

tribes. They are given this command, but in verse 21 it says, “If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put His name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock which the LORD hath given thee and I have commanded thee and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.” That is to say, they were to make their sacrifices at the place established, but they did not have to bring all their cattle there to sacrifice. They brought there what they would sacrifice. Normally, if you lived near it, you would bring all your cattle there and you would kill them sacrificially. The priest might get a small section of it, but most of it, which was a sacrifice, you could bring home. But if you are too far away, you do not have to bring it all in there and carry it all back again; you can kill it at the place where you like, but he continues in verse 23, “only be sure that thou eat not the blood.” In verse 21, “if the place is too far then thou shalt kill of thy herd and thy flock as I have commanded thee and eat it in thy gates.” The word there translated “kill” is this word, used this way right in this chapter – the chapter that has the command about the one place of sacrifice. The word is used for killing meat, apart from sacrifice; that shows that the word *zabach* does not necessarily mean “sacrifice,” it means “to kill” an animal, and ordinarily the killing is done for sacrifice, but not necessarily. It may be killing in accordance with the proper ritual, which is to let the blood out and not eat of the blood.

One of the instances which the critics make much of concerns Saul. You remember that he was in battle and they had had a great victory and they were all terribly hungry and tired and the people began killing animals and just eating them and Saul stopped it. He had them put a stone there, and when they killed the animals they put the neck over the stone and let the blood drain out and they say that he sacrificed there. He sacrificed there, out in the place where they were having battle. There is not a problem in this connection, because the word *zabach* does not have to mean “sacrifice” and there is nothing whatever said in the context about it being a sacrifice. They were wanting food and the thing was that he told them to follow this command here in Deuteronomy 12:21 and not to simply kill the animal but to kill it the way God had ordered, which was to let the blood drain out so that they did not eat it with the blood. That was contrary to the Mosaic