

Word study for “elemental things” in Galatians 4:9

Tools: Interlinear Bible, Lexicon, Englishman’s Concordance

See separate handout for the Interlinear Bible on Galatians 4:9

Lexicon entries for Strongs number 4747

στοιχεῖον

stoicheion (stoy-khi'-on); something orderly in arrangement, i.e. (by implication) a serial (basal, fundamental, initial) constituent (literally), proposition (figuratively): (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary.)

From BDAG:

1. **Basic components of something, *elements*.**
 - a. Of substances underlying the natural world, *the basic elements* from which everything in the world is made and of which it is composed
 - b. Of basic components of celestial constellations, *heavenly bodies*.
 - c. Of things that constitute the foundation of learning, *fundamental principles*.
2. **Transcendent powers that are in control over events in this world, *elements, elemental spirits*.**

(always occurring in the plural): the supernatural powers or forces regarded as having control over the events of this world - 'the supernatural powers over this world.' 'now that you have died with Christ and are free from the supernatural powers ruling over this world' Col 2:20. In a number of languages there is no way of speaking of 'supernatural powers' or 'supernatural forces.' Reference can only be made to such powers in terms of kinds of spirit beings; therefore, one may render στοιχεῖα in Col 2:20 as 'those spirits that have power' or 'those spirits which control.'

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used in the plural, primarily signifies any first things from which others in a series, or a composite whole take their rise; the word denotes "an element, first principle" (from stoichos, "a row, rank, series"; cf. the verb stoicheo, "to walk or march in rank"; see WALK); it was used of the letters of the alphabet, as elements of speech. In the NT it is used of (a) the substance of the material world, 2 Peter 3:10,12; (b) the delusive speculations of gentile cults and of Jewish theories, treated as elementary principles, "the rudiments of the world," Col 2:8, spoken of as "philosophy and vain deceit"; these were presented as superior to faith in Christ; at Colosse the worship of angels, mentioned in v. 18, is explicable by the supposition, held by both Jews and Gentiles in that district, that the constellations were either themselves animated heavenly beings, or were governed by them; (c) the rudimentary principles of religion, Jewish or Gentile, also described as "the rudiments of the world," Col 2:20, and as "weak and beggarly rudiments," Gal 4:3,9, RV, constituting a yoke of bondage; (d) the "elementary" principles (the A. B. C.) of the OT, as a revelation from God, Heb 5:12, RV, "rudiments," lit., "the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God," such as are taught to spiritual babes.

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Englishman's concordance for Strongs number 4747

Galatians 4:3

Galatians 4:9

Colossians 2:8

Colossians 2:20

Hebrews 5:12

2 Peter 3:10

2 Peter 3:12