

Galatians 6:11 (NIV)

“See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!”

Introduction

The Apostle Paul’s comment in Galatians 6:11 about writing in “large letters” has sparked curiosity among many believers. Was it a literal statement about handwriting, a symbolic expression of urgency, or both? To understand this, we must consider both the context of the epistle and Paul’s theological concerns.

1. The Context of the Epistle to the Galatians

The letter to the Galatians was written to churches in the region of Galatia that Paul had previously evangelized (Acts 13-14). After his departure, certain Judaizers—Jewish Christians who insisted on the observance of the Mosaic Law—began teaching that Gentile believers had to be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses to be fully accepted by God.

Galatians 1:6-7 (NIV):

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.”

Paul wrote to correct this serious theological error. The Galatians, who had received the Holy Spirit by faith, were now being misled into thinking they needed works of the law for salvation.

2. The Danger of Legalism

The central theme of Galatians is justification by faith, not by works of the law. Paul passionately argues that returning to the law nullifies the grace of God and the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice.

Galatians 2:21 (NIV):

“I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

He rebukes the Galatians sharply:

Galatians 3:1-2 (NIV):

“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?”

Paul reminds them that their initial experience of the Spirit was a result of faith, not legal observance. He considers reverting to the law as spiritual regression (Galatians 4:9-10).

3. Why Paul Wrote in Large Letters

By the end of his letter, Paul picks up the pen himself—a practice he did occasionally to authenticate his letters (see 2 Thessalonians 3:17). In Galatians 6:11, he draws attention to the “large letters” he uses.

This could indicate:

- Authenticity – To verify the letter came directly from him.
- Urgency and Emotion – To emphasize the seriousness of the message.
- A Physical Condition – Some scholars suggest Paul may have had poor eyesight (see Galatians 4:13-15), which could explain the large handwriting.

But more importantly, it was a visual emphasis—much like we might use capital letters, bold font, or underlining today. He was making sure they didn't miss the gravity of what he had just written.

4. Modern Parallels and Misapplications

Sadly, many Christians today repeat the same error the Galatians made—confusing outward practices with true righteousness. For example:

- Elevating the Sabbath above the work of the Spirit.
- Claiming dietary restrictions are necessary for holiness.
- Teaching that salvation must include law-keeping alongside grace.

But Scripture is clear:

Ephesians 4:30 (NIV):

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

The seal of God is not a day or ritual—it is the Holy Spirit Himself. Moreover:

1 Timothy 4:1-5 (NIV):

“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons... They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving.”

This aligns exactly with what Paul saw happening in Galatia and what continues in some circles today.

5. Conclusion: Return to the True Gospel

Paul’s use of large letters was not merely a stylistic choice—it was

a heartfelt plea. He wanted the Galatians to wake up to the truth: salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Not by observing Sabbaths, circumcision, or any part of the law.

Let us also examine our own faith. Are we relying on traditions, external rituals, or denominational teachings that add to the gospel? If so, we risk falling under the same deception Paul warned against.

Let us return to the foundation of Scripture and embrace the freedom we have in Christ.

May the Lord bless you and keep you in His truth.

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