GALATIANS 6:7

An Exegetical Development

by

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GALATIANS 6:7

I. CONTEXT STUDY

GENERAL CONTEXT

The epistle to the Galatians is called "the Magna Charta of Christian Liberty". This letter was indisputably written by the apostle Paul to the churches (plural) of Galatia (1:1). The term "Galatia" was used both in a geographical sense (referring to north central Asia Minor), and in a political sense (which referred to the Roman province in the southern district). This problem makes the dating of the epistle an uncertainty. The epistle could have been written as early as A.D.48 (before the Council of Jerusalem - Acts 15), or as late as A.D. 53 if Paul wrote from Ephesus or A.D. 55 if from Macedonia, while on his third missionary journey. Galatians is the only Pauline epistle that is specifically addressed to a group of churches. Since they were all fruit of a single mission (3:1-3; 4:13-14), and all were affected by the same disturbances (1:6-7; 5:7-9), rather than writing individual letters, Paul sends a circular letter to them all. The Galatian churches were mainly composed of Gentile converts as evidenced by the facts that they were formerly idolaters (4:8), and attempted (after conversion) to receive circumcision (5:2; 6:12). Though primarily Gentiles, Paul throughout the epistle takes for granted that the readers are familiar with O.T. history (4:21-31; 3:7-9), the Law of Moses (3:10-12), and the prophets (4:27).

The occasion for writing to the Galatian churches was a compelled response to poisonous teaching that had infected these believers. Paul the planter of these churches (1:8,11), writes to his spiritual children (4:19-20) in an urgent manner to seek to rescue them from the grasp of heretical teaching. The Galatians, who originally received Paul with respect and reverence (4:14) and his message with great enthusiasm (4:12-15), had now obtained a changed attitude. Whereas they once were willing to make any sacrifice for Paul (4:15) or endure persecution for their faith (3:4), they now held his authority in suspicion (1:1; 2:1-11) and actually succumbed to the pressure of giving adherence to another gospel (1:7). All of which resulted in confusion, dissension & conflicts (5:15).

This sudden change in attitude was caused by the intrusion of alien propaganda. Some Jewish teachers ("Judaizers"-probably from Jerusalem) had troubled the Galatians (1:7) and upset them (5:12). They apparently had one man as the ringleader (5:10) and together their misguided efforts proceeded to rob Christ of His uniqueness by placing other things (rules & regulations) on a level with Him as necessary for salvation. These Judaizers, who regarded Christianity as a more fully developed form of Judaism, advocated circumcision (5:2; 6:12) and Mosaic Law-keeping (4:21), along with its rites and ceremonies (4:10), as essentials to "true salvation". In other words, they taught that no Gentile convert would enter the kingdom of God apart from the "door of Judaism".

To be convincing, in this diabolical teaching, the Judaizers would need to undermine and destroy, if possible, the authority and influence of Paul (i.e. both the man and his message). The Judaizers went along with this agenda and the Galatians fell for it. It is to this disturbance that Paul reacts.

The purpose for the epistle to the Galatian churches is basically three-fold: To defend Paul's authority and message (vindication); To explain the Gospel of justification by grace through faith alone (exposition); And to teach the ethical morality involved in Christian Liberty (application).

Next to II Corinthians, this epistle is the most autobiographical of Paul's letters. He spends much time defending his authority so as to support his assertion that justification before God is by grace through faith alone, and that man is, by nature totally unable to accomplish self-salvation or even self-sanctification by his own efforts. The Apostle drives home the point that justification is not produced through faith plus works (chapters 1-4), but rather through a faith that works (chapters 5-6) (cp.James 2).

The tone of the letter is noticeably sharp. This sharpness (severity) is especially evident in Paul's dealing with the Judaizers (5:12), but also in rebuking the Galatians. The readers are never addressed as "saints in Christ", nor is there a word of praise or thanksgiving for them. On the contrary Paul said "I stand in doubt of you"(4:20). This severity however is mingled with a concern, a tenderness, and affection (4:12-15, 19-20). This concern is reflected in the intensity and urgency with which Paul speaks as he strives to rescue the readers from the grip of error. The Holy Spirit Through the apostle Paul uses a variety of oratory devices to accomplish His end. Appeals are made predominantly to the O.T. Scriptures, then to experience, logic, warning and exhortation. Two key words are employed to develop Paul's theme. They are the words "justify" (δικαιοω), which appears eight times, and "free" (ἐλευθερος), which is used six times in this short epistle.

OUTLINE

The epistle to the Galatians may be outlined as follows:

I. THE DEFECTION FROM CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (1:1–10)
(JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ABANDONED)

II. THE AUTHORITY FOR CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (1:11–2:21)
(JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH DEFENDED)

III. THE ARGUMENTS FOR CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (3:1–4:31)
(JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH EXPLAINED)

IV. THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (5:1–6:18)
(JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH APPLIED)
One who practices Christian liberty will:
A. Remove the yoke of slavery (5:1–12)
B. Retain the law of love (5:13–15)
C. Rely on the Spirit of God (5:16–26)
D. Relieve the burdened Christian brother (6:1–10)
F. Remain a faithful follower (6:11–18)

Galatians 6:7 is situated in the major section describing the application of the doctrine of justification by faith; namely–the practice of Christian liberty (5:1–6:18). Galatians 6:7 is specifically found in the unit of thought which exhorts the Christian to relieve the burdened Christian brother (6:1–10).

IMMEDIATE PRECEDING CONTEXT

The unit of thought appears to begin with 6:1 because:

1. Paul shifts in subject matter from a unit of thought which describes the necessity of relying upon the Spirit of God (5:16–26), to a unit describing the spiritual believer's responsibility to relieve a burdened Christian brother (6:1–10).

2. Paul begins verse one with a vocative of address ("brothers" - ἀδελφοί), which indicates an abrupt, attention getting, shift in thought (cp. Gal.3:15 for same usage).

3. The subject matter in verses 1–10 ties together as a single unit (relieving the burdens of others):

   a. The subject matter involves 2 aspects of "relieving" (i.e. "2 sides of the same coin"): 1) Bearing burdens (v.1–5); 2) Sharing blessings (v.6–10).

   b. The command to "bear one another's burdens" (v.2) corresponds to (ties in with) "doing good to all men"(v.10). [Note: verses 1–10 basically describe "doing good" - The general command to do good to all men (v.10) widens the scope from merely providing financially for the teacher (v.6) to relieving burdens in every area.

   c. Paul's development in verses 1–5 is similar to that of verses 6–10. (He begins with imperatives [compare "restore"; "bear"(v.1,2) with "share"(v.6)], and follows with warnings against self deception [compare "he deceives himself" (v.3), with "do not be deceived" (v.7)]

   d. The idea of being "spiritual" (v.1) is related to "sowing into the Spirit" (v.8).

4. The paragraph division of the 3rd edition of the Aland Greek N.T. indicates a distinctive unit of thought beginning with verse one.

Context Study
of
Galatians 6:7

Immediate preceding context:

Paul exhorts the "spiritual" believer to restore (mend or repair) one who is taken by surprise while committing a trespass; but with the right attitude (v.1). He then commands the Christian to fulfill Christ's Law (of love) by carrying the heavy burdens of one another (v.2). Such a ministry requires a humble attitude (apart from deceptive pride) (v.3). In verse four the believer is called upon to examine (test for genuineness) his own work to have grounds for rejoicing (boasting), and he is not to rejoice that he is in any way superior to the brother who needed his aid (v.4). The reason for this self-examination is because - all believers have their own individual responsibility toward their own spiritual growth in carrying loads they must carry by themselves (v.5). Paul then teaches that a believer who is continually being instructed in the Word of God, has a responsibility to reciprocate that spiritual blessing by sharing with his instructor all good things (materially)-(v.6).

Immediate following context:

In verse 8 Paul gives a definite result of the principle of verse 7. He assures the one who sows for the mere benefit of his own flesh, that he will, out of the flesh, reap a harvest of corruption. On the contrary the one who sows for the benefit of the Spirit of God will, out of the Holy Spirit, reap a harvest that will be eternal(v.8).

In verse 9 Paul encourages believers (including himself) not to lose heart (become discouraged) with spiritual sowing because the harvest is often long in coming. However the promise stands, that at the proper time (season) all faithful believers will reap if they do not faint (grow exhausted or weary)-(v.9).

In verse 10 Paul concludes his exhortation by showing that "doing good" is not restricted, but is to be to all men while the season for doing good is still available. However believers are to be priority recipients of having needs met. Believers are commanded to especially do good to the members of the family of the faith (fellow Christians)-(v.10).

(IMMEDIATE FOLLOWING CONTEXT - continued)

The unit of thought appears to end with verse 10 because:

1. Verse 10 gave the concluding exhortation of the unit of thought in verse 1-9 as evidenced by the inferential particles ἄρα γε οὖν (meaning: "consequently" or "so then" - Arndt & Gingrich).

2. Verse 11 involves a change in subject matter. Paul moves from the believers responsibility to relieve burdens (1-10), to his encouragement to followers of Christ to remain faithful (v.11-18).

3. Grammatically, Paul in verse 11 shifts from imperatives (v.1-10) to the indicative mood (v.11-17).

4. Grammatically, Paul in verse 11 changes in subject from "us" (1p.pl.) to "I" (1p.sing.).

5. In verses 1-10 Paul's address is general (that is he unfolds principles for a wide audience; i.e. for all believers in general), whereas in verse 11 His address is personal and specific ("to you" ὑμῖν - directed personally and specifically toward the Galatians in authenticating his epistle).

6. In verse 11, the verb ἴδετε (aorist imperative from ὁράω), which means "to see, catch sight of, or notice" (Arndt & Gingrich) is used in the aorist tense to abruptly grab and re-shift the attention of the readers to focus on something distinct from what was previously stated.

7. The paragraph division of the 3rd edition of the Aland Greek N.T. indicates a distinctive unit of thought beginning with verse eleven.

INTERNAL CONNECTION

1. Galatians 6:7 appears to involve 4 clauses.
2. Two of these clauses seem to be complete. < check outline
3. Verse 7 appears to involve 4 parties (perspectives) –[1) God; 2) the people addressed (the Galatian believers in particular); 3) A hypothetical, general person ("a man"); and 4) the writer – Paul]
4. The verse involves a variety of verbs. This variety appears evident in tense (present & future), voice (active, middle, and passive), and mood (imperative, indicative, and subjunctive).
5. The apodosis (main clause – "this will he also reap") appears to have a future indicative verb stressing certainty, and it appears to be modified by verse 8 which begins with ὅτι .
6. The first two clauses in verse 7 evidently teach a principle that is related to verse 6.
7. The ὅτι clause beginning in verse 8 presumably gives the result of the third class conditional sentence of verse 7.
8. The verb "sow" (σπειρω v.7) is likely elaborating on the verb "share" (κοινωνεω) of verse 6.
9. Apparently the "sowing" and "reaping" described in verse 7 are both explained and expanded upon in the 3 verses that follow (v.8–10).

II. WORD POSSIBILITIES

I. μη (Neg. adverb)

1. "not" (To express a negative command that is generally [continually] valid) I Cor.6:9,7:5,12; Eph.4:26.
2. "stop" (To bring to an end a specific condition now existing) Jn.20:17; I Cor.7:5; Rev.5:5.

II. πλανασθε (Pres. pass/mid. imper. 2p. pl. from πλαναω)

1. to "be led away" (Passive - to be caused to wander; literally) Heb.11:38.
2. to "be deceived" (Passive - to be deluded; figuratively) Tit.3:3; Heb.5:2.
3. to "deceive yourselves" (Middle - To be mistaken; to err figuratively) I Cor.6:9; I Jn.1:8.

III. θεος (Noun, nom., masc., sing.)

1. "God" (General reference to the divine Godhead) Gal.2:6,19.

IV. οὐ (Neg. adverb)

1. "not" (In simple statements with the indicative) Gal.4:14;6:4.

V. μυκτηριζεται (Verb, indic. pres. pass. 3p. sing. from μυκτηριζω)

1. to be "snubbed" (Literally - to turn up the nose at; as external sign of contempt) Cicero; Loeb classical library., XV 19:4 (p.307).

2. to be "outwitted" (Figurative - an intention to outsmart and thereby insult or make to look ridiculous; an internal attitude of contempt)
Pol.5:1 M-M.; LXX - Prov.1:30; 12:8; 15:5,20; 23:9; I Clem.39:1.

VI. ὅ (Relative pronoun, accus., neut., sing., from ὅς)
1. "whatsoever" (indefinite relative pronoun) Eph.6:8; I Jn.3:22.

VII. γαρ (Coord. conjunction)

1. "for" (cause or reason) I Cor.11:5.
2. "for" (explanatory; ex."for you see...") Rom.7:1,2.

VIII. ἐὰν (particle, verbal from ἄν)

1. untranslated (a particle denoting uncertainty when used with [ὅ']) Mt.5:19,32; 8:19; I Cor.16:6; Rev.11:6.

IX. σπειρῃ (Subjunctive, pres., active, 3p.sing., from σπειρω)

1. "sow" (literally; ex."sowing seed") I Cor.15:36 ff; Mt.13:22)
2. "sow" (figuratively; symbolically sowing something) I Cor. 15:42-44; I Cor.9:11; II Cor.9:6; Ja.3:18; Mt.25:24,26.

X. ἀνθρωπος (Noun, nom., masc., sing.)

1. "man" (mankind in general) Gal.2:16; I Cor.7:26; 11:28.
2. "man" (restricted to adult males) I Cor.7:1; Mt.19:5.

XI. τοῦτο (Demonst. pronoun used subst., accus., neut., sing., from οὗτος

1. "this" (resumes the relative clause previously mentioned with special emphasis) Rom.7:15; Acts 3:6.

XII. καὶ (Conjunction)

1. "even" (ascensive use) Gal.2;17; ICor.2:10; Eph.5:12.
2. "also" (adverbial; used simply - "likewise") Gal.2:1,10,13; 5:21,25.

XIII. θερισει (indic., fut., act., 3p., sing. from θερίζω)

1. "reap" (to literally harvest) Mt.6:26; Lk.12:24; Jn.4:36; Ja.5:4.
2. "reap" (to figuratively harvest; proverbial expression) Jn.4:37; Mt.25:24,26; Lk.19:21; I Cor.9:11; II Cor.9:6.

III. WORD CHOICE

A. μη - "not" (to express a negative command that is generally [continually] valid) is the word choice because:

1. In context, the subject matter being taught reveals continuing, external principles that are always valid (ex. "God is not [never] mocked"; "man shall . . . reap" for what he has sown [v. 8]).

2. Verses 7 - 9 are parenthetical in nature, revealing a general principle not limited to the Galatian believers.

3. Paul ties μη to πλανασθε elsewhere in the N.T. in unfolding negative commands that are generally and continually valid (I Cor. 6:9; I Cor. 15:33).

4. The predominant use by Paul in the N.T. of μη + imperative is to express continually valid negative commands (out of 56 usages by Paul only 2 are indisputably valid exceptions as proven from context - I Cor. 7:5, 15:34).

5. μη + πλανασθε is a stoic formula serving as an interjection to introduce a universal, eternal principle (TDNT, Vol. 6, p. 244; cp. Ja. 1:16; I Cor. 6:9, 15:33).

6. "Stop" (to bring to an end a specific condition now existing) is not the word choice because:

   a. Whenever the specific idea of "stopping" an action (or condition) presently existing is used in the N.T., the context makes it clearly known that the action (condition) was indeed existing (ex. John 20:17; Lk. 8:52, 23:28; Jn. 2:16; Acts 4:20, 8:38; I Cor. 7:5; Rev. 5:5, 15:34).

   b. Nothing in context indicates that the Galatian believers were specifically being deceived in the area of relieving burdens (restoring v. 1) (repaying v. 6).

   c. This usage is rare (out of 160 uses of μη + imperative, only 9 in the N.T. are indisputably used in the sense of "stop" as evident in context (cp. NASV - Jn. 2:16, 20:17; Lk. 8:52, 23:28; Acts 4:20, 8:38; I Cor. 7:5, 15:34; Rev. 5:5).

B. πλανασθε - to "deceive yourselves" (middle - to be mistaken, to deceive oneself, to err figuratively) is the word choice because:

1. In the immediate preceding context Paul focuses on individual introspection ("each one looking to yourself" - v. 1; "let each one examine his own work" - v. 4).

2. In the immediate following context Paul is stressing personal responsibility and accountability placing the emphasis on oneself ("whatever a man sows, this he will reap" - v. 7; "the one [singular] sowing . . . will reap - v. 8).

3. Verse 8 specifically focuses on the individual himself ("the one sowing, [lit.] into the flesh of himself" - την σαρκα εαυτου).

4. Verse 3 in the immediate preceding context explicitly points to self-deception ("he deceives himself" - φρενα πατα εαυτον . NOTE: φρενα πατα = φρην - mind + απαταω deceive).

5. Paul uses the exact phrase - μη πλανασθε - two other times in the N.T. in the middle voice (I Cor. 6:9, 15:33).

6. "To be deceived" (passive - to be deluded figuratively) is not the word choice because:

   a. In context (6:1-10) no one is mentioned as a deceiver.

   b. In context the only reference to deception is that of self-deception (v. 3 - φρενα πατα εαυτον).

7. "To be led away" (passive - to be caused to wander literally) is not the word choice because:

   a. In context (6:1-10) no one is mentioned as literally leading people astray.

   b. The literal use of πλαναω would not correspond with the figurative language in context (figurative use of mocking, sowing, reaping - v. 7-9).

   c. The literal use of πλαναω would not correspond to the subject matter (of doing good by relieving burdens) in context (6:1-10).

   d. This usage in the N.T. is restricted to contexts specifically describing the wandering of men (Heb. 11:38) or in figures depicting the literal wandering of sheep (Mt. 18:12, 13; I Pet. 2:25).

C. θεος - "God" (general reference to the divine Godhead) is the word choice because:

1. In verse 7 the word θεος is not qualified or limited to specify any specific member of the trinity (ex. Tit. 2:13; Gal. 1:3-4)) or to any other false "god" (ex. II Cor. 4:4).

2. The true God is the only One who can bring to fruition the universal law and promises of v. 7b and 8.

3. θεος is used without the article stressing the quality of God as divine (cp. Gal. 2:6).

4. θεος as a general reference to the divine Godhead is the primary usage in the N.T. (over 1,000 times) (it is only limited to an antecedent, appositive, or other modifier where specific reference is made in context. For example, to the Son [Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13], the Spirit [Acts 5:3-4), or the Father [Gal. 4:4], or to some other false god [II Cor. 4:4].

D. οὐ - "not" (negative adverb used in simple statements with the indicative) is the word choice because:

1. Syntactically, οὐ is the negative adverb that negates the indicative mood (Robert W. Funk, p. 277; cp. its use in Gal. 4:14, 6:4).

E. μυκτηριζεται - to be "outwitted" (figurative: internal attitude of contempt; an intention to outwit and thereby insult, make to look ridiculous) is the word choice because:

1. In the immediate preceding context Paul focuses on man's inner attitude of pride ("in a spirit of meekness" - v. 1; "if anyone thinks he is something" - v. 3; "he deceives himself" [lit. to deceive the mind] - v. 3; "ground for boasting" - v. 4).

2. In verse 7, man's thinking that he can outwit God corresponds to the self-deception (πλανασθε) mentioned.

3. The LXX uses μυκτηριζω in conjunction with puffed up (proud) imaginations (Prov. 1:30, 11:12, 15:5, 20; 23:9).

4. The LXX uses μυκτηριζω in connection to the internal condition of one who is "dull of heart" (νωθρο καρδιος) - Prov. 12:8.

5. Clement uses μυκτηρίζω to depict the ungodly in their personal attitude of pride ("unwise, unreasonable, foolish, and ignorant people are those who ridicule and despise us" - I Clem. 39:1; cp. I Clem. 57:5; TDNT, Vol. IV, p. 797).

6. Polycarp in a context describing how nothing escapes God's notice--such as man's inner "reasonings" (λογισμων) or "thoughts" (ἐννοιῶν) or of the "secret things of the heart" (κρυπτων της καρδιας)--then draws the principle that "God is not mocked" (θεος οὐ μυκτηρίζεται) (Polycarp to the Philippians, 5:1 - Loeb Classical Library).

7. Longinus used μυκτηρ in the sense of "urbane (polished) sarcasm" (μυκτηρ πολιτικωτατος) in describing intellectual wit (Longinus [Dionysius] on the Sublime - Loeb Classical Lib., XXXIV - 2).

8. The church fathers used the word in the figurative sense of scorn (Pss. Sal. 4.8); or insult (Marc. Diac, v. Porph.) (cf. Lampe, p. 888).

9. "To be snubbed" (literally; an external sign of contempt; to "turn up the nose at") is not the word choice because:

   a. To snub (mock) in the sense of giving external signs of contempt is limited to contexts where the one being mocked is visibly seen (cp. Lk. 16:14-15, 23:35 - ἐκμυκτηρίζω [cognate form]) (in Gal. 6:7 God is not seen).

   b. To literally "turn up the nose" would not fit (correspond to) the figurative language in context ("deceived," "sow," "reap").

F. ὅ - "whatever" (indefinite relative pronoun) is the word choice because:

1. Grammatically this is its only use when combined with the particle ἄν (ἐάν) (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 585, 48).

2. It is used this way elsewhere by Paul (Eph. 6:8). (cp. other N.T. usages - Mt. 20:4, 7; Mk. 6:22, 23; I Jn. 3:22; III Jn. 1:5).

3. The indefinite idea in the word "whatever" corresponds (in number) to the wide spectrum of possible applications implied in context (v. 8-10).

4. ὅ has a generalizing force when used with ἄν (ἐάν) (Funk, Vol. II, p. 526).

G. γαρ - "for" (explanatory; ex. "for you see") is the word choice because:

1. It is used in verse 7 to <u>explain</u> the basis on which the statement "God is not outwitted" rests.

2. Paul uses γαρ in this sense elsewhere, in which, after he states an unchangeable truth, he then <u>explains</u> its validity (Rom. 7:1, 2).

3. If one would be deceiving himself, he would need an <u>explanation</u> as to <u>why</u> he should not be.

4. Paul uses a teaching picture (sowing and reaping) which aids <u>explanation.</u>

5. "For" (cause or reason) is <u>not</u> the word choice because:

   a. Paul deliberately chooses a different word (ὅτι) in v. 8 to introduce the cause or reason.

   b. Paul cannot give a reason for saying, "God is not mocked" before he gives <u>proof</u> that He is not mocked (he gives such proof with the explanatory use of γαρ).

H. ἐάν (**untranslated**) (a particle denoting uncertainty when used with ὅς) is the word choice because:

1. Grammatically, it is untranslatable when used with ("It is a particle peculiar to Greek, incapable of translation by a single English word" - Arndt & Gingrich, p. 48).

2. See proofs under F.

I. σπειρη "sow" - ("may sow") - (figurative: symbolically sowing something) is the word choice because:

1. In context, Paul uses <u>other symbolic terms</u> - "deceived," "mocked," "reap."

2. In context, Paul is describing <u>spiritual truth</u> (v. 8) (in verse 8, Paul explains sowing into the flesh and spirit).

3. Paul uses σπειρη symbolically (metaphorically) several times in the N.T. (I Cor. 15:42-44, I Cor. 9:11; II Cor. 9:6).

4. Paul uses σπειρη symbolically elsewhere in the N.T. in <u>contexts similar</u> to Gal. 6:6 - namely, contexts dealing with <u>giving</u> (I Cor. 9:11; II Cor. 9:6).

5. The <u>symbolic</u> use of "sowing" was well-known as an ancient proverbial expression (Job employs it in Job 4:8 LXX; cp. also Jer. 12:13; Prov. 22:8) and one that is often used in the N.T. (Mt. 25:24, 26; Mk. 4:14; Jn. 4:36; Ja. 3:18).

6. σπειρη (literal; ex. sowing [literal] seed) is <u>not</u> the word choice because:

   a. In verse 8 the sowing is <u>into</u> the flesh or spirit (<u>not</u> into the ground).

   b. The seed that is implied is not literal, but refers to relieving the burdens of a Christian brother (6:1-6)--in other words, "doing good" (v. 10).

J. ἀνθρωπος a "**man**" (mankind in general) is the word choice because:

1. In context, Paul is <u>general</u> in his references to the subject ("the <u>one</u> who" - v. 6, 8; "let <u>us</u> - v. 9; "while <u>we</u> - v. 10).

2. It is <u>without the article</u>, indicating a general use.

3. ἀνθρωπος is <u>not</u> qualified or limited by any adjectival modifiers.

4. Paul uses a general reference to man in II Cor. 9:6 where he is dealing with the same concept of sowing and reaping (Note general use in 9:7 also: "Let each one . . .").

5. Man" (restricted to adult males) is <u>not</u> the word choice because:

   a. Context in no way restricts (limits) ἀνθρωπος to adult males (there are no qualifiers or modifiers that would limit it, nor is it used in opposition to woman [γυνη] as in I Cor. 7:1; Mt. 19:5).

   b. It cannot be limited because (in the physical as well as spiritual realms) seed sown by <u>anyone</u> will produce the <u>same results</u>.

   c. If ανθρωπος is limited in verse 7, then it would also be in v. 10 when Paul says, "Let us do good to <u>all</u> men."

K. ΤΟΥΤΟ - "this" (resuming the relative clause previously mentioned with special emphasis) is the word choice because:

1. Grammatically, it corresponds in both case, number and gender to the relative pronoun Ὅ which precedes it (acc., sing., neut.).

2. It is used in this sense elsewhere by Paul (Rom. 7:15) (cp. also Acts 3:6 - Ὅ . . . . ΤΟΥΤΟ)

L. Καὶ - "also" (adverbial, used simply - "likewise") is the word choice because:

1. Grammatically, when Καὶ contrasts two elements of the same order (but different character), it is used adverbially and means "also," "too," or "likewise" (Funk, Vol. II, p. 490).

   a. In Gal. 6:7 Καὶ stands between a subordinate plus a resumptive pronoun and a main clause, in which ΤΟΥΤΟ (describing "whatever a man may sow") and ΘΕΡΙΣΕΙ are contrasted.

2. "Even" (ascensive use) is not the word choice because:

   a. It would break the parallel (equation) evident by the grammatical formula used ("whatever sow = reap").

   b. This usage is employed so as to climb (ascend) up to a statement that seems incredible (reaping what one has sown is not incredible in any sense).

M. ΘΕΡΙΣΕΙ - "reap" ("he will reap") - (to figuratively harvest; proverbial expression) is the word choice because:

1. In context, Paul uses other symbolic terms - "deceived," "mocked,"--and parallels ΘΕΡΙΣΕΙ with the symbolic use of ΣΠΕΙΡΗ ("sow").

2. In context, Paul is describing spiritual truth (v. 8 & 9) ("reap corruption" . . . "from the Spirit reap eternal life" [v. 8] "in due season we shall reap [from doing "good"] [v.9]).

3. Paul uses θερίσει symbolically (figuratively) several times in the N.T. (I Cor. 9:11; II Cor. 9:6), and in both instances in contexts of "giving" as in Gal. 6:6).

4. The symbolic use of "reaping" is <u>often used</u> (cp. Jn. 4:37; Mt. 25:24, 26; Lk. 19:21) and is an old (well-known) proverbial expression (cp. LXX Job 4:8; Jer. 12:13; Prov. 22:8).

5. "Reap" (to literally harvest) is <u>not</u> the word choice because:

   a. In verse 8 the "reaping" is <u>from</u> "the flesh" and from "the Spirit," <u>not</u> from the ground.

   b. Nothing in context indicates a literal harvesting of crops, rather the opposite is true: it is a figurative harvest of either "corruption" or "eternal life" (v. 8).

IV. TRANSLATION & DIAGRAM

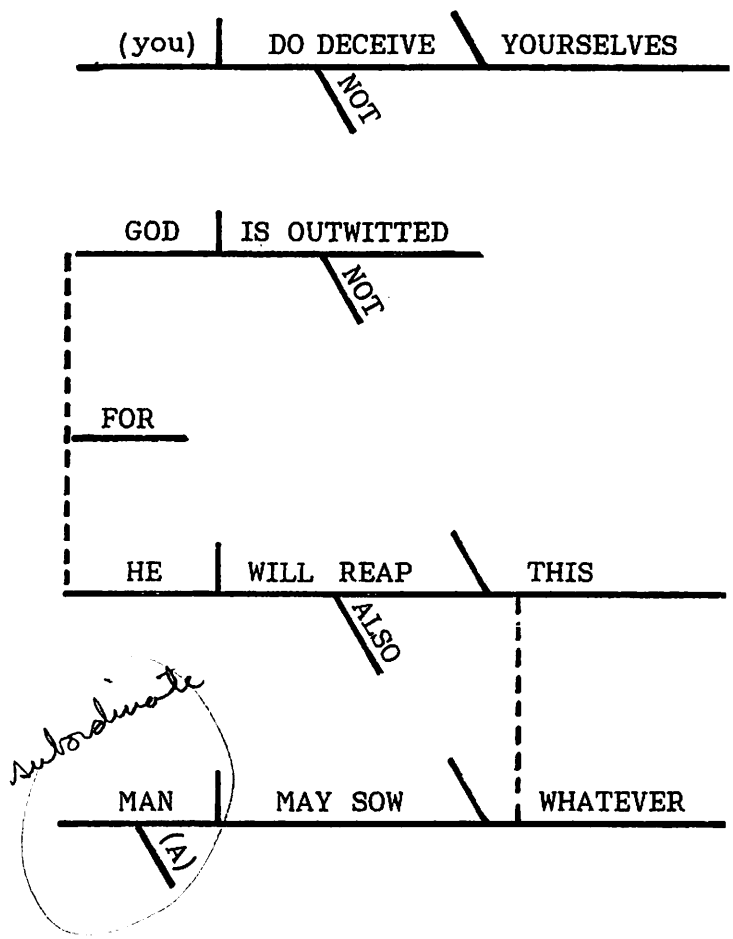
Translation:

"Do not deceive yourselves; God is not outwitted:

For whatever a man may sow, this he will also reap."

@ possibilities

Diagram:



V. SIGNIFICANCE

A. "Do not deceive yourselves" signifies:

1. **Man's thinking is sometimes sinful.**

a. The word [πλανάομαι] in this context is used to depict the internal thinking processes of man.

1) In context, Paul focuses on individual introspection. (ex. "each one looking to yourself"(v.1); "Let each one examine his own work"(v.4).

2) In context, Paul specifically points to self-deception (v.3).

b. Sin is implied in context:

1) The imperative form of [πλανάω], with the negative [μή] demonstrates that this thinking is sin.

2) In verse 7, the substance of the deception - that God might be outwitted (and hence be ridiculed) - is inconsistent with the nature of God. Therefore such thinking is sin.

3) In context (v.3), Paul implies that self-deception is wrong.

4) Its results are the results of sin ("corruption" v.8 in contrast to "eternal life"; cp. Rom.6:21,23).

c. Paul's general reference to "man" [ἄνθρωπος] (v.7), indicates that all men are potential candidates for wrong thinking.

2. **Believers are capable of deceiving themselves in spiritual matters.**

a. Believers are the antecedent to the 2nd person, plural ending on the verb - [πλανᾶσθε].

1) They are called "brethren"(v.1), 2) "spiritual" (v.1), 3) Paul identifies himself with them ("let us...we"(v.9,10).

b. The capability (potentiality) is implied by the imperative "do not deceive yourselves" (If it was necessary for God to prohibit self-deception, it is evident that the potential for such thinking indeed exists).

c. Self-deception is evident by:

1) πλανασθε in the middle voice, indicating an activity that one does to himself (see proofs under Word Choice B).

2) In context, Paul points to self-deception (v. 3).

d. Spiritual matter is the subject in context.

1) In immediate preceding context believers are called on to restore the transgressor (v. 1).

2) In immediate preceding context believers are called on to repay the teacher of God's Word (v. 6).

3) The harvest is spiritual (v. 8 - "corruption" vs. "eternal life").

4) In context, spiritual people (v. 1) and the Holy Spirit are mentioned.

5) In the immediate following context, the subject matter involves "doing good" (v. 10).

6) In verse three the implication is that proud internal thinking is spiritually sinful.

B. "God is not outwitted" signifies:

1. **It is impossible for man to outsmart God.**

a. The negative adverb οὐ negates μυκτηριζεται and indicates the impossibility for God to be outsmarted.

b. The word μυκτηριζεται in context indicates man's intention to outwit or outsmart God by his supposed evading of the results of his sowing.

c. The passive voice of μυκτηριζεται is indicative of man's part in attempting to outwit God. ("God is not outwitted by man - implied).

d. In the immediate preceding context, some are said to have an <u>overestimation</u> of themselves in their own thinking (v. 3, 4).

2. **Man's activities do not escape God's notice** (God knows all things).

a. In the immediate preceding context, the <u>actions</u> of relieving a burdened brother are taught (v. 1-6).

b. In the immediate following context, the results of sowing are implicitly <u>given by God</u> in payment for actions ("from the Spirit" - v. 8).

c. The phrase God is not outwitted" indicates that God knows all things (see Signif. B.1.).

d. The phrase "Do not deceive yourselves" indicates man's wrong assumption that his activities might go unnoticed by God.

C. "<u>Do not deceive yourselves, God is not outwitted</u>" signifies:

1. **Man is wrong to think he can <u>sin</u> and get away with it.**

a. Man's wrong thinking is evident by the negative imperative and self-deception of v. 7 (See Signif. C.1. above).

b. The sin is implied in context.

1) Failure to relieve a burdened brother (either by restoration - v. 1, or repayment - v. 6, is sin.

2) Verse 8 points to a selfishly sinful "sowing into one's own flesh."

3) Verse 9 specifically indicates a sinful giving into evil or badness (ἐγκακεω) and a sinful giving up (ἐκλυω) on doing good.

c. The impossibility of getting away with sin is evident in:

1) The phrase "God is not outwitted" (v. 7).

2) The <u>result</u> of sinful sowing ("corruption" v.8).

3) The <u>certain</u> result of sinful sowing ("<u>shall</u>" reap corruption" - v. 8).

2. **Man is wrong to think he can <u>do good</u> and not be rewarded for it.**

   a. Man's wrong thinking is evident by the negative imperative and self-deception of v. 7 (see Signif. C.1. above).

   b. "Doing good" is specifically stated in context ("in doing good" - v. 4; "let us do good" - v. 10).

   c. "Doing good" is implied in context.

      1) Relieving burdens (v. 1-5).

      2) Sharing blessings (v. 6-10).

   d. The impossibility of not being rewarded for doing good is evident in:

      1) The <u>result</u> of good sowing ("eternal life" - v. 8).

      2) The <u>certain</u> result of good sowing ("<u>shall</u> reap" - v. 8-9).

D. "<u>For whatever a man may sow</u>" signifies:

1. **Various moral (spiritual and unspiritual) activities may be accomplished.**

   a. Paul uses, the indefinite relative pronoun "whatever" (ὅ + ἐάν) to indicate a wide spectrum of possible spiritual elements.

   b. The fact that sowing is an <u>activity</u> is evident by <u>verbal</u> use of σπείρῃ (pres. act. subj.).

   c. Context specifically states various possibilities of spiritual sowing:

      1) Restoring (v. 1, 2)

      2) Relieving (v. 2-5)

      3) Repaying (v. 6)

      4) Doing good in general to all men (v. 9-10)

   d. The spirituality of the seeds corresponds to the spiritual nature of the sowing and reaping (see Choice I. & M.) and to the activities mentioned in context (see c. above).

2. **Man is free to choose what he will sow and reap.**

a. Sowing is man's activity.

1) Paul specifically states that "a man sows" (σπειρη + ἀνθρωπος) - v. 7.

2) In context, Paul contrasts man's activity with God's law (while man does the sowing, God sends the appropriate harvest - v. 8, 9).

3) In the immediate preceding context, Paul exhorts men (specifically, believers) to sow in a spiritual sense (see l.c. above).

b. The subjunctive mood of σπειρη indicates the freedom man has to choose what he may or may not sow.

c. The various elements that may be sown (indicated by "whatever") indicate man's freedom to choose.

d. The two different results of sowing (corruption vs. life - v. 8) indicate the freedom of man's will in choosing what he sows (if God would force mans will, he would force it to a sowing that would lead to abundant life).

E. "This he will also reap" signifies:

1. **Man's reaping is in direct proportion (equal) to his sowing.**

a. Grammatically, Paul uses the resumptive pronoun "this" (τοῦτο) which corresponds to "whatever" (ὅ) to indicate an equivalence between what one sows and what he in turn reaps (both pronouns agree in case,number and gender).

b. In verse 7, the adverbial use of καὶ ("also" or "likewise") points to a parallel or equation between what is sown and what is reaped.

c. In verse 8, the correspondence between sowing and reaping is further evident by fleshly sowing resulting in fleshly reaping ("corruption") and spiritual sowing resulting in spiritual reaping ("life").

2. **Man's reaping is in a <u>different season</u> than the sowing** (it is future).

   a. Grammatically, Paul shifts from the present tense verb to the future in context.

      1) "Whatever a man may sow (presently), this he will also reap (in future)" (v. 7).

      2) "The one sowing (present participle) . . . will reap" (future ind.) (v. 8).

      3) "While doing good (present part.) . . . we will reap" (fut. ind.) (v. 9) (cp. also Paul's usages in I. Cor. 9:11; II Cor. 9:6).

   b. In context, Paul uses the word καιρω to indicate a point of time, or "<u>season</u>" of reaping distinct from the sowing.

      1) "<u>In due season</u> (καιρω) we shall reap" (in the future - v. 9).

      2) "<u>While we have opportunity</u> (καιρον) (the present season), let us do good" (in the present-v. 10).

   c. Agriculturally, reaping always <u>follows</u> sowing (cp. examples in Mt. 25:24, 26; Lk. 19:21; Jn. 4:36).

3. **The reaped consequence of one's sowing is <u>just</u>** (man receives what he deserves).

   a. In the immediate preceding context (v. 1-5), the implication (from v. 7) is that the one who relieves a brother will be relieved himself; and the man who repays his teacher (v. 6) will be repaid himself (one gets what he gives).

   b. Verse 8 reveals the fairness (equity or justness) of the consequences of one's sowing.

      1) Sowing into the flesh will result in corruption <u>from</u> (lit. out of) <u>the flesh.</u>

      2) Sowing into the Spirit will result in eternal life <u>from</u> (lit. out of) <u>the Spirit.</u>

   c. In verse 7, the resumptive pronoun "this" corresponds to "whatever a man may sow," and indicates an equality between what is sown (planted) and the resultant reaping (harvest).

4. **The reaped consequence of one's sowing is <u>certain</u>** (unavoidable and inescapable).

   a. The promise is sure because it is a law promised by God (v. 7).

   b. The future tense "<u>shall</u> reap" indicates certainty (v. 7).

   c. The fact that it is impossible for God to be "outwitted" by man indicates certainty (v. 7) (God's character, laws, and promises are unchanging).

   d. The example in verse 8 indicates certainty (2 certain results: corruption or life).

   e. Personal payment is unavoidable because the same man who sows, reaps.

      1) The third person singular ending on the word θερίσει refers back to the same man (ἄνθρωπος) who sows.

F. **<u>"For whatever a man may sow, this, he will also reap"</u>** signifies:

1. **Present choices effect future circumstances.**

   a. Man's "sowing" is in present tense, and "reaping" is future (v. 7).

   b. Verse 8 teaches that present sowing to the flesh results in future corruption, and present sowing to the Spirit results in future eternal life.

   c. Verse 9 teaches that future circumstances will be favorable if present faithfulness is accomplished.

2. **Man is responsible for his own action** (he is individually accountable).

   a. The same subject of the sowing receives the reaping ("a man . . . <u>he</u> shall reap") - v. 7.

   b. In the immediate preceding context, Paul teaches individual responsibility and accountability.

      1) "Each one looking to <u>yourself</u>, lest you too be tempted" (v. 1).

2) "Let each one examine <u>his own work</u>" (v. 4).

3) "For each one shall bear <u>his own</u> load" (v. 5).

c. The immediate following context indicates individual responsibility.

1) "The one who . . . he shall . . ." (v. 8).

2) "We shall reap, <u>if</u> <u>we</u> do not grow weary" (v. 9).

G. "<u>**Do not deceive yourselves, God is not outwitted, For whatever a man may sow, this he will also reap**</u>" signifies:

1. **The law of "sowing and reaping" is a <u>universal</u> principle.**

(This truth is impartial. It applies to al men: believers and unbelievers, male and female, old and young alike.)

a. Paul uses ἄνθρωπος to refer to mankind in general.

1) ἄνθρωπος is without the article indicating a general use.

2) ἄνθρωπος is not qualified or limited in v. 7.

b. In context, Paul makes general references to people ("the <u>one</u> who"-v. 6, 8; :let <u>us</u>" - v. 9; "while <u>we</u>" - v. 10).

c. In verse 10, Paul uses ἄνθρωπος in the universal sense (:Let us do good to <u>all men</u>").

d. Verses 7 - 9 are parenthetical in nature, revealing a <u>general</u> principle applicable to all men, everywhere.

1) In v. 7 μη + πλανασθε is a stoic formula serving as an abrupt interjection for the purpose of introducing a <u>universal</u>, eternal principle (TDNT, Vol. 6, p. 244; cp. Ja. 1:16; I Cor. 6:9, 15:33).

e. In the natural (physical) realm, seed sown by <u>anyone</u> will produce the same results.

2. **The law of "sowing and reaping" is an <u>eternal</u> principle.** (This truth is always valid.)

   a. In context, the <u>subject matter</u> being taught reveals continuing, eternal principles that are always valid (ex. "God is not [never] mocked" - v. 7; "man shall [always] reap" for what he has sown - v. 8).

   b. Verses 7 - 9 are parenthetical in nature, revealing a <u>general</u> principle or law of God that is applicable to al men, of all time.

      1) In v. 7, μη + πλανασθε is a stoic formula serving as an abrupt interjection for the purpose of introducing a universal, <u>eternal</u> principle (TDNT, Vol. 6, p. 244; see Ja. 1:16; I Cor. 6:9, 15:33 for other examples of μη + πλανασθε that introduce an eternal principle).

   c. Since the O.T. (in fact, the earliest written O.T. book), the law of "sowing and reaping" was known by man (ex. Job 4:8 - "They that . . . sow wickedness, reap the same").

VI. SYNTHESIS

"Do not deceive yourselves" signifies that : Man's thinking is sometimes sinful. Believers are capable of deceiving themselves in spiritual matters.

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"God is not outwitted" asserts that : It is impossible for man to outsmart God. Man's activities do not escape God's notice (He knows all things). Man is wrong to think he can sin and get away with it. Man is wrong to think he can do good and not be rewarded for it.

Does this in any way relate to v. 6 ?

"For whatever a man may sow, this he will also reap" denotes that: Various moral (spiritual & unspiritual) activities may be accomplished. Man is free to choose what he will sow & reap. Man's reaping is in a <u>different season</u> than the sowing (it is future). The reaped consequences of one's sowing is <u>just</u> (man receives what he deserves). The reaped consequence of one's sowing is <u>certain</u> (unavoidable & inescapable). Present choices effect future circumstances. Man is responsible for his own actions (he is individually accountable). The Law of "sowing & reaping" is a <u>universal</u> principle (this truth is impartial. It applies to all men - believers, unbelievers, young, old, male, female). The Law of "sowing & reaping" is an <u>eternal</u> principle (this truth is always valid).

C - A

WS - A+

S - A+

Sq - A-

A