

# Analytical Outlines

## I. What is an Analytical Outline?

- 1) An analytical outline is a way of displaying a text of Scripture so that the interconnections between the grammatical parts become clear. An analytical outline does not rephrase the text: it merely breaks it up and indents it onto separate lines to highlight the connections. The purpose of an analytical outline is to help the interpreter see how things fit together. There are two benefits to doing an analytical: it causes you to be a close observer of the text, and it forces you to recognize and deal with interpretive problems, some of which might otherwise be skipped over.
- 2) There are no “right” or “wrong” ways to do analytical outlines. Analytical outlines are a private aid to the interpreter to help him better see how the text fits together grammatically. Therefore each interpreter should choose a method that helps him. Different interpreters may have different ways of doing analytical outlines. The specific guidelines that follow are only to get you started. If you can improve this method to be more helpful to you and others, please do so!
- 3) An analytical outline is not the same thing as an interpretation. Rather, it is merely a help. The grammatical structure of a text gives the interpreter a lot of clues to what the author is trying to say. However, the grammatical structure is not *always* identical to the semantic structure.
- 4) Analytical outlines can be very valuable. For if your interpretation cannot explain the grammatical structure of the text, then your interpretation is probably wrong. The meaning of the text comes out of the words. If there were no words, there would be no meaning. So keep honing your interpretation until it “fits” with the analytical.
- 5) Language is very flexible. There are so many different ways to say things that it is impossible to come up with a rigorous scheme for them all. Instead, we use a number of guidelines that work in most of the cases. If you encounter passages that are hard to outline, don’t worry too much about it. But do work to develop a consistent approach to everything you encounter.

## II. General Guidelines for an Analytical Outline

- 1) Divide the whole text into passages: work on one passage at a time.
- 2) Start main (independent) sentences or commands at the left margin.
- 3) Put any dependent phrases or clauses under the words they modify.
- 4) Make the parallel phrases obvious. If absolutely necessary, connect them with lines.
- 5) Place lists of qualities, actions, etc. in vertical columns.

## III. Making the Most of an Analytical Outline

- 1) Look for the different interpretive options as you write down your outline. Each time you put a phrase under a word, ask yourself if it could go under anything else. These different possibilities may open up new ways of seeing the passage, and perhaps even a new understanding of what the author is really saying.
- 2) Watch for repeated words and phrases.
- 3) Distinguish main statements from explanations and rabbit-trails.
- 4) Identify the crucial words of the text for later word studies.
- 5) Let the structure of your teaching outline be shaped by what has been revealed in the analytical (when possible).



**C. Indent participles under the main verb they modify.**

He chose us  
    in Him  
    before the foundation of the world.  
    for us to be holy  
    having predestined us (Eph. 1:4-5)

**C.1: If a participle phrase comes before its main verb, change the word order so the participle can be indented underneath it.**

I do not cease giving thanks for you  
    having heard of  
    making mention of (Eph. 1:15-16)

**D. Indent appositional phrases under the word they modify.**

formerly you,  
    the Gentiles in flesh,  
    the ones being called foreskin (Eph. 2:11)

**E. Indent explanatory sentences (“for”, etc.) under the word or phrase they explain: do the same for causal sentences (“since, because”), purpose sentences (“in order that”) and other related statements.**

you came near by the blood of Christ.  
                                    For He is our peace (Eph. 2:13-14)

I bend my knees before the Father  
    in order that He might give to you to be strengthened (Eph. 3:14-16)

**F. In any list of two or more similar parts of speech, write them in parallel under one another.**

speaking to yourselves in psalms  
                                    hymns  
                                    spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19)

**F.1: If the sentence resumes following a list, continue it on from the last item on the same line.**

Let all bitterness  
    anger  
    wrath  
    outcry  
    slander           be taken away from you (Eph. 4:31)

**G. Major logical conjunctions (“therefore”, “wherefore”, etc.) and independent questions should be placed in the middle of the page, alone on the line, in all capital letters.**

take up the full armor of God,  
in order that you might be able to withstand  
to stand.  
everything having done.

THEREFORE

stand  
having (Eph. 6:13-14)

**H. Put *unimportant* connectives (“and”s, “but”s, “or”s, etc.) at the end of the line.**

Tychicus  
the beloved brother and  
faithful servant (Eph. 6:21)

**I. Put *important* connectives at the beginning of a line with any corresponding parts lining up in parallel.**

remember that formerly you,  
. . . the Gentiles in the flesh,  
. . . the ones called foreskin  
that at that time you were (being) without Christ,  
. . . having been alienated  
. . . strange to  
. . . not having hope and  
. . . without God in the world.  
But in Christ Jesus now you,  
the ones formerly far away (Eph. 2:11-13)

**I.1: In a command passage, even if there is an important contrastive before a new command, the contrastive must still go at the end of the previous line (as in H above)**

Let the stealing one no longer steal, but rather  
let him toil,  
doing with his own hands the good,  
in order that he might have to give (Eph. 4:28)

**J. When the author begins a transitional sentence, indent it under the point of transition.**

in order that you might order certain ones  
.  
.  
Now the end of the order is (1 Tim. 1:4-5)

## ANALYTICAL OUTLINES

### Example: Ephesians 5:3-13

<sup>A.1</sup> But  
<sup>A.3</sup> let prostitution <sup>H</sup>and  
every impurity <sup>H</sup>or  
greediness <sup>F.1</sup> stop being named among you,  
just as is fitting for saints, <sup>H</sup>and  
ugliness <sup>H</sup>and  
foolish talk <sup>H</sup>or  
coarse jesting,  
<sup>B.1</sup> which are not proper, <sup>I.1</sup> but rather  
<sup>A.4</sup> (let) thanksgiving (be named)  
<sup>F</sup> for this you certainly know: that every fornicator <sup>H</sup>or  
<sup>F</sup> impure one <sup>H</sup>or  
<sup>F</sup> greedy one  
(an idolator, that is to say) <sup>F.1</sup> does not  
<sup>A.4</sup> Let anyone stop deceiving you by (means of) empty words,  
<sup>F</sup> for on account of these (deceptions) the wrath of God comes  
<sup>G</sup> THEREFORE  
<sup>A.4</sup> stop being fellow-sharers with them;  
<sup>F</sup> for you were formerly darkness,  
<sup>F</sup> but now light in (the) Lord;  
<sup>A.4</sup> walk as children of light  
<sup>F</sup> (for the fruit of the light (is) in all goodness <sup>H</sup>and  
righteousness <sup>H</sup>and  
truth)  
<sup>C</sup> putting to the test what is pleasing to (the) Lord; <sup>H</sup>and  
<sup>A.4</sup> stop participating in the unfruitful works of the darkness, <sup>I.1</sup> but rather  
<sup>A.4</sup> reprove (them) even,  
<sup>F</sup> for the things being in secret by them are ugly even to speak (of); <sup>H</sup>but  
all the things being reprovved by the light are manifest,  
<sup>F</sup> for every thing being manifest is light.

### Example: 1 Timothy 1:1-2

<sup>A.2</sup> Paul,  
<sup>D</sup> an apostle  
of Christ Jesus  
<sup>B</sup> according to a command of God our Savior <sup>H</sup>and  
Christ Jesus our hope,  
<sup>A.2</sup> to Timothy  
<sup>D</sup> a legitimate child in faith:  
<sup>A.2</sup> grace,  
<sup>A.2</sup> mercy,  
<sup>A.2</sup> peace from God (the) Father <sup>H</sup>and  
<sup>F</sup> Christ Jesus our Lord.