

## Exegetical Notes – Galatians 6:11-18

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### Galatians 6:11-18

#### Verse 11

<sup>11</sup> ***See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!***

- Paul dictated his letters to a secretary. So, the letters came to the recipients in the hand writing of someone other than Paul. This opened the door to potentially fraudulent letters; letters being sent in Paul's name but not really from Paul.
- To verify that the letters sent from Paul were actually from Paul, he added a closing paragraph in his own handwriting. This is that paragraph in the book of Galatians. This paragraph was Paul's way of signing the letter.
- He wrote with large letters so that the readers would not miss the authenticating mark.

#### Verses 12-13

<sup>12</sup> ***Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh.***

- In closing the letter, Paul returned to the beginning of the letter. There were people in Galatia who were teaching that those who wanted to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord needed first to become Jews. They taught that to be a Christian one needed to keep the whole Law of Moses, including the portions addressing circumcision, first.
- This false teaching, which Paul had opposed from the beginning of Galatians, based salvation on works not on the grace of God. But salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone and is received by faith not by works.
- The only reason that these people took this position was to avoid persecution from the Jews. These people hoped that the Jews would not persecute the Church if Christians first became Jews.

- Paul pointed out that salvation by works is impossible because no one can keep the Law of Moses completely.

### **Verses 14-17**

***<sup>14</sup> May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. <sup>15</sup> Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. <sup>16</sup> Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God. <sup>17</sup> From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.***

- The Judaizers boasted in the number of people they had won to their way of thinking. But Paul said that he, and the rest of us as disciples of Jesus who know we are saved by God’s grace alone, should boast only in Jesus who saves us.
- Through Jesus we have been crucified to the acts of the flesh and to the world. We now live in the power of the Holy Spirit. We have been made new in Jesus Christ (see 5:17-19).
- Paul prayed for peace and mercy for all who trust Jesus to save them. Those who know that their salvation is an act of God’s grace and receive the gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone, both Jews and Greeks, are the true Israel of God. They are God’s holy people.
- Paul says that he “bears the marks of Jesus on his body” in his flesh. The word “marks” in Greek means brand which marked a person as a slave. These are the scars of his suffering for Christ. These are the marks which identify him and others as belonging to Jesus, not circumcision. Therefore, no one should stand in his way and cause him trouble. He belongs to God.

### **Verse 18**

***<sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.***

- This is the benediction, the final blessing, on the Galatians. He called them to base their salvation on God’s grace alone. God’s grace alone, apart from acts of the flesh, is enough.

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