

Ebal and Gerizim

- A. Definitions.
1. Ebal = stone or bald/bare mountain.
 2. Gerizim = cut up/off, rocky.
 3. bless: To declare to be supernaturally favoured; to pronounce or make happy. To pronounce words that confer (or are held to confer) supernatural favour and well-being. To confer well-being upon; 'to make happy; to prosper, make successful.'
 4. curse: *trans.* To utter against (persons or things) words which consign, or are intended or supposed to consign, them to evil spiritual or temporal, as the wrath of God or the malignity of fate; to damn.
- B. Moses gave instructions for a special ceremony once Israel was in Canaan which set forth blessings and cursings. **DEU 11:26-32; 27:1-26.**
1. This was a one-time event as they entered into their temporal/natural inheritance.
 - a. Under Christ, believers also have a one-time ceremony that sets forth their declared commitment to faith and obedience which yields blessing and the implied condemnation that their disobedience will warrant. This is a fundamental issue of baptism/discipleship which has implications for a blessed spiritual inheritance or the loss thereof. **LUK 9:62; 14:25-35; HEB 10:38-39.**
 - b. The baptized convert is blessed with a fresh start and the promise of the Spirit to baptize him into the body of Christ He indwells and comforts. **ACT 2:38-41 c/w 1CO 12:13.**
 - c. Quenching or grieving the Spirit does not generate spiritual blessings but spiritual poverty and potential loss of kingdom inheritance. **EPH 4:30; 5:1-5.**
 - d. Mind that Israel's ceremony pertained to their entrance into a hostile inheritance but believer's baptism pertains to entrance into a friendly inheritance of like-minded faith (**2PE 1:1**). Therefore, imperiling this inheritance is especially grievous. **HEB 10:28-29.**
 - e. Gospel ministers declare both blessing and cursings to compel men to Christ. **2CO 5:10-15; GAL 1:9.**
 2. Joshua oversaw the performing of this ceremony after the defeat of Jericho where their obedience was blessed, and their sobering lesson for disobedience and presumption at Ai in which they were accursed. **JOS 6:17-20; 7:11-12 c/w 8:30-35.**
 - a. After their sin problem was cleared up, God gave them victory over Ai (**JOS 8**). Let this be a comfort in the times of our failure, shame and repentance. **HEB 4:16.**
 - b. Mind that Israel was in the midst of hostile Canaan yet in obedience to God they kept this service. God is disposed to watch over us when we are in the way of duty, but not so much when in the way of disobedience. **EXO 34:23-24; MAT 6:33-34.**
 3. It is interesting that God set up a ceremony which modeled the principle that blessing and cursing should not proceed from the same mouth. **JAM 3:8-10.**
- C. The altar was constructed of whole stones untoolled by man's hands. **DEU 27:5-6.**
1. This may hint at Christ our Altar Who sanctifies the gift of Himself. **HEB 13:10; MAT 23:19.**
 2. He was not toolled by men but fully formed by God. **LUK 1:35; JOH 3:34; COL 2:9.**
 3. The stones were over-plastered and the Law was written plainly in the plaster. **DEU 27:4, 8.**
 - a. Plaster is not as durable as the stone it covers. Thus, the Law which hid Christ while speaking of Him was a temporary institution. **GAL 3:19.**
 - b. The New Testament and its blessings are not written in stone or plaster but in the

- fleshy tables of the heart. **2CO 3:3.**
- c. If the Law was thus plainly recorded, how much more should Christ be plainly declared? **2CO 3:12; 1CO 14:9.**
 - 4. Religion that is tooled by man is religion that is polluted. **EXO 20:25 c/w MAR 7:13.**
 - D. The altar and the ceremony were near the plains of Moreh. **DEU 11:30.**
 - 1. This was one of the first places Abraham came to in Canaan. **GEN 12:6-7.**
 - 2. God picked a very conspicuous place which might remind them of the promise He made to Abraham.
 - E. The altar was built on Ebal, from which came the curses. **DEU 27:4.**
 - 1. The Law could not give life or righteousness (blessings). **GAL 3:21.**
 - 2. The Law made nothing perfect. **HEB 7:19.**
 - 3. The Law sacrifices were impotent to take away the curse. **HEB 10:4.**
 - 4. The Law was the ministration of condemnation and death. **2CO 3:7-9.**
 - 5. The ceremony itself declared the curse of impossible compliance. **DEU 27:26; GAL 3:10.**
 - F. Only the curses were expressed. **DEU 27:13-26.**
 - 1. This accords with the overall message of the Law: no matter what blessings accrue to obedience, the sinner is still a sinner under the curse. **GAL 3:10; ROM 3:19-20.**
 - 2. The honor of declared blessings was reserved for Christ Who perfectly kept the Law as a pure Man. **MAT 5:1-12, 17-18.**
 - a. In Christ, the elect are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. **EPH 1:3-6.**
 - b. In Christ, believers enjoy the blessings of fellowship with God, rest in the soul, assurance of salvation, the hope of resurrection, the peace and joy of the Holy Ghost, etc. The gift of repentance is a great blessing. **ACT 3:26; 17:30.**
 - c. What Christ represents in blessing for believers is contrarily a curse to the disobedient. **MAT 21:42-44; 2TH 1:7-10; 1PE 2:6-8.**
 - d. Compare, "...Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (**MAT 25:34**) with "...Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (**MAT 25:41**).
 - G. Only the sons of the freewomen, Rachel and Leah, declared blessings on Gerizim: Joseph, Benjamin, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar. **DEU 27:12 c/w GEN 35:22-26.**
 - 1. None of the sons of the handmaids/bondwomen (Bilhah, Zilpah) were on Gerizim.
 - 2. This accords well with the theme of justification in Galatians: that blessing pertains only to the children of the freewoman, not the children of the bondwoman. **GAL 4:28-31.**
 - 3. It was for the blessing of all the children of the promise that Christ was made a curse. **GAL 3:13-14.**