

anybody. All references to the Levites up to the time of Deuteronomy are said to be late insertions. But look at the history as it stands, and you will find that there is a section in the book of Joshua which tells us that when the people in Joshua's time got the idea that this command of Deuteronomy 12 was going to be disregarded by a section of the people, they almost had a great war about it. That is contained in Joshua. It is an element of the history which fits very closely with the idea that the Pentateuch was written when it says it was, rather than that this idea did not come into existence until the time of Josiah. In Joshua 22, you find that after most of the conquest had been completed, Joshua called the people whose inheritance was in Trans-Jordan. You remember that they had left their families in Trans-Jordan, where they had established their homes. Moses had said to these two and one-half tribes, "If we give you land in Trans-Jordan, you must go over and help conquer the rest of Canaan," and they agreed to do it. Now in Joshua 22, when the great conquest was finished, Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh and told them that they were now free to go back across the Jordan to their homes. He ordered them to take diligent heed to follow the commandments of the Lord, and he blessed them and they went away. Then after they had gone, word soon came back that they were building a great altar by the Jordan at the place where the children of Israel had crossed. Then in verse 12 we read that when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together to go up to war against them. The children of Israel said to the children of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, "What is this, that you are building an altar over there? This is contrary to God's will. You are rebelling against God. You will bring great misery upon the whole nation by doing such a thing. We cannot permit it." Then the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh answered and said, "We want to follow the LORD. If we have built an altar in order to make burnt-offerings and meat offerings, let the LORD himself punish us for it. We have no such idea in mind. We will build a large altar over here as a monument to show our unity with the people and to remind us of what the LORD has done so that when our people see it in years to come it will remind them of their relation to God, and of the fact that to perform sacrifice they must go over to the place God has established." In verse 29 they say, "God forbid that we should