

GALATIANS: THE GOSPEL, HUMAN OR DIVINE?

A Brief Explanation of the Analysis of Galatians in Three Charts

(Please note I am having problems with my table lines in the charts not all appearing until the chart is set at 125%. I apologize and hope to rectify this.)

I have done an analysis of Galatians in order to get a sense of Paul's approach to a misuse of the Law such as occurred amongst the churches of Galatia. The results of the analysis are organized in three charts covering Galatians chapters 1 and 2, chapters 3 and 4 and chapters 5 and 6. Chapters 1 and 2 are a review of apostolic events which related theologically to the Galatian situation. Chapters 3 and 4 present material mainly from the Old Testament prophets. Chapters 5 and 6 contain applications for Galatian church life.

I decided to analyze Galatians under chiasms because I noticed, for example, that the section covering chapters 1 and 2 began and ended with similar themes, cursing and condemnation. Paul called a curse down on those who preached circumcision and the Law in order to be saved. At the end of the section he recounts Peter's condemnation for fearing those of the circumcision and withdrawing from the Gentile believers with whom he had been eating when the men from James arrived. Paul was telling the Galatians that they were not the only ones being drawn away from the gospel of the grace of God by faith in Christ's righteousness. Even a leader like Peter committed this act of hypocrisy under the same influence. (See Appendix 1, A 1:1-9 GALATIAN TURMOIL and A' 2:11-21 APOSTOLIC TURMOIL.)

In the second section, chapters 3 and 4, Paul reaches back into the Old Testament, offering examples at the beginning regarding Abraham's righteousness and at the end of that section, the example of Abraham's son Isaac, who was the son of promise. (See Appendix 2, A 3:1-18 ABRAHAM'S RIGHTEOUSNESS COUNTED ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT OF PROMISE and A' 4:21-31 ABRAHAM'S SON, ISAAC, BORN ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT OF PROMISE.)

In the third section, chapters 5 and 6, Paul reiterates at the beginning and at the end that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything. (See Appendix 3, A 5:1-12 NEITHER CIRCUMCISION NOR UNCIRCUMCISION COUNTS BUT FAITH THROUGH LOVE and A' 6:11-18 NEITHER CIRCUMCISION NOR UNCIRCUMCISION COUNTS BUT A NEW CREATION.)

GALATIANS: THE GOSPEL, HUMAN OR DIVINE?

By means of powerful examples, comparisons, progressions of thought, contrasts and repetition Paul drives home his points throughout the letter to the Galatians. Paul underlines that we are saved and made new creations by Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection, not by the works of the Law, and that the gift of the Spirit moves us to fulfill the law of Christ, loving each other and bearing each other's burdens.

Paul's letter is, of course, sequential in its argument but I hope the analysis organized in this way will draw out fresh thoughts. The first chart, of chapters 1 and 2, is a chiasm standing on its apex like this V. The second and third charts of chapters 3 and 4, and 5 and 6, stand on their side like this >.