

JE and contradicted the whole idea of Deuteronomy, and he put it here in the middle of this chapter. In other words you have to resort to all kinds of twists to try to give any reasonable explanation for how it could come about that this command would sharply contradict what the critics say is the main purpose of Deuteronomy, that it would be included here in the book of Deuteronomy in a section whose whole viewpoint and attitude is utterly typical of the Deuteronomic style.

There is no reasonable explanation of it from the critical viewpoint, but it fits right in with the natural interpretation of the Pentateuch as it stands: that the major law is given in the Book of the Covenant in Exodus 20:23, that at that time they are to sacrifice where the Lord records His name and there He will bless them, and that it is important that they make their altars the way that He describes them. Then, when they approach the land of Palestine, they are told that after they are in the land and the Lord has given them peace from their enemies, they are not to sacrifice in various places but are to bring their sacrifices to the place that the Lord will select. It is a matter of good order, so that during the long periods of peace when they are apt to drift into indifference, the direction of the religious life may be unified. This is not part of the moral law, about a definite matter of tremendous importance to be observed at all times, but it is an arrangement for the conduct of the nation during the period of peace and ordinary life.

The critics say that the law here in Deuteronomy was not even known until the time of Josiah. They say that before that we find people sacrificing all over. They say that the people are sacrificing at all kinds of places, and that all kinds of people are sacrificing, and therefore that the law of Deuteronomy was not yet even known.

As to the idea that only Levites should sacrifice, they say that if you go through all the historical accounts from the beginning of Joshua to the time of Josiah, you find that everywhere Levites are mentioned, that the mention of Levites was inserted at a later time – at the time of the P document. If you take out the references to the Levites, then you will find that there will be left no case prior to the exile when the sacrifice was done by Levites! They say sacrifice was done by just