



HOPE
LOWERTOWN
ST. PAUL

THE CRY OF THE SOUL OF

Nehemiah

This Weeks Sermon

“Go to the Highways and the Byways”

Nehemiah 13:1-14

Legalism

Nehemiah 13:1-14

On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God,² because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.)³ When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

Legalism:

Legalism: Any time I do any thing that makes me think God will love me more.

Legalism: Any time I do any thing that makes me think God will love me more. Even when that thing I do is what God asked me to do.



Mark 7:5-13

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

⁶ He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“ ‘These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’^k

⁸ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

Mark 7:5-13

⁹ And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ¹⁰ For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ ⁿ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ ^o ¹¹ But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God) — ¹² then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. ¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

Purifying The Temple

Nehemiah 13:1-14

⁴ Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, ⁵ and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil prescribed for the Levites, musicians and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

Nehemiah 13:1-14

⁶ But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission ⁷ and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. ⁸ I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. ⁹ I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

Nehemiah 13:1-14

¹⁰ I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and musicians responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. ¹¹ So I rebuked the officials and asked them, “Why is the house of God neglected?” Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.

¹² All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil into the storerooms. ¹³ I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zakkur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because they were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their fellow Levites.

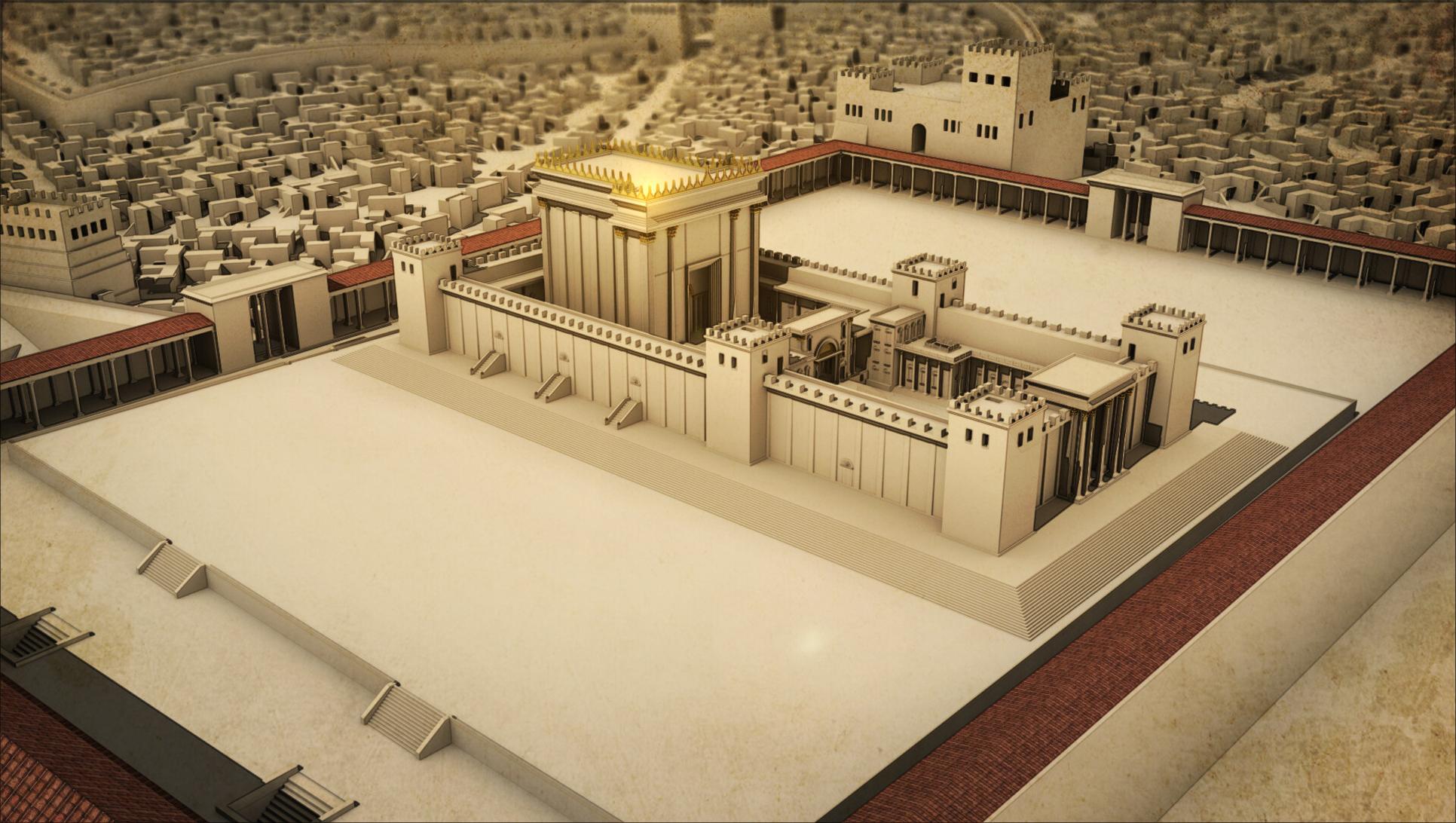
Nehemiah 13:1-14

¹⁴ Remember me for this, my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services.

Purifying The Temple 2.0

Matthew 21:12-13

¹² Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹³ “It is written,” he said to them, “ ‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’^e but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’”



Metalepsis

Isaiah 56:1-8

This is what the LORD says:

“Maintain justice
and do what is right,
for my salvation is close at hand
and my righteousness will soon be revealed.

² Blessed is the one who does this —
the person who holds it fast,
who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it,
and keeps their hands from doing any evil.”

³ Let no foreigner who is bound to the LORD say,
“The LORD will surely exclude me from his people.”

Isaiah 56:1-8

And let no eunuch complain,
“I am only a dry tree.”

⁴ For this is what the LORD says:

“To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant—

⁵ to them I will give within my temple and its walls
a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that will endure forever.

Isaiah 56:1-8

⁶ And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD
to minister to him,
to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant —
⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations.”

Isaiah 56:1-8

⁸The Sovereign LORD declares —
he who gathers the exiles of Israel:
“I will gather still others to them
besides those already gathered.”

Jeremiah 7:1-11

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² “Stand at the gate of the LORD’s house and there proclaim this message: “ ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the LORD. ³ This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. ⁴ Do not trust in deceptive words and say, “This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!” ⁵ If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, ⁶ if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, ⁷ then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and

Jeremiah 7:1-11

⁸ But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.
⁹ “ ‘Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known,¹⁰ and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, “We are safe” –safe to do all these detestable things? ¹¹ Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.

The context surrounding the passages that Jesus quotes tell us that he wasn't simply angry because there were items being sold at the temple – it was because they were inhibiting all nations from hearing who his Father was.

What does this mean to us?

What does this mean to us?
Go to the highways and byways

Luke 14:15-24

¹⁵ When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

¹⁶ Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷ At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

¹⁸ “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

¹⁹ “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

²⁰ “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

Luke 14:15-24

²¹ “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

²² “ ‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

²³ “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴ I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’ ”

What does this mean to us?
Go to the highways and byways

What are our highways? Hedges?

What obstacles are in this church, in our worship, in our teaching, in our character, etc. that diminishes what the freeing power of the gospel is to all people.

Jesus made a way for all nations to go
directly to God the Father.

Matthew 27:45-51

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

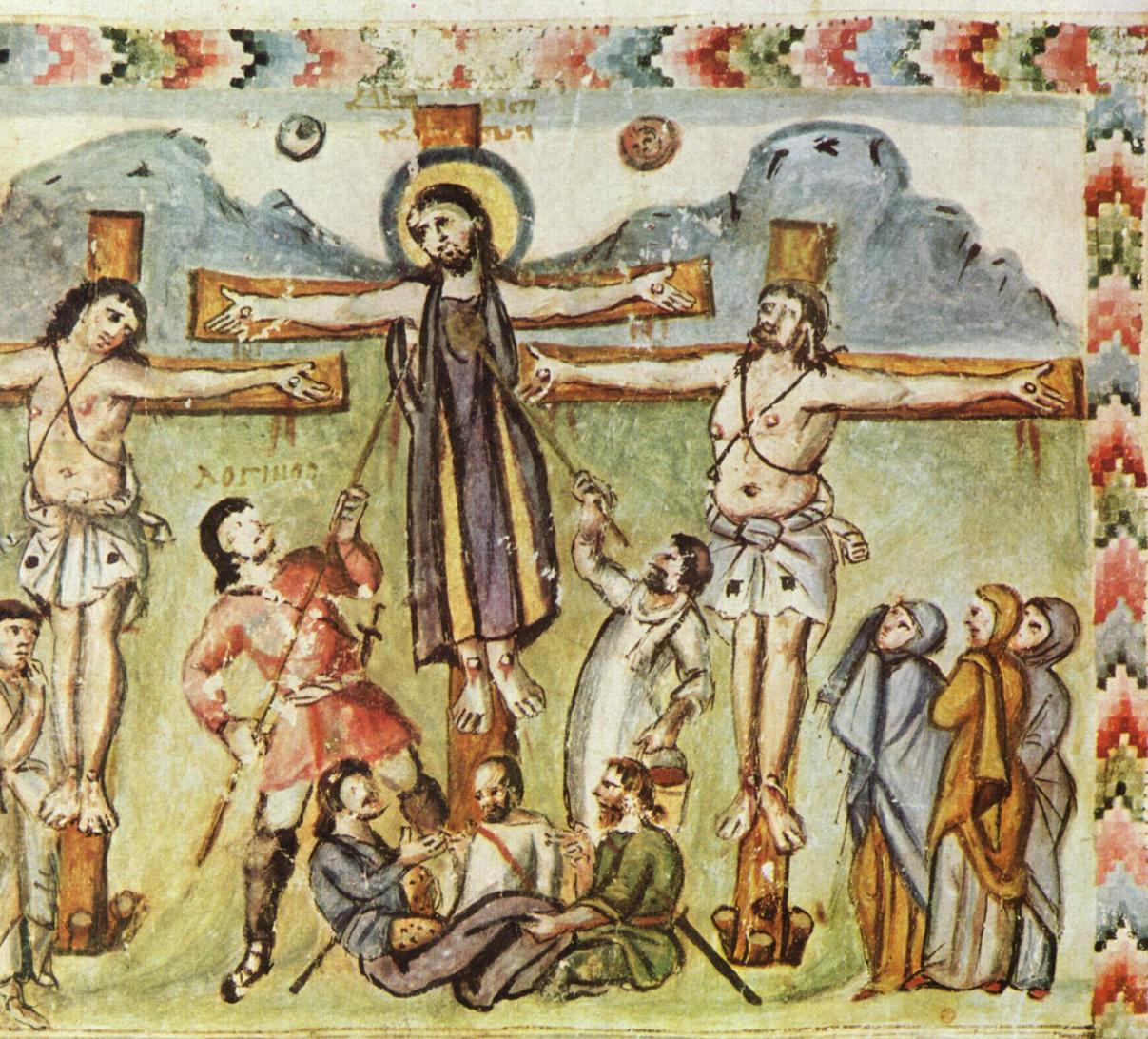
⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink.

⁴⁹ The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.





Matthew 27:45-51

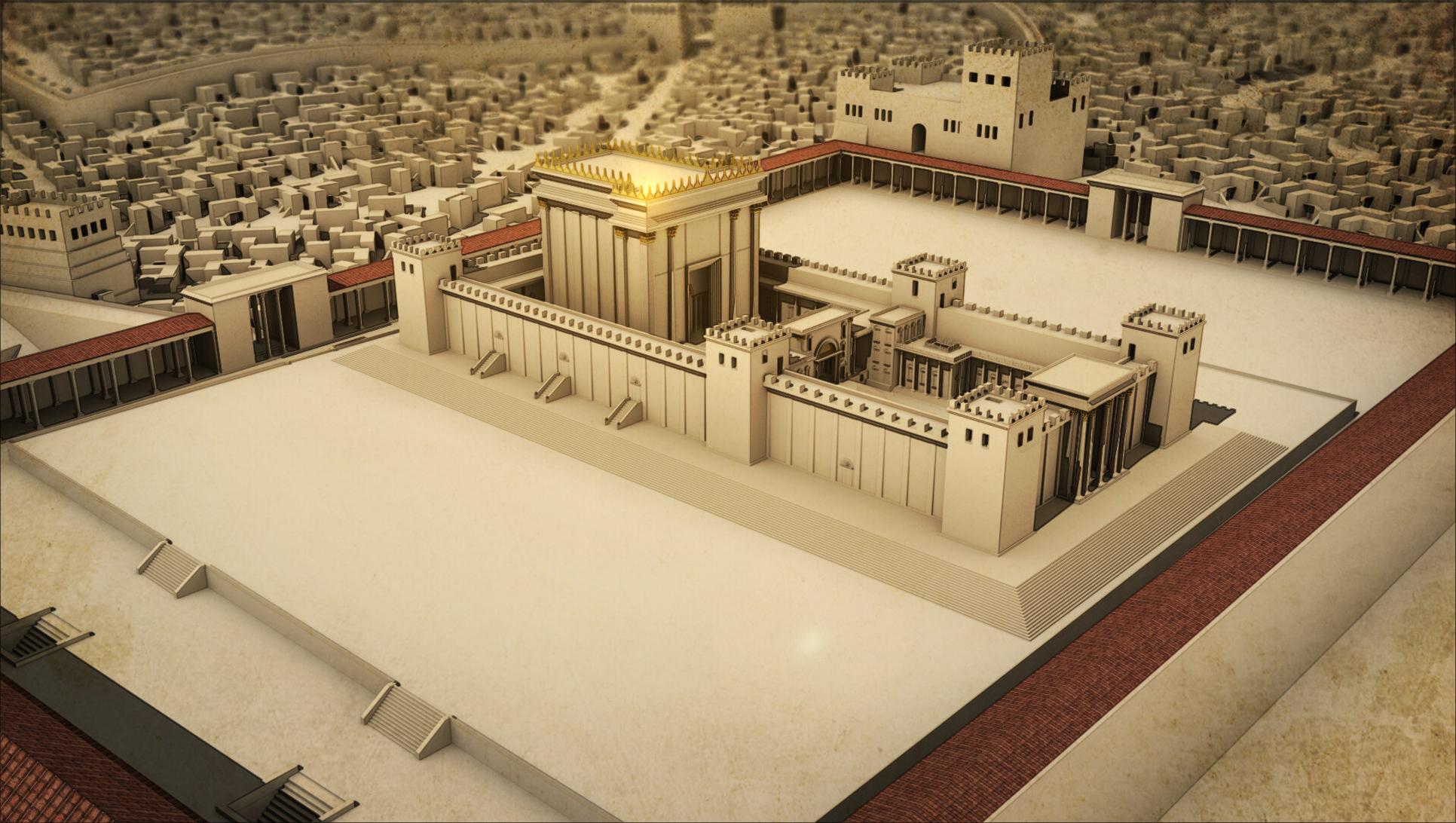
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Ephesians 2:11-18

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands) —
¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:11-18

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Gospel Application

*What extra-biblical laws are you putting on yourself?
On Others?*

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*Jesus paid the ultimate price so all nations can have
access to the father – including you.*