

history, you find that it corresponds to this situation – that in the history, prior to the time of Josiah when D was written, the law of JE was followed: they sacrificed anywhere they wanted to. The sacrifice was performed by any head of a family. Then they say, at the time of Deuteronomy they began restricting sacrifice to the Levites and they said it must all be in Jerusalem, and then, from that time on, it is all in Jerusalem and performed by the Levites until the time of the exile when the P document was written, according to the critics. After that they continue having it only in Jerusalem and say that it comes to be restricted to the family of Aaron.

As far as the last two periods of this theory are concerned, there is not much historical evidence. When the small groups of people came back from exile they naturally clustered around Jerusalem and sacrifice would naturally be at Jerusalem. Even if at that time there had been sacrifice in other places round about, the little evidence Scripture gives of the full details of the history would hardly be expected to tell us about it. Also, between the time of Josiah and the time of the exile, we have comparatively little information about this. There are a few striking events described in that period, but aside from them we do not have any great amount of historical material.

The great bulk of our historical material deals with the time before Josiah, so the critics go all through this material before Josiah, of which we have a great deal, and they say that in this you often find people sacrificing at different places and not just in Jerusalem and that this shows that the law of Deuteronomy was not yet given. They also say that you will find all kinds of people performing sacrifices then and that this proves that the idea of an Aaronic priesthood, or even of a Levitical priesthood, had not yet been established – that all sorts of people did it before that time. But out of the historical material in the Bible about that long period of history before Josiah, after the time in the wilderness, out of that long stretch of material, they pick out various materials which they say show that this law was not known. As Gray and Carpenter present it, it sounds like a very strong argument. If you take their starting point, it is a strong argument.

Before looking into the historical evidence alleged by the critics to