

plaster these stones and write on them the words of this law. Then he says in Deuteronomy 27:6, “Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God. And thou shalt offer peace-offerings, and shalt eat there and rejoice before the LORD thy God and thou shalt write upon the stone all the words of this law very plainly.” Thus in chapter 27 of the book of Deuteronomy there is an explicit command for the making of an altar at Mt. Ebal, many miles from Jerusalem, and for offering peace-offerings and burnt-offerings there.

So we see that Deuteronomy does not really order this great step of doing away with altars all through the land and establishing one in Jerusalem. On the contrary, it orders the establishment of an altar, and its use for sacrifice at another place altogether! See how that fits with the history. As the history stands, God gives a regulation for the situation after the people have become established in the land and have established peace with their enemies round about. It is a rule for the normal conduct of the religious life of the land, that it is to be unified with one headquarters where the sacrifices are to be made, but right in the same book in which this command is given, there is also a specific command that this involves making sacrifice at another place immediately after they go into the land. This shows clearly that the purpose of the book of Deuteronomy was not to lay down a great vital rule of life for the people, to be followed under normal circumstances, but was subject to change under abnormal circumstances such as those of their first entrance into the land and the beginning of their conquest.

Carpenter and Gray and all the other critics say that Josiah was terribly excited because they had sacrificed in different places throughout the land, and now they had discovered a book which says sacrifice is only to be done in one place. But do you find that in the Bible? You turn to the Bible and you find that when the book was brought before him, Josiah said, “Great wrath has been upon our nation because we have neglected the laws and the ordinances and the testimonies of this Book.” Seeing the idolatry, wickedness, and sin of the people, he set out to make a change in the whole nation so that they should bow before God and should carry out the various services that he had ordered. As part of his revival he destroyed the high