

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS
NO OTHER GOSPEL:
FREEDOM IN CHRIST

LESSON 14: "What Are You Bragging About?" **Date:** December 21, 2014

TEXT: Galatians 6:11-18

INTRODUCTION

"See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand" — Paul's practice, apparently, was to dictate his letters to a scribe (or technically, an amanuensis), often writing the salutation in his own hand (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:21; Colossians 4:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:17) in order to prove its genuineness. Here, however, it seems that he has written this entire letter "with [his] own hand." The lack of a personal conclusion, the continuation of a tone of seriousness, and his declaration to have written the letter by hand cause MacArthur to observe, "It is almost as if the courier were standing at the door, waiting for Paul to finish writing so he could rush the letter on its way."¹

Paul's reference to writing in "large letters" has been variously understood. The two most common interpretations are: (1) he used large letters because of his poor eyesight, a medical condition we noted as a possibility in Galatians 4:13, 15; (2) the large letters were Greek uncials, similar to our capital letters, that were not normally used by a scribe. Both explanations are entirely possible, causing MacArthur to again offer us his conclusion.

Reflecting the sum of the possibilities just discussed, Paul may have used the somewhat unsightly lettering as a statement, saying, in effect, "Because of my poor eyesight, you know how hard it is for me to write by my own hand, but what I have to say is so important and urgent that I want you to have this letter in your hands as soon as possible, with as bold lettering as possible. Unlike the Judaizers, I have never tried to impress you with my scholarship, personal skills, or superficial formalities. When I first came to you, you accepted my message with gladness, although my bodily presence was unattractive. This epistle is not written attractively, either, but I hope you will receive its message with the same urgency with which it is sent."²

So, in his "own hand" and with "large letters," Paul ends this intense letter with an intense conclusion. His burden is that of any instructor,

who upon coming to the climax of his lesson might say, "DON'T MISS THIS!" What is it that Paul doesn't want us to miss?

Illustration: For many, talking trash is a big part of sports. The NBA is notorious for its big-name trash-talkers: Kevin Garnett, Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, Gary Payton, Charles Barkley, and even Reggie Miller. And in the NFL today, no one is worse than Richard Sherman.

Sometimes, their trash-talking boasting climaxes in a "guarantee." We're accustomed to hearing a few of these each year, in which a player makes some claim about his team and then "guarantees" it. This week, it was the Denver Broncos defensive tackle, Terrance "Pot Roast" Knighton, who "guaranteed" that his team would win the Super Bowl, even if that meant going through Foxborough first. As we know, such a boast is not a certain prediction, and many a "guarantee" has never come to pass.

We talk big and we brag a lot! There are often consequences for such boasting—many a bragger has had to eat his words!

At the end of this epistle, Paul has one question on his mind, "What are you bragging about?" When it comes to your religious commitments and spiritual perspective, Paul wants to know what you are boasting in. He knows that we'll boast about something, and so he's concerned that we be boasting about the right thing—because, in spiritual and eternal matters, a false boast has tremendous consequences.

In Galatians 6:11-18, Paul's closing passage, he contrasts two objects of our boasting. And his thesis is clearly stated in verse 14, "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let's consider together these contrasting objects of our boasts.

BOASTING IN THE FLESH (vv. 12-13)

Paul first writes about those who "boast" "in the flesh." The word for "boast," used two times in verses 13-14, means "to take pride in something"³ or "to express an unusually high degree of confidence in someone or something being exceptionally noteworthy."⁴ It may be deduced from the Greek word for neck, which pictorially is often stretched out as a proud person puffs out his chest and sticks up his chin.

The object of their boasting is “the flesh.” “Here the flesh has reference to the works of their humanness and self-effort apart from the Spirit. They were not concerned about pleasing God by inward righteousness but about impressing other men by outward legalism.”⁵ So, these people are Paul’s opponents in this letter, emphasizing Law over grace works over faith, flesh over Spirit.

In verses 12-13, Paul traces several characteristics of those who are confident the flesh (cf. Philippians 3:2-4).

1. Religious pride (v. 12a)

They “want to make a good showing in the flesh.” The word “make a good showing” is a compound Greek word combining the words for “good” and “face.” The word is used only here in the New Testament, but is used in the Septuagint of Genesis 12:11 to literally describe the physically beautiful appearance of Sarah. In our passage, it is used metaphorically and means “to make a fair appearance or show.”⁶ One lexicon states concerning this word, “It concerns the difference between appearance and reality.”⁷ These flesh-boasters were making a big deal about “the flesh,” that is, their external effort, visible works, and religious commitments (i.e., circumcision”). They were zoned in on appearance and show, and there was little more concern than that. The reality of their inward heart and internal selves before God was an altogether different matter (as we’ll see more clearly in verse 13). They were proud about the outside, disregarding all else.

As it did then, such religious pride manifests itself in two ways today. First, it is apparent in the person who appears to be genuinely pious, but is trusting in his self-effort and personal religious accomplishments (i.e., “flesh”). Paul rejected this kind of flesh-boasting in Galatians 3:3 when he rhetorically asked, “Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” Of course not! In fact, he was quite clear in 5:13-26 as to what the flesh inevitably produces. Elsewhere, Paul describes these people this way, “They will maintain the outward appearance of religion but will have repudiated its power” (2 Timothy 3:5, NET). Cf. Matthew 6:1; Luke 16:14-15

The second way this religious pride manifests itself is in those whose religious activities merely mask fleshly living. Paul already showed the deficiency of such living in his analogy of Galatians 4:21-

24, when he contrasted Isaac with Ishmael who was “born according to the flesh” (v. 23). The birth of Ishmael was the consequence of fleshly thinking on the part of Abraham and Sarah. They took matters into their own hands, and they did produce a son, but he was not what the Lord had promised (and, as is the point of that passage, he was a slave, not free!). So today, many religious people are firmly in the driver’s seat of their own lives, and since they are led by the flesh instead of walking by the Spirit, it inevitably manifests itself in a host of ungodly choices (cf. Galatians 5:16-21). Paul warns against these flesh-boasters (i.e., their boisterous motto is, “I have my freedom and you can’t tell me what to do!”) in Titus 1:16, saying, “They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.”

2. Legalistic coercion (v. 12b)

Therefore, they “would force you to be circumcised.” We have already seen this forceful compulsion in Galatians 2:3, 14. In 2:3, Paul referred to the apostles at Jerusalem, who against the desires of the Judaizers did not “force” the Greek Titus to be circumcised. In contrast, Paul rebuked the wishy-washy Peter for “forcing” the Gentiles to live like the Jews in his legalistic faltering (2:14). Paul used wordplay with a synonym in Galatians 5:7-8 and addresses the same legalistic manipulation: “You were running well. Who hindered [lit. persuaded] you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from Him who calls you.”

Those who “boast in the flesh” not only refuse to bear one another’s burdens (6:2, 10) in loving service (5:13), but they burden others with their legalistic codes and external requirements. They create “trouble” (1:7; 5:10) and “slavery” for people (4:9-10; 5:1), rather than “freedom” (5:1) and “fellowship” (6:6).

3. Cowardly fear (v. 12c)

MacArthur notes, “The only sign that has continuously and universally represented the Christian faith is the cross. Even secular Roman historians, including Tacitus in the first century and Suetonius in the second century, commonly referred to Christians as the followers of a criminal crucified under Pontius Pilate.”⁸ True Christian “boast...in the cross of [their] Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 14) because “that symbol of a horrible means of [physical] death [has

become] for [us] the most cherished symbol of [spiritual/eternal] life.”⁹ No one would boast in the gallows or an electric chair, but we do glory in a symbol of cruel, humiliating human punishment. This is because, in the sovereign grace of God, He “transformed the most fearful expression of man’s hatred into the most beautiful expression of His divine love”¹⁰ when our Savior “suffered and died on a cross as the full and final sacrifice to save [us] from sin and death.”¹¹

Although a crucified Christ is “a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles” (1 Corinthians 1:23), it is the object of a true Christian’s boasting (1 Corinthians 1:31), because it is the expression of God’s power and wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24).¹² Such commitment to the cross is not merely responsive; it is also required. Jesus told the “crowd” that what it meant to “come after [Him]” was to “deny [oneself] and take up his cross and follow [Christ]” (Mark 8:34). Therefore, an unmistakable mark of genuine belief is a humble and grateful boasting in the cross of Christ. This has been an important theme to Paul in this letter:

*The book of Galatians has been called “The Crucifixion Epistle,” not only because it directly mentions the cross or crucifixion some seven times (2:20; 3:1; 5:11, 24; 6:12, 14 [twice]) but because God’s redemptive grace, the theme of the epistle, became effective for men only through the cross of Christ. The sign of the cross points to grace.*¹³

Since the Judaizers have spurned grace for self-effort and replaced humble faith with arrogant work, it is not surprising that they belittle the cross of Christ, too. In fact, the very motive for their legalism is uncovered at the end of verse 12—they chose to practice a legalistic religion “in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.” They don’t mind the name “Christian” and they are fine with attending His church, but to identify themselves with the offensive meaning of His cross¹⁴ would jeopardize their material welfare and even their lives (as Paul knew well; cf. v. 17). This was a sacrifice they were unwilling to make, and so in their cowardly fear, they professed Christ, claimed the title “Christian,” and attended His church, but they disregarded His cross.

Their concern was for their safety, not their salvation, and they hoped that adherence to outward forms such as circumcision

*would minimize the offense to other Jews and to Gentiles and would thereby give them protection from persecution. By teaching obedience to the Mosaic law and the rite of circumcision they hoped to blunt criticism, alienation, and rejection by fellow Jews. A Jew who became a Christian was often subject to social ostracism and financial ruin. He was put out of the synagogue and often out of his own household. Fellow Jews refused to do business with him, and he often found it difficult to buy food and clothing even if he had money to pay for them. The Judaizers also hoped that identifying themselves with the law of Moses would help them keep the protected status Jews then enjoyed in the Roman Empire. Because their leader had been crucified under Roman law, Christians were frequently under suspicion by Roman officials and often experienced harassment that Jews did not.*¹⁵

So today, many religious people like the idea of Christ and like His “softer” side, but reject the meaning and implications of the cross. In cowardly fear, they “boast in the flesh” to avoid the persecution of true identity with Christ, and so, in Christ’s own words, they are “not worthy of [Him]” (Matthew 10:38).

4. Blatant hypocrisy (v. 13)

Paul describes their hypocrisy this way, “For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.” In other words, in self-promotion (cf. 4:17) they compel others to live under the Law, but they themselves didn’t keep it.” “They were not even honest Jews, much less genuine Christians, Paul implies.”¹⁶ Throughout His ministry, Jesus took umbrage with this kind of blatant hypocrisy. Speaking of the pretentious scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said, “Do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger” (Matthew 23:3-4).

Within today’s Christian community, while genuine believers certainly struggle with consistency and transparency, it is the hypocrisy of the “tares” in the church (cf. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

that have turned many away from Christ. Those who “boast in the flesh” can be nothing other than hypocrites, for they have no power of God to truly change them (cf. 5:13-6:12; Romans 8:9-13).

Application: Are any of these characteristics prevailing in your life—religious pride, legalistic coercion, cowardly fear, blatant hypocrisy? These are the marks of those who “boast in the flesh,” and such misplaced boasting brings terrible consequences (cf. 5:21).

Transition: Paul knew the deception of fleshly boasting, for he admitted in Romans 7:18, “In me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” (NKJV; cf. Romans 7:25; 8:3-8). Therefore, he resolves, “Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

GLORYING IN THE CROSS (vv. 14-18)

The phrase “far be it from me” is the same phrase that Paul uses often in Romans (cf. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15), usually translated “may it never be” or “God forbid” in the KJV. It “carries the idea of virtual impossibility. ... [Paul] uses it here to tell the Galatians that it was inconceivable for him even to think of boasting in anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁷ We have already considered the importance of such boasting in identifying one as truly belonging to Christ. Now, in verses 14-18, Paul rehearses several reasons why “the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” is a worthy object of the believer’s confident boasting.

1. *It frees us from the world (v. 14).*

Paul states that “by [the cross] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

The world translates kosmos (the opposite of chaos, from which we get the English chaos) and speaks of an ordered system. Our word cosmetic (derived from kosmos) has the basic meaning of covering up disorder with something that brings order. In the New Testament, kosmos refers to the order of the evil world system ruled by Satan and his agents (see John 12:31; 14:30; 1 Cor. 2:6, 8; Eph. 2:2). ... In a more specific aspect it refers to Satan’s vast system of false religions, all of which are grounded in human merit and works righteousness. “The whole world lies in the power of the evil one,” John declares (1 John 5:19).¹⁸

It was the “world” that crucified “the Lord of glory” (1 Corinthians 2:8) and is controlled by Satan himself (John 12:31; 14:30). In Ecclesiastes, Solomon helps us taste in his experiences the futility of the world (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:32), and 2 Peter 1:4 refers to its corruption. Ephesians 2:1-2 talks about the bondage of the world: prior to salvation through the cross of Christ, we “were dead in the trespasses and sins in which [we] once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.” 1 John 2:15-17 reminds us of the transience of the world, while 1 Corinthians 11:32 assures us of its judgment (cf. 2 Peter 3:7-13).

Paul says that “by [the cross] the world has been crucified to [us], and [we] to the world.” The freeing effect of the cross on our relationship to the world has both a positional and practical dimension to it. Positionally, we have been freed from the world’s status as the enemy of God (John 4:4) and the resulting condemnation of such hostility (1 Corinthians 11:32). John writes in 1 John 5:4-5, “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” “When a person receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, sin becomes a dead issue, the law becomes a dead issue, and the world becomes a dead issue.”¹⁹

Practically, in their co-crucifixion with Christ, the dominion of the world has been broken for the gospel-believer (Ephesians 2:2). It certainly still wields great influence and attraction, which is what John’s counsel in 1 John 2:15-17 (cf. 2 Peter 1:4-7) is meant to address; however, its bondage has been destroyed, for we are citizens now of a heavenly country (cf. Philippians 3:20-21) and have been protectively prayed for by our cross-bearing Sovereign (John 17:6, 11, 15-16).

Illustration: Like having diplomatic immunity, the Christian is now protected from the morally depraved “laws” and “rules” of this world system. Our citizenship is in a different and heavenly country, and we are not under the dominion of this world. Although we are “in” this world, we are not “of” this world, because Jesus Christ has rendered its authority obsolete.

Not only is “the world...crucified to [us]” in these ways, but “[we] [are crucified] to the world.” So, not only is the world dead to me, but I am dead to the world. In other words, through the surpassing work and value of the cross of Christ, the Christian becomes dead to both the worldly way of relating to God through self-effort and human achievement (cf. Philippians 3:2-12) and the various manifestations of ungodly worldliness (cf. Romans 6:6-7). Therefore, having been freed from the earthy and worldly through our co-crucifixion with Christ, true believers will “seek the things...[and] set [their] minds on things that are above” (Colossians 3:1-3 in contrast with 2:20-22).

2. *It recreates us as new creatures (v. 15).*

According to verse 15, “Neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision.” Circumcision and uncircumcision here represent the entirety of the world’s system of religion—that is, relating to God (whatever that means) through human effort. Paul says that the world’s idea of religion and spirituality doesn’t “count for anything”—it offers no significance, meaning, or value.

Only the crosswork of Christ can bring forth “a new creation.” Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, 6, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. ... That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Mankind needs an entirely new life, not just a remodeling of the old. The old is completely defiled (cf. Romans 7:19) and so needs to be remade (cf. Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10). Only Christ, through His payment for the sins of the old and His resurrection unto a new kind of life (cf. Romans 6:3-10), can make those who trust in him “new creatures.” And that is exactly what He does! 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” Paul touches on this new life in Romans 8 (vv. 1-4, 10-17, 22-23):

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not

according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ... But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. ... For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

3. *It graces us as God’s people (vv. 16, 18).*

Paul writes, “And as for all who walk by this rule [i.e., the gospel of grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone], peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. ... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.” For all those who “walk by this rule”—that is, the true gospel of grace alone through faith alone in Christ’s crosswork alone²⁰—God grants “peace,” “mercy,” and “grace.” Rich salvation belongs to those who claim it through belief in the gospel!

“Peace” refers to a believer’s new relationship of eternal harmony with God through the reconciliation of Christ’s cross (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 2:11-22). In “mercy” God forgives the believer’s sin and removes divine judgment from him, having had His wrath satisfied in Christ (Ephesians 2:4-10). God’s “grace,” a concept that bookends this epistle (cf. 1:3; 6:18), is the very source of all God’s gospel-gifts; it is His kindness and goodness to the undeserving, and in this letter’s very last sentence, Paul makes a final declaration that it triumphs over Law and works.

The cross is the fountainhead of all these gifts and more (cf. Ephesians 1:3), and so may our boasting be only in the cross!

4. *It identifies us as Jesus' followers (v. 17).*

In contrast to the flesh-boasters (cf. v. 12), Paul understood the calling of Christ, that His followers will “take up [their] cross and follow [Him]” (Mark 8:34). He had done this, and his cross had been like his Savior’s, filled with suffering and self-denial, insomuch that he could now testify, “I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.” He had been branded for His Savior, and his opponents would be wise to recognize that and cease from “troubling” him!

Undoubtedly, some of the Galatians had witnessed him being branded for Christ, for those at Lystra watched him be stoned and left for dead outside of the city (Acts 14:19).

Every blow that Paul received was really a blow against Jesus, his Master and Savior. “The sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance,” he told the Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:5). The apostle was “always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also [might] be manifested in [his] body” (4:10). To the Colossian church he wrote, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” (Col. 1:24).

Whenever a Christian is persecuted for his faith, it is really Christ who is being persecuted through him. When Paul was on the way to Damascus to arrest and imprison Christians there, the Lord said to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4). Because Satan and his world system can no longer afflict Christ directly, they afflict Him indirectly by persecuting the church, His Body.²¹

Few sources give the Christian greater confidence in his identification with Christ than suffering for Christ (cf. Matthew 10:16-29; John 15:18-16:4; Philippians 1:29)! It is when we “take up our cross,” that we know we are His followers!

Application: Consider the confidence of the cross—it frees us from the world, recreates us as new creatures, graces us as God’s people, and

identifies us as Jesus’ followers! It is no wonder, then, that Paul pledged to spend his life boasting only “in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”!

CONCLUSION

What are you bragging about?

In The Holy War, John Bunyan provides a dramatic closing scene between Emmanuel (Christ) and residents of the town of Man-soul (you and me). Emmanuel has helped them beat off the Diabolonians (Satan’s army), and now he stands in the town square telling them how to stay free from Satan’s clutches. Emmanuel says:

“I have loved you, Man-soul. I bought you for a price; a price not of corruptible things, as of silver and gold, but a price of blood, my own blood, which I spilled freely to make you mine, and to reconcile you to my father.

“And I stood by you in your backsliding, when you were unfaithful, though you did not know I was there. It was I who made your way dark and bitter. It was I who put Mr. Godly fear to work. It was I who stirred up Conscience and Understanding and Will. It was I who made you seek me, and in finding me, find your own health and happiness.

“Nothing can hurt you but sin; nothing can grieve me but sin; nothing can make you fall before your foes but sin; beware of sin, my Man-soul.

“I have taught you to watch, to fight, to pray, and to make war against your foes; so now I command you to believe that my love is constant to you.

“O my Man-soul, how I have set my heart, my love upon you!

“Show me your love—and hold fast—until I take you to my father’s kingdom where there is no more sorrow, no grief, no pain ... where you shall never be afraid again. ...”

As Emmanuel rides away in his chariot, Conscience, Understanding, and Will discuss the future and how they will have to be alert to keep the Diabolonians at bay. Unless they depend completely on King Shaddai (the Father), Emmanuel (the Son), and the Lord High Secretary (the Holy Spirit) they will fail and fall into enemy hands.

“Is this way better than the freedom you had before?” asks Understanding, referring back to days before Emmanuel had come into their lives.

“The freedom we had before was like—” Will struggled for words, “like birds flying through broken windows in-and-out of a deserted house—flying aimlessly, going nowhere.”

“Do you love him because you have to?” Understanding’s probing was gentle; their talk was to reiterate their faith, and in their talking they strengthened each other.

“I do not have to love him,” said Will. “I am free. He has always left me free to do as I please.”

“Then?”

“I love him because I want to,” Will said simply. “And I can never love him enough.”²²

There is no other gospel than the good news of freedom by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone! Let us boast about this gospel and love the One who makes it such good news—our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

ENDNOTES

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Galatians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 193.

² *Ibid.*, 195.

³ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 536.

⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 430.

⁵ MacArthur, 196.

⁶ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ MacArthur, 197.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² “When used in a soteriological (salvation) context, as here, the cross does not refer to the pieces of wood on which Jesus was hung but to the entire work of divine redemption that His death on the cross accomplished” (*Ibid.*).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ “It is not the fact that Jesus was crucified like a common criminal that is the offense of the cross, but the truth of the substitutionary atonement, which allows no place for human pride, status, or achievement” (*Ibid.*).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 206-207.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 208.

²⁰ “*Kanōn* (rule) has the basic idea of measurement and was often used in the sense of a principle or standard. To walk by this rule is to accept the gospel of divine accomplishment through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and to walk by faith in the power of His Spirit, rather than by sight in the power of the flesh (cf. 5:16-17; 2 Cor. 5:7)” (*Ibid.*, 210).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

²² *Ibid.*, 211-212, quoting an adaptation of Ethel Barrett’s *The Great Conflict* [Glendale, Calif.: Regal Books, 1969], in which the author has rewritten John Bunyan’s *The Holy War* in contemporary language.