the protasis," and sometimes this construction is used with a rhetorical force that is removed by "since."
>
>   I came across a great example of this latter argument. When you look at 1 Cor 15:12 out of context, it seems a candidate for "since." "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" There is no question that "Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead," so why not translate "since Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead"?
>
>   But look at the next two verses. "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised" (1 Cor 15:13). "And if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is groundless, and your faith is to no purpose" (1 Cor 15:14).
>
>   Here is a rhetorically powerful triad of confessions that Paul is calling the Corinthians to affirm (even though the second is in reverse).
>
>   Is Christ proclaimed as raised from the dead?
>
>   Is there a resurrection?
>
>   Has Christ been raised?
>
>   The use of "if" in this triad calls for an affirmation of faith on the part of the reader, an affirmation that they believe Christ has been raised from the dead, that there is a resurrection, and that Christ has been raised.

"Since" would destroy the rhetorical strength of Paul's statements.

Daniel Wallace (Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics) has this note...

Semantic Categories of Conditional Sentences

1. **First Class Condition** (Assumed True for Argument's Sake)

   a. Definition   The first class condition indicates the assumption of truth for the sake of argument. The normal idea, then, is if—and let us assume that this is true for the sake of argument—then… . This class uses the particle ε with the **indicative** (in any tense) in the protasis. In the apodosis, any mood and any tense can occur**. This is a frequent conditional clause, occurring about 300 times in the NT.**

   b. Amplification

   1) Not "Since"

   There are two views of the first class condition that need to be avoided. First is the error of saying too much about its meaning. The first class condition is popularly taken to mean the condition of reality or the condition of truth. Many have heard this from the pulpit: "In the Greek this condition means since."

   This is saying too much about the first class condition. For one thing, this view assumes a direct correspondence between language and reality, to the effect that the indicative mood is the mood of fact. For another, this view is demonstrably false for conditional statements: (a) In apparently only 37% of the instances is there a correspondence to reality (to the effect that the condition could be translated since). (b) Further, there are 36 instances of the first class condition in the NT that cannot possibly be translated since. This can be seen especially with two opposed conditional statements. Note the following illustrations.

   Mt 12:27–28 ε γ   ν Βεελζεβο λ κβάλλω τ δαιμόνια, ο υ ο   μ ν ν τίνι κβάλλουσιν; … (28) ε δ   ν πνεύματι θεο γ   κβάλλω τ δαιμόνια, ρα φθασεν φ᾽ μ ς βασιλεία το θεο .

   If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? … (28) But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

   Obviously it is illogical to translate both sentences as since I cast out, because the arguments are opposed to each other. And it would be inconsistent to translate the first participle if and the second since.

   1 Cor 15:13 ε δ   νάστασις νεκρ ν ο κ στιν, ο δ Χριστ ς γήγερται

   But if there is no resurrection, then Christ has not been raised.

   It is self-evident that the apostle Paul could not mean by the first class condition "**since** there is no resurrection"!

   Cf. also Mt 5:29–30; 17:4; Mt 26:39 with Mt 26:42; John 10:37; 18:23; 1 Cor 9:17; 1Cor 15:14.

MY CONCLUSION - Clearly two Greek authorities disagree about use of "**since**." one saying yes you can but make sure it makes sense and Wallace saying no you should not translate "If" (1CC) with "since." But for example look at Col 3:1 - "Therefore **if** (FIRST CLASS CONDITION) you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." So here's the question - have you been raised up with Christ in this context? Clearly the answer is yes since unbelievers could not obey the command to "keep seeking the things above..." And so it is not surprising that the dynamic paraphrase NIV has "**Since**, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. (Col 3:1NIV) Take another example - John 10:37 "**if** (FIRST CLASS CONDITION) I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me." To translate that as since would be "**non-sense**" because did do the works of His Father. And so it is not surprising that none of the Bible versions translate this "if" as "since."

In sum it seems that context is king and if we cannot be 100% sure, we should stick with the literal Greek word and translate it with "if" and not with "since."

THIRD CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE

A **Third Class Conditional Sentence** in Greek grammar expresses a **probable or potential condition**. It reflects a situation that may or may not happen, depending on circumstances or choices. These sentences are particularly common in the New Testament and often deal with actions or events that are possible but not certain. Third class conditional sentences present **potential conditions** with

real-life implications. They often invite believers to reflect on their choices, actions, and attitudes in light of God's truth. Third class conditionals often challenge us as believers to trust in God's promises and take steps of faith (remembering that faith is linked with Spirit enabled obedience). The apodoses (main clauses) often reassure believers of God's faithfulness when they meet the condition.

Structure of a Third Class Conditional Sentence

A third class conditional sentence typically consists of two parts:

1. **The Protasis (Conditional Clause)**: This is the "if" part of the sentence, introduced by ἐάν **(ean)** + a verb in the **subjunctive mood**.

   - ἐάv = "if" or "whenever." In Jn 14:15 the protasis is "*If you love Me...*"
   - The subjunctive mood indicates potentiality or uncertainty.
   - Protasis is the "if" part of the sentence that sets up the condition.

2. **T h e Apodosis (Main Clause or Result Clause)**: This is the "then" part of the sentence, which provides the result or consequence if the condition is fulfilled. Stated another way apodosis expresses the outcome or conclusion that depends on the condition stated in the **protasis** (the "if" clause). In Jn 14:15 the apodosis is "...*you will keep My commandments.*"

   - Apodosis is derived from apo = back or away + didomi = to give. And so in grammar, apodosis reflects the idea of a result or conclusion given in response to the condition.
   - Understanding the apodosis helps in interpreting Scripture, particularly in passages with conditional promises, warnings, or instructions. It clarifies the relationship between what God requires (protasis) and what He promises or warns (apodosis).
   - Apodosis is dependent on the Protasis: The apodosis only applies if the condition in the protasis is met.
   - Apodosis is used in varied Moods: The apodosis can include verbs in the indicative (stating fact), imperative (giving command), or other moods, depending on the sentence's purpose.
   - Apodosis expresses Outcome: It highlights the result or consequence of fulfilling the condition.

Key Characteristics of Third Class Conditional Sentences

1. **Potential Fulfillment**: The condition is presented as a real possibility, though it is not certain whether it will occur.

   - Example: *"If you are willing..."* — The condition depends on the subject's choice or circumstance.

2. **Subjunctive Mood in the Protasis**: The use of the subjunctive mood in the conditional clause emphasizes that the action is contingent and not guaranteed.

3. **Flexible Outcomes**: The apodosis may describe what will happen, what should happen, or what might happen if the condition is met.

Examples of Third Class Conditional Sentences in the New Testament

1. John 14:15

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

- Greek: ἐὰν ἀγαπᾶτέ με, τὰς ἐντολὰς μου τηρήσετε.
- **Analysis**:
  - Protasis: ἐὰν ἀγαπᾶτέ με ("If you love Me")—conditional clause with the subjunctive verb ἀγαπᾶτέ (you love).
  - Apodosis: τὰς ἐντολὰς μου τηρήσετε ("you will keep My commandments")—indicative mood indicating the result.

2. Matthew 17:20

"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move."

- Greek: ἐὰν ἔχητε πίστιν ὡς κόκκον σινάπεως, ἐρεῖτε τῷ ὄρει τούτ...
- **Analysis**:
  - Protasis: ἐὰν ἔχητε πίστιν ("If you have faith")—subjunctive verb ἔχητε (you have).
  - Apodosis: ἐρεῖτε τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ ("you will say to this mountain")—indicative mood describing what will happen.

3. 1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- Greek: *ν μολογ μεν τ ς μαρτίας μ ν, πιστός στιν κα δίκαιος.*
- **Analysis**:
  - Protasis: *ν μολογ μεν τ ς μαρτίας μ ν* ("If we confess our sins")—subjunctive verb *μολογ μεν* (we confess).
  - Apodosis: *πιστός στιν κα δίκαιος* ("He is faithful and just")—indicative mood indicating the result.

How It Differs from Other Conditional Sentences

1. **First Class Conditional**:
   - Assumes the condition is true for the sake of argument.
   - Example: *"If you are the Son of God..."* (assuming it's true). (Mt 4:3+)

2. **Second Class Conditional**:
   - Assumes the condition is contrary to fact.
   - Example: *"If I were hungry, I would not tell you."* (Ps 50:12)

3. **Third Class Conditional**:
   - Deals with a probable or possible condition that may or may not happen.
   - Example: *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."* (Jn 14:15+)

Practical Application

Third class conditional sentences challenge readers to consider their responsibility and response. They often present **conditions for blessings, responsibilities of discipleship, or truths about faith**. For example:

- *"IF you love Me, you will keep My commandments"* (Jn 14:15+) (See note above) encourages obedience as a demonstration of agape love, which calls on us to be continually filled with the Spirit Who Alone can enable and energize God-like love (Eph 5:18+). We need to understand that obedience is not about earning God's favor but expressing love and gratitude to Him, walking in a manner which is pleasing to Him (frequently pray Col 1:9-10+ for yourself and other believers). This conditional sentence is an opportunity not to say "I love you Lord," but to show that this statement if from the heart and is authentic as shown by our willingness to obey Him. In short, it is important to **show** you love Jesus on Monday through Saturday, then just to **say** you love Jesus on Sunday! This underscores that obedience flows naturally (actually supernaturally) from our love for Christ. In other words, our obedience is based on love for our Lord, not legalistic adherence to the Law!

- *"IF we confess* (present tense - continually, as a lifestyle) *our sins"* (1Jn 1:9+) reminds believers of the importance of repentance (cf Pr 28:13+). Confessing our sins is an act of humility and faith. The **condition** invites us to reflect on whether we are honest with God about our struggles. The apodosis assures us of God's faithfulness and forgiveness (Neh 9:17, Da 9:9, 19+), encouraging us to draw near to Him with confidence (Heb 4:16+).

- *IF you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move"* (Matthew 17:20+) calls you to reflect on whether your faith in God and His Word is active and trusting, even if small. The condition challenges us to exercise our faith, trusting God's power to work in seemingly impossible situations. It is a call to face challenges with prayer and boldness, relying on God's strength rather than your own abilities.

- *IF you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.* (John 15:7+) For this potential condition to be realized our responsibility is to abide in Christ by daily seeking to maintain a close, intimate relationship with Him through prayer, Scripture, and obedience (and confession and repentance as needed!) The apodosis (main clause = answered prayer) depends on aligning our desires with God's will through abiding in Him (cf the same principle in 1Jn 5:14-15+). To aid continual abiding dedicate portions of your day to prayer and memorize (See Memory Verses by Topic) and meditate on His Word, always having His holy, life giving Word (Dt 32:47+) available for use (Joshua 1:8+, Pr 25:11, Pr 15:28, Pr 16:23, 24, Mt 12:34, 35+).

- *"For **IF** you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But **if** you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* (Matthew 6:14-15+) calls on us to reflect on whether we are holding grudges or harboring bitterness that prevents forgiveness. The **condition** highlights the spiritual connection between our willingness to forgive and experiencing God's forgiveness (in the sense of filial forgiveness or familial relationship, not judicial because in Christ ALL our sins have been judged and paid in full - Jn 19:30+). This conditional sentence should serve to motivate and encourage us to be proactive and take intentional steps toward forgiving others, understanding that this reflects God's grace in our life.

- "*IF anyone wishes to come after Me, he must **deny** himself, and **take up** his cross daily and **follow** Me.*" (Luke 9:23+) This **condition** challenges each of us to live sacrificially, reflecting Jesus' example, Walking Like Jesus Walked! Practically, under grace not law, guided by His Spirit not flesh, we should seek to make specific choices daily to put Christ first, regarding how we spend our time, how we handle relationships, or how we make decisions (what we do, what we read, what we watch, etc).

- "*And **IF** your right eye makes you stumble, **tear it out**, and **throw it from** you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*" (Matthew 5:29+, cf Mt 18:9+) is a warning against ignoring sin and a call (command from Jesus) to take sin in your life seriously! The condition (*If your right eye...*) calls for radical action to avoid sin as well as temptation (cf Ro 13:14b+).

Greek Conditional Sentences

- **The following notes are compliments of Corey Keating**

Conditional sentences are "If ..., then ..." statements. They make a statement that if something happens, then something else will happen.

The 'if' clause is referred to as the 'protasis' by grammarians. It comes from the Greek words 'pro' (meaning before) and 'stasis' (meaning 'stand'). So the 'protasis' means 'what stands before' or 'comes first' as far as these two clauses are concerned. The 'then' clause is termed the 'apodosis'; it is what 'comes after' the protasis.

Logical Relationship between Protasis and Apodosis

There are a number of different relationships that can exist between the protasis and apodosis. It is important that you try to distinguish between these relationships for sake of more clearly understanding the text. Please also note that there can be some overlap between these three relationships.

They could represent a Cause-Effect relationship, where the action in the protasis will cause the effect in the apodosis. For example Romans 8:13b, "...but if by the spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live."

They could show a Evidence-Inference type relationship, where the apodosis is inferred to be true based upon the evidence presented in the protasis. This will often be semantically the converse of the 'Cause-Effect' relationship. For example 1 Cor. 15:44, "If there is a soulish body, there is also a spiritual one."

Or, the relationship could be one showing Equivalence between the protasis and apodosis, which is actually a subset of the Evidence-Inference relationship. For example Gal. 2:18, "...if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor."

Classification of Greek Conditional Sentences

Greek has more ability than English in describing the kind of relationship between the protasis, and the apodosis. It is possible for the writer/speaker to indicate whether the protasis is true or not. Actually they can indicate if they are presenting the protasis as 'assumed true (or false) for the sake of argument'. In order to indicate this kind of relationship between the protasis and apodosis, Classical Greek traditional had four kinds of conditional sentences, based upon what tense and mood the verb occurs in and upon some helping words. These are much the same in Koine (Biblical) Greek, with slight variations.

(Please see link to the chart below for a description of formation and examples of conditional sentence.)

First Class Condition - Is considered the 'Simple Condition' and assumes that the premise (protasis) is true for the sake of argument. The protasis is formed with the helping word ei ('if') with the main verb in the indicative mood, in any tense; with any mood and tense in the apodosis.

Second Class Condition - Is known as the 'Contrary-to-Fact Condition' and assumes the premise as false for the sake of argument. The protasis is again formed with the helping word ei ('if') and the main verb in the indicative mood. The tense of the verb (in the protasis) must also be in a past-time tense (aorist or imperfect). The apodosis will usually have the particle an as a marking word, showing some contingency.

Third Class Condition - Traditionally known as the 'More Probable Future Condition', the third class condition should actually be split into two different categories, the 'Future More Probable Condition' (indicating either a probable future action or a hypothetical

situation) and the 'Present General Condition' (indicating a generic situation or universal truth at the present time). It is formed in the protasis using the word ean (ei plus an = 'if') and a verb in the subjunctive mood. The main verb of the protasis can be in any tense, but if the condition is a 'Present General', the verb must be in the present tense.

Fourth Class Condition - Is usually called the 'Less Probable Future Condition' and does not have a complete example in the New Testament. The fulfillment of this condition was considered even more remote than the Third Class Condition. It was formed with the helping word ei and the optative mood in the protasis. The apodosis had the helping word an and its verb was also in the optative mood.

Greek Conditional Sentences in the New Testament (Classified by Structural Formation)								
Type of Condition	Possibility of Being Realized	Protasis ("if") Conditional Word	Mood	Tense	Apodosis ("then") Conditional Word	Mood	Tense	Examples
First Class 'Simple Condition' – 'Presumed True for the Sake of Argument' *(pp. 690-694)	Assumes the reality of premise for the sake of argument, whether actually true or not.	ei (negative: ouj) (Not accurate to translate as 'since'.)						Matt.12:27-28 Luke 4:3 Romans 6:5 Galatians 5:18 Colossians 3:1
Assumes the reality of premise for the sake of argument, whether actually true or not.	Assumes the premise as untrue for the sake of argument, whether actually untrue or not.	ei (negative me)	Indicative	Past tense: a) Imperft b) aorist	(an) (usually)	indicative	Past tense: a) Impf b) Aorist	a) Present Time: Luke 7:39 John 5:46 b) Past Time: Mark 13:20 1 Cor. 2:8
Third Class 'More Probable Future Condition' a) 'Future Likely' 'Probable', or 'Hypothetical' Condition b) 'Present General Condition' (5th Class Condition) (pp. 696-698)	Fulfillment is uncertain, but still likely. a) Specific situation in future time, OR Only hypothetical b) Generic situation in present time	ean (negative me)	subjunctive	a) any tense b) present		any mood	any tense	a) Future More Probable: Matt. 4:9 Mark 5:28 Heb 6:3 Hypothetical: 1 Cor. 13:2 b) Present Gen: Matt.6:22-23 John 11:9 2 Ti 2:5
Fourth Class 'Less Probable Future Condition' Only partial formations in NT. (pp. 699-701)	Possible fulfillment; "if perhaps this should occur, then …"	ei	optative	present or aorist	an	optative	present or aorist	1 Peter 3:14, 17 Luke 1:62 Acts 17:18

Source (See more explanatory notes).