

itself, you see that it is God's command to the people that they sacrifice and that the important thing is their relationship to God. The sacrifice is evidence of their relationship to God and under normal conditions it is to be centralized in one place, but to give up the sacrifice altogether for lack of proper place to have it, is like a person saying, "I will not read my Bible because there is no sound church in this community!" Certainly a person should be a member of a sound church, but a person should never give up reading his Bible because no church in his community is sound. We must not be ridiculous. The Lord wants us to have our relationship to Him. He wants us to have it under the proper conditions and regulations if that can be done, but if circumstances prevent it, that is no reason to do away with the major things of the law. When they were under Philistine subjection and it was impossible to have a unified system, Samuel went about and had his sacrifices in different places in the land. He made a circuit. Then the people from the area would come to one place and express their faith in God there and have their sacrifice. Then Samuel would go on to the next place. Under the circumstances it was a reasonable way to do it, since the temple at Shiloh had been destroyed and they were subject to the Philistines for a good many years. In this situation it was not possible to try to have one place of sacrifice; they must either do away with sacrifice, or do the sensible thing and have them in places that were convenient for the people, with Samuel going about from one place to another. Thus the people might not readily and quickly get back to the realization of the one proper place.

Instead of rebuking Solomon and saying he should not sacrifice at Gibeon, which is a high place, but only in the designated place, the Lord appeared to him at night and said, "What shall I give you? What do you want?" It was Solomon's desire to serve the Lord. When he asked for wisdom, the Lord was pleased. This was immediately after he sacrificed at the great high place at Gibeon! So Solomon was not disobeying God then. Solomon was carrying on the custom which had become established during the previous time of upheaval, and they had not yet re-established the system they had before.

Solomon established the temple at Jerusalem, and it became the center. Now the critics say that the law of the place of sacrifice and