

BRANDED For JESUS' SAKE!

Galatians 6:14, 17

“The marks of the Lord Jesus” -- what were they? The Greek word which is here translated as “marks” is *stigmata*, from which we get our English words “*stigma*” and “*stigmatize*.” *Paul wrote about bearing in his body the marks (brands) of the Lord Jesus.*

What was Paul referring to? Literally the Scripture here is stating these words, “*I bear **branded** on my body the **marks** of the Lord Jesus.*” It is quite clear the apostle Paul is here referring to actual **marks** which he bore in his body. Paul’s use of the word **stigmata** to describe what he went through for the Lord is used figuratively, or with much symbolic meaning. They were not merely marks: they were as **brands**; and in using this term Paul was referring to some practice in that day that was well known to his readers.

I. What Was This Branding To Which Paul Referred?

There were **five** classes of people who were **branded**.

1. ***It was a common thing to brand slaves.*** The brand was a mark of ownership, or a means of precaution against running away, or a mode of punishment. (Cf Exod 21:5-6)

2. ***Branding was common among soldiers.*** They often wore tattoos on their arm or hand or the initials of favorite generals. It was a sign of **allegiance**. And often men were branded by their leaders as a sign as to whom they belonged.

3. ***Then, religious devotees were often branded.*** It was a sign of **devotion** and it was done out of an act of **consecration**.

4. ***Often criminals were branded,*** as a mark of affliction and

5. ***the abhorred were often branded*** as a mark of insult, or judgment.

II. What Were These Marks Or Brands?

They were actual marks on Paul’s body. They were the scars, sears, and maybe long-continued sores which had come upon him during this costly and heroic service for the sake of the Lord’s will. (Acts 9:15-16; II Cor. 11:23-28; I Cor. 4:9-13) Paul had been battered and bruised in ways that left many permanent *memorials on his body*. **Paul knew:** Jewish whippings, three floggings, barbarous violence, the ambush of enemies, the assaults of robbers, bodily hardships, and mental sufferings. We also read of some type of eye disease that probably brought pain unbelievable and unending. All this for Christ’s sake?

III. And why did Paul refer to these marks or brands (wounds)? Because there were Judaizing teachers who were subverting the Galatian believers and seeking to turn them against Paul. (Paul was defending himself.) These were self-important men

who mouthed great pretensions; but did they bear any brand-marks of the Lord Jesus on their person? (Did they truly care?) These false teachers were shouters, but also shirkers; they spoke boldly, but were poor sufferers.

For Paul To Be Branded Was Very Significant!

1. This reminds us of Cain upon whom God put a mark.
2. Persons who were vile or dangerous of character were sometimes branded for identity and for detection.
3. The Jews have often been abhorred and so marked for extinction.
4. There were five meanings for these brandings.. the mark of a:
 - > slave - mark of ownership, > soldier - mark of allegiance,
 - > devotee-mark of consecration > criminal - mark of exposure,
 - > abhorred - mark of reproach.
5. ***Paul bore on his person the meaning of all of these marks!*** They proved Christ's *ownership* of his person. They were the brand-marks of a *soldier*, and they proclaimed his *allegiance* to his heavenly Captain. They were the brand marks of a *devotee*, for they declared his *consecration* to the Lord and the brands were received as one who was hated and hounded!

IV. What Should These Brands Mean To Us !

What is the lesson? We should never be ashamed of ***bearing suffering or reproach for Jesus' sake!*** (Acts 5:41; 15:26; Gal. 6:14) Paul considered himself a ***branded slave for Jesus' sake. . . what about us?*** He gloried in the Cross and what it meant to him. There is no higher honor than to suffer for Christ. (Acts 5:42)

We should not be afraid of ***bearing such marks in our own bodies.*** (Heb. 12:1-4) Far better to be scarred than to be scared. Far better to suffer because of loyalty to Christ than to be a coward. Let us never fear persecution or ridicule or trial.

Paul's brand-marks suggest that we should ***bear the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ in our character.*** What characteristics of Christ should we bear in our lives? What characteristics of Paul's example in service should challenge us? Do we bear the marks of --- ***ownership, allegiance, consecration,*** and even of ***exposure,*** and the mark of ***reproach*** for our testimony for Jesus sake?

Does the World Brand Us?

1. Don't people carry upon their lives the ***influence*** of the world system?
2. Don't we witness people who are so ***branded*** by the world's value system that they will do almost anything to be like those around them?
3. Don't we see Christians whose lives are ***no different*** than the lost because they have been ***marked by the world system?***

What Do We Know About Suffering?. . . Study What God Says In These Verses! Rom. 8:17; Phil. 1:29; Phil. 4:12; I Thess. 3:4; I Tim. 4:10; II Tim. 1:12; II

Tim. 2:9; II Tim. 2:12; II Tim. 2:13; Heb. 11:25; James 5:10; I Pet. 3:14; I Pet. 3:17; I Pet. 4:19