

Galatians Chapter 6

Verse 15

1. Paul reiterates the same principle found in **Galatians 5:6**.
2. When a person is in Christ, Paul says that he is a new creature.
2 Corinthians 5:17 declares that old things are passed away and all things are become new.
 - We tend to relate this to outward, visible actions (like the Judaizers).
 - Many times we look at our Christian life and see actions from our old life that are still present. We may even read this verse and wonder, "Am I really saved?"
3. Thank God for **Galatians 6:15**. This reveals that being a new creature in Christ has nothing to do with outward, fleshly, physical actions.
 - This is why Paul says that in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything. Our "new creature" status has nothing to do with outward accomplishments or religious works.
 - We have **spiritually** been made new in our inner man. We have been made complete in Christ. **Colossians 2:10**
4. Because of the finished work of Christ that has been applied to our hearts, we are dead to sin, dead to this world, delivered from Satan's power, and alive unto God! This is what is meant by, "*Old things have passed away...all things are become new.*"
5. This fact has nothing to do with our outward actions, but our new glorious position in Christ and in His heavenly kingdom. It is not something we are striving to live up to, but something that has already been done for us in Christ. It is a statement of fact!
 - Our physical life may not always reflect the new creatures we are in Christ, but it doesn't change who God has made us in Christ.

Verse 16

1. Paul has stated very clearly and proven in this letter that you cannot place requirements of the Jewish law on believers in Christ. He summarized this again in verse 15.
2. Now Paul once again demonstrates his apostolic authority and pronounces peace and mercy on those who walk according to this rule. cf. 1:8-9
 - The word "rule" simply means "a boundary, a standard of faith and practice."
 - No longer are the Galatians to follow the fleshly rules of the Judaizers, but rather the standards of faith and practice that Paul had given them by divine revelation of Jesus Christ.
3. But Paul makes it clear in this verse that his teachings are not just for the Gentile believers to accept, but also the Jewish believers as well. He refers to them as "*the Israel of God.*"
 - This is clearly a distinct group of believers in the churches of Galatia. He distinguishes these believers from the "them" in this verse and makes special mention of this group.

- Paul **cannot** be referring to the church as a whole (Jews and Gentiles) as "the Israel of God."
 - "The Israel of God" has to be referring to a **physical**, racial distinction because he already taught that spiritually in Christ there is no Jew or Gentile. 3:27-28
 - It would make no sense at all and would contradict the entire spirit and teaching of this letter to refer to Gentile believers as the Israel of God.
4. There are those who teach that the church has replaced Israel forever. They teach that God cast aside the nation of Israel permanently, and all of her promises now belong to the church (in an allegorical way).
 - They use this verse for their purposes and claim that Paul refers to the church (the body of Christ) as "the Israel of God."
 5. Who is Paul referring to as the Israel of God?
 - Very simply put, he is addressing Jewish believers in the churches of Galatia.
 - The Galatian churches were primarily Gentile, but there would have been a Jewish remnant of believers in these churches. **Acts 13:5, 14, 42-43, 14:1**
 - Paul uses the designation "Israel" sixteen times and every time it is a reference to the people of the physical nation, the fleshly, physical seed of Abraham. There is no basis for believing that he is allegorizing the word "Israel" here in Galatians.
 - We must remember that Galatians was written in the mid-Acts time period. It was one of Paul's first letters. Israel was diminishing, but had not been completely set aside yet. **Acts 28**
 - "The Israel of God" was true believers in Christ within the nation that formed a believing remnant that Paul refers to in **Romans 11:1-5**. This was the true Israel of God.
 - **Romans 9:4-7** teaches that there are two kinds of Israelites:
 - There is the strictly natural, physical seed of Israel.
 - There is the spiritual seed of Israel within that physical seed that constitutes the true Israel of God. This is the one God recognizes and will one day save. **Romans 11:26-28**
 - Paul taught that true Jews are not just circumcised in the flesh, but in the heart. **Romans 2:17, 28-29** Notice that Paul is addressing physical Jews in this text.
 - The Israel of God was those Jews that recognized that physical circumcision won't do it. They must have a spiritual circumcision of the heart by trusting in Jesus Christ.
 - Paul addressed this group in **Galatians 6:16** and lets them know that his teachings of grace are binding upon them, too. They are not to have any part with the Judaizers in troubling the Gentile believers.

Verse 17

1. Paul and the Galatians had been troubled by the Jewish legalists that desired to have the Gentiles circumcised.
2. Paul's glory was in Jesus Christ and he had the marks to prove it. When Paul speaks of his marks, this is referring to the great suffering he had endured as he proclaimed the gospel of grace. **2 Corinthians 11:18-33**

3. The Jewish legalists had the marks of circumcision out of a religious-based performance system, but Paul had physical marks that were the result of his deep love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 18

1. Paul started with grace (1:3) and now he ends with grace.
2. As His grace fills our spirit, may our lives be glorious reflections of the grace of Christ.