

the people. He did this instead of trying to get them to come together in one central place, as would be the normal procedure. Under those circumstances the normal procedure could not be carried out. In a time of war and oppression, the vital thing was not, “You are to sacrifice at this place.” The important thing was, “You are to remember God and do the things He wants and when you have peace over your enemies and a normal condition of life, then the religion is to be centralized in one place in order to have a unified religious life of the land.” It is likely that later the Jews misunderstood the law, as they misunderstood many things, and so came to feel that sacrifice must always be at Jerusalem. So in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were scattered throughout the world, they quit sacrificing and so left out a tremendous part of the Lord’s commands and of their law that they read through in their synagogues. This is the great center of their lives – especially the five books of Moses. And yet, think how much of the five books of Moses consists of precise detail about sacrifice, and they do not do it at all, because the temple at Jerusalem has been destroyed! It was not God’s plan that they should not sacrifice unless they had the temple. There is no such law. It is set down as the orderly procedure that when they are established in the land and God has given peace over their enemies around them, then the religious life is to be centralized and the sacrifice is to be in one place. It was Shiloh originally, and then later moved to Jerusalem.

Joshua 8:30 says, “Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in Mt. Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel as it is written in the book of the law of Moses – all of whole stones over which no man hath laid any iron and offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings, and he wrote upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.” And it goes on to tell how they read the curses and the blessings – that is the command that is given in Deuteronomy – to read the curses and the blessings upon Mt. Ebal. We are told in Joshua how it was carried out. Of course the critics say that this is not a part of the original JE book, but of a later edition by a Deuteronomic editor. It includes the building of an altar and the offering of peace offerings and burnt offerings on that altar, which is contrary to what they claim is the basic purpose of the