

should be confined to a particular family, and Aaron and his sons were to be the priests, with one of them as the high priest and the rest performing the service. That was the work of the priest. The rest of the tribe of Levi had service in connection with the sanctuary and various other types of religious service and were scattered throughout the land of Israel as God's representatives for these different types of religious service. The critics say that the early document represents the law about the time of Jehoshaphat, and that then any head of a family could offer sacrifice. They say there was then no restriction but that at the time of Josiah the book of Deuteronomy restricted the priesthood to one tribe and consequently at that time there are many references to the Levitical priests (literally, "the priests-the Levites" – a very common term in the book of Deuteronomy). Then they say that at this time the priesthood had become restricted to the tribe of Levi, and that when you come to the P document you find a new system with the priesthood restricted still further to one family, the family of Aaron. So, they say, you have a progress in the document from priesthood of anybody who was the head of a family to a priesthood restricted to one tribe and then to priesthood restricted to one family. But look at Deuteronomy 10:6,7. There you will find that the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera and there Aaron died and was buried, and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead. Here in Deuteronomy there is a recognition of the importance of Aaron and of Eleazar his son, who ministered in the priest's office in his stead. Of course, the critics could say that this is an interpolation in the book of Deuteronomy of a part of the actual P document and that its recognition of the priesthood as connected with the family of Aaron really belongs to the P document and was inserted into Deuteronomy later on so as to bring it into harmony. As you see, this whole argument is entirely an argument from silence.

In Exodus 20-24, where God tells the people what they are to do, and lays down certain general rules about sacrifice, He gives the people, as His people, the general requirements, there was no need of stressing who would do the sacrificing. There would be no particular point in it. There certainly is no statement there that any head of a family can do it!