

Paul's Use of the Law for Church Age Doctrine

What is Legalism?

Legalism is the exact opposite of God's commands for the believer. Whereas God requires belief that produces faithfulness to Him as a response of gratitude for His Grace, man in his wickedness attempts to please God by keeping a set of rules that he considers the standard of righteousness.

Legalism will always hide from the investigation of the heart by emphasizing the external observance of the made-up rules.

The Law and Love

- Deuteronomy 6:5 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
- Deut 7:9 “Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;
- Deut 10:12 “Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,
- Deut 11:1 “You shall therefore love the Lord your God, and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.
- Deut 11:13 “It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul,
- Deut 11:22 “For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him,

- Deut 13:3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
- Deut 19:9 if you carefully observe all this commandment which I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in His ways always— then you shall add three more cities for yourself, besides these three.
- Deut 30:6 “Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.
- Deut 30:16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.
- Deut 30:20 by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

Preview of Paul's Correction of the Legalists' Errors

- The Mosaic Law was never a means of salvation. Salvation was always by faith.
- The Mosaic Law is now not our basis for continued fellowship with God or spirituality. In fact, in Christ we are free from observance of the Mosaic Law.
- However, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for...instruction in righteousness.”

3:6-7: So You Like Abraham?

Just like Abraham “believed (aorist active indicative) in God and it was credited to him (aorist passive indicative, LOGIZOMAI) unto righteousness (DIKAIOSUNE),”

so you must know (present active indicative/imperative, GINWSKW) that those *who are* from the source of faith, these are sons of Abraham.

3:8-9: What About Before Gen 15?

⁸Now (DE) the Scripture,

as a result of seeing that God justifies the
Gentiles from faith,

Evangelized beforehand (PROEUAGGELIZW)
to Abraham that, “All the Gentiles will be
blessed in you.” (Gen 12:3)

⁹Therefore those who are from faith are being
blessed (present passive indicative,
EULOGEW) with the believing Abraham.

Paul's Categorical Language

1. “From faith,” ek + genitive of pistis, sets up the category of those who believe.
2. Notice that Paul thinks in terms of this simple distinction between members of the human race.
3. The continuity of belief for righteousness that receives blessing has been true for all of human history.
4. Why did Paul not use Adam?

Answer: Abraham, the “father of Israel” was saved as a Gentile!

Now (DE) the Scripture,

because it had foreseen (PROEIDON) that God justifies the Gentiles from faith,

Evangelized beforehand (PROEUAGGELIZW) to Abraham that, “All the Gentiles will be blessed in you.” (Gen 12:3)

Therefore those who are from faith are being blessed (present passive indicative, EULOGEW) with the believing Abraham.

The Soteriology of the Abrahamic Covenant

1. God's promise to Abraham regarding blessing in Gen 12:3 and 18:18 carried a universal benefit.
2. All the "nations" would be blessed. This hints at Unlimited Atonement.
3. This is the last and most important component in the Abrahamic Covenant of "Land, Seed, and Blessing."
4. "Blessing" means enjoyment of relationship with God or Salvation.
5. This blessing of righteousness in Christ has always been available to all human beings, most of whom have been Gentiles.
6. Therefore there is no room for discussion of the Mosaic Law in the determination of how God saves.

7. The Abrahamic Covenant is different from the promise in Gen 3:15 because it **specifies** Abraham as the father of the family that will fulfill this blessing prophecy for all mankind.
8. Notice that this is an eschatological covenant, with a future possession of the Land by the Seed Who is the Blessing.
9. The Key to understanding the Bible is the principle of the **PROGRESS** of REVELATION

Gal 3:10

FOR (explanation that further strengthens the last point)

As many as are from the works of the Law,
They are under a curse (KATARA)

FOR it stands written that

‘Under a curse *is* everyone who does not remain in all of the things being written in the Book of the Law with the result that he do them’

Texts: Quote or Paraphrase?

- BYZ
 - Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου, τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.
- LXX of Dt 27:26:
 - ²⁶Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, ὃς οὐκ ἐμμενεῖ ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτούς, καὶ ἐροῦσιν πᾶς ὁ λαός Γένοιτο.

- BHS

אָרוּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְיִם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעַם אָמֵן: פ 26 •
cursed is whoever does not QUM (hifil)—establish/keep—the words of this teaching (=Law) to do them.

LXX is a literal translation; the Gal “quote” interprets what a DABAR is in this case—the written word, not the spoken word!! Another argument against the oral law. LXX says “man” but Gal 3 is a better translation with “anyone.”

- It seems that Paul 1) makes his own translations and has them memorized or 2) has a different translation memorized.
 - It is fitting for Paul to specify written vs. spoken Law, since the Written is inspired, and the spoken tradition is not.
 - Both translations have taken the Heb infinitive construct and rendered it as a Greek genitival articular infinitive.
- MENW in Greek is interpretive of QUM in the Hebrew hifil stem.

Paul Quotes the Law Again

- Dt 27:26: 26 ‘Cursed is he who does not stand in the words of this law with the result that he does them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’
- **Context: Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim**
 - Conquest of the Land by Joshua
 - Dt 11:26-32, Dt 27-28, Josh 8:30-35

The Conditional Covenant: Illustrated

26 “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: **27** the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I am commanding you today; **28** and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known. **29** “It shall come about, when the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you shall place the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. **30** “Are they not across the Jordan, west of the way toward the sunset, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh? **31** “For you are about to cross the Jordan to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall possess it and live in it, **32** and you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the judgments which I am setting before you today.

Observations on the Command

- This goes to the heart of the enemy territory across the Jordan.
- It is near the same location where Abraham first built an altar in the Land to the LORD.
- The command is to set the blessings and the curses on Gerizim and Ebal
- The reason is not given; the geography is given.

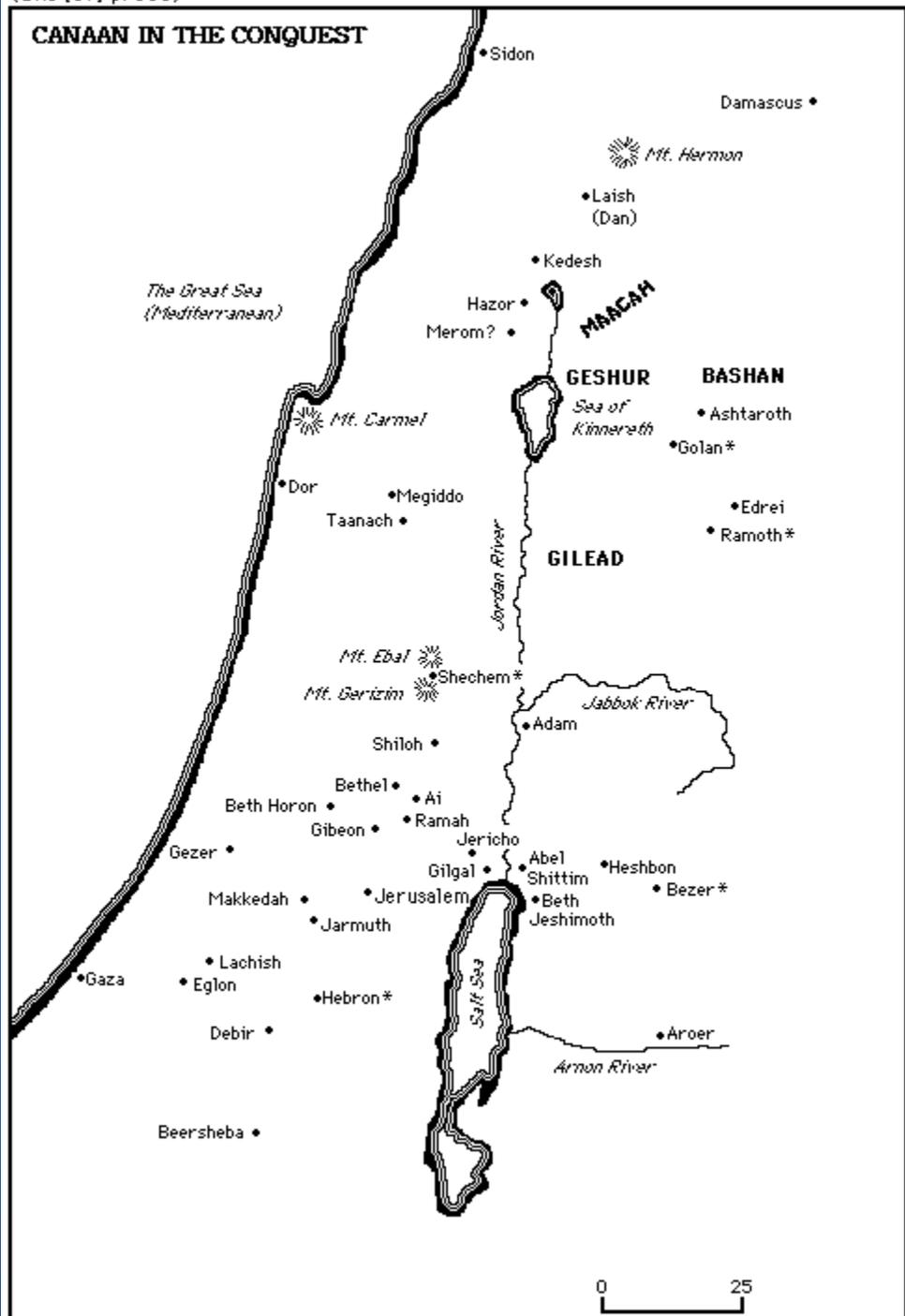
Interpretation of the Command

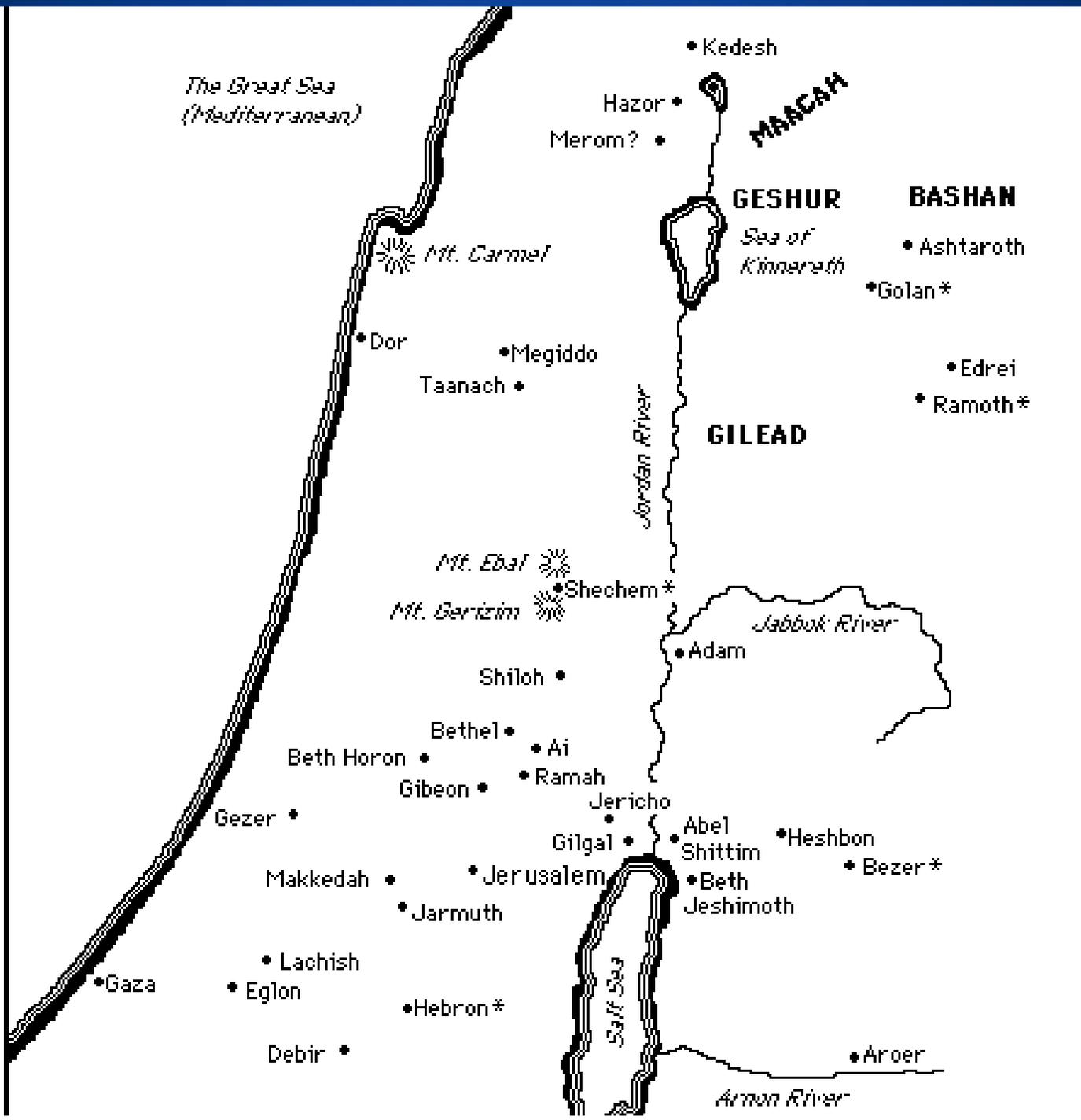
The redeemed Children of Israel were to be set apart to the LORD by means of the Mosaic Law.

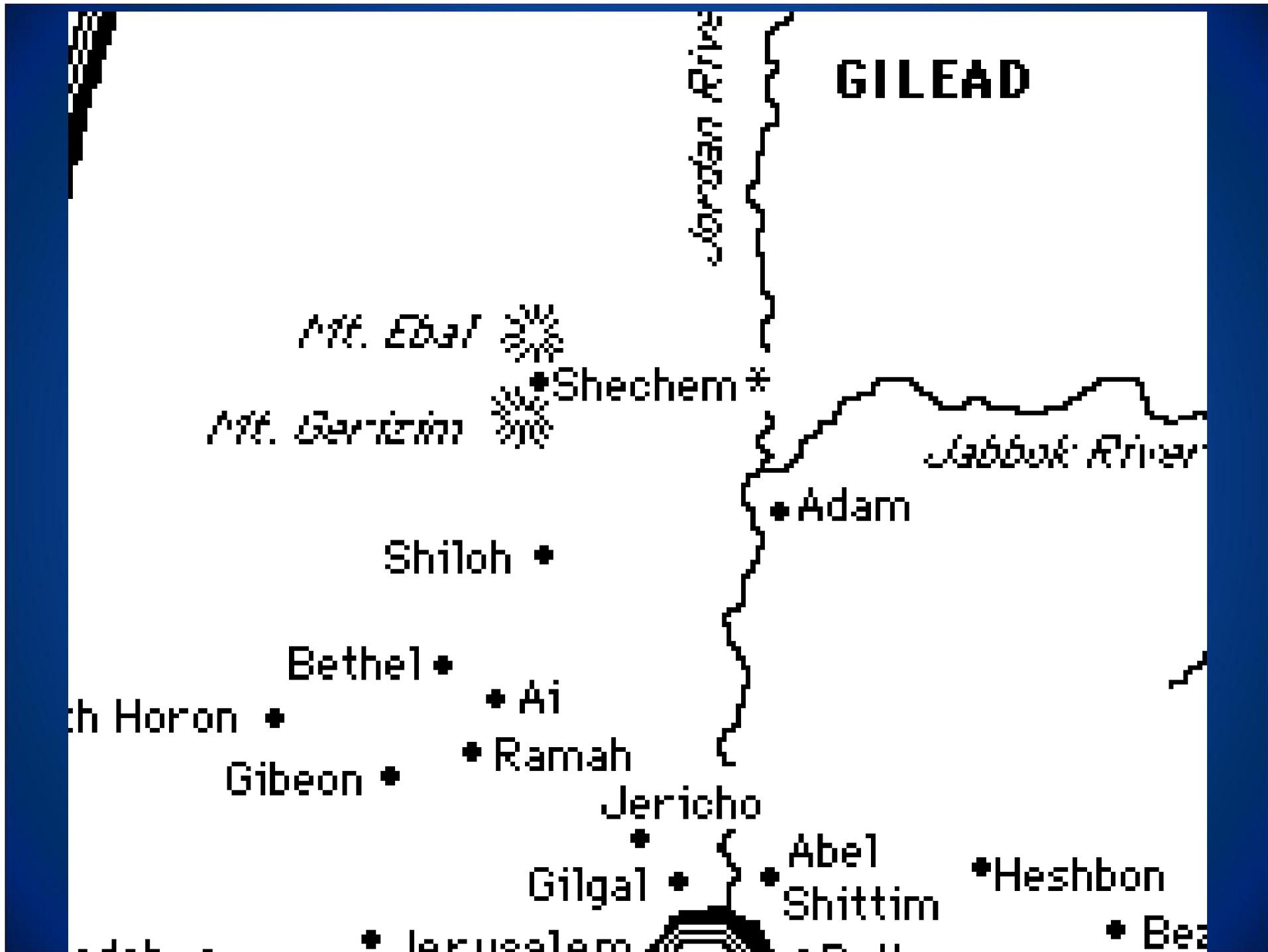
This sanctification was a testimony to God's righteousness, just as their conquest was a testimony to His faithfulness to the Abrahamic Covenant.

The symbolic planting of the Law in the heart of the newly-given territory demonstrated the abiding issue between God and man: man needs righteousness to have fellowship with God.

CANAAN IN THE CONQUEST







The Bookends of Ebal and Gerizim

- Moses repeats the requirement in Dt 27. This makes a frame around the bulk of the commandments in Dt 12-26.

Dt 11: Ebal and Gerizim ceremony upon entering the Land

Dt 12-26: Specific commandments of the Law restated in the Suzerain-Vassal Treaty

Dt 27-28: Ebal and Gerizim ceremony

Deuteronomy 27

1 Then Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying, “Keep all the commandments which I command you today. 2 “So it shall be on the day when you cross the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God gives you, that you shall set up for yourself large stones and coat them with lime 3 and write on them all the words of this law, when you cross over, so that you may enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, promised you.

4 “So it shall be when you cross the Jordan, you shall set up on Mount Ebal, these stones, as I am commanding you today, and you shall coat them with lime. 5 “Moreover, you shall build there an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones; you shall not wield an iron *tool on them*. 6 “You shall build the altar of the Lord your God of uncut stones, and you shall offer on it burnt offerings to the Lord your God; 7 and you shall sacrifice peace offerings and eat there, and rejoice before the Lord your God. 8 “You shall write on the stones all the words of this law very distinctly.”

9 Then Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying, “Be silent and listen, O Israel! This day you have become a people for the Lord your God. 10 “You shall therefore obey the Lord your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today.”

11 Moses also charged the people on that day, saying, 12 “When you cross the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin.

13 “For the curse, these shall stand on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

14 “The Levites shall then answer and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice,

15 ‘Cursed is the man who makes an idol or a molten image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.’ And all the people shall answer and say, ‘Amen.’

16 ‘Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

17 ‘Cursed is he who moves his neighbor’s boundary mark.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

18 ‘Cursed is he who misleads a blind person on the road.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

19 ‘Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

20 ‘Cursed is he who lies with his father’s wife, because he has uncovered his father’s skirt.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

21 ‘Cursed is he who lies with any animal.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

22 ‘Cursed is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or of his mother.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

23 'Cursed is he who lies with his mother-in-law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

24 'Cursed is he who strikes his neighbor in secret.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

25 'Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

26 'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

The Illustration Executed

Joshua 8:30-35

30 Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, **in Mount Ebal**, 31 just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones on which no man had wielded an iron tool; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings.

32 He wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel.

33 All Israel with their elders and officers and their judges were standing on both sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as the native. Half of them stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had given command at first to bless the people of Israel.

34 Then afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them.

Did Joshua Write the Law on the Stones of the Altar?

Dt 27:4 “So it shall be when you cross the Jordan,

you shall set up on Mount Ebal, these stones, as I am commanding you today, and you shall coat them with lime.

5 “Moreover, you shall build there an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones; you shall not wield an iron *tool on them*.

6 “You shall build the altar of the Lord your God of uncut stones, and you shall offer on it burnt offerings to the Lord your God;

7 and you shall sacrifice peace offerings and eat there, and rejoice before the Lord your God.

8 “You shall write on the stones all the words of this law very distinctly.”

The Picture

- Mount Ebal represents the curse of the Law.
- On Mt Ebal are the stones with the Law written on them
- Out of those stones they built the altar for the Burnt Offering and the Peace Offering
- The transgression of the Law required the curse, represented by the sacrifice.
 - Burnt offering: dedication of oneself entirely to God; pictures justification, phase 1
 - Peace offering: resultant fellowship between God and man and among God's people, phase 2.

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Summary

1. Take with you that Paul is interpreting the Law just as Jesus did (cf Mt 5-7)
2. This is not an interpretation out of context, but legalists could not understand it.
3. Legalists still cannot understand this.
4. The curse of the Law is the need for sacrifice.
5. However the reality (Jesus Christ) behind the ritual (the sacrifices) was always most important.
6. There is no sacrifice for sin but Jesus Christ.