

Prophets -17-

mighty and strong, in v. 15 and in v. 16. What is v. 17? Seventeen and 18 surely are deliverance, but deliverance not in the specific sense we've been having but a very general statement of deliverance. God does give great deliverance in a general sense, showing the character of God and the deliverance He gives. Seventeen and 18, He opens up rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys, and v. 19, He plants in the wilderness these trees-- He is providing help, providing shade for the people on their long march across the desert from Babylon, shade and protection for them. And then v. 20. What is v. 20. Twenty is sorrow. The reason he is doing all this is in order that they may know and see that God exists and is powerful, that it is the God of Israel who has done this. So--Mr.---? (Student) Yes, it could very possibly be, but in the general line of the context it seems to me somewhat more probable that it is speaking of the return from exile. Somewhat more probable but not certain. The other is a possibility to be considered also but it might be a specific prediction of a future time. It's a possibility--I think the less likely possibility--but hardly to be ruled out as a possibility. Settlement to come from comparison with other passages. Now there is a point that I would like to make here that I think is rather vital. In chapter 40 we were dealing with God's comfort for the people, with God's deliverance, with God's superiority to the idols, with the knowledge that God has of the future, with the help that God gives to His own. Is there any difference, do you think, between 40 and 41? I think there is a striking difference, that 41 begins with a specific event. Forty-one has "the righteous man from the east", who comes and the people fear before him. It is a specific event described, a specific event which in the light of future passages seems quite certainly to refer to the coming of Cyrus and the danger which he makes to all the civilized nations in his day. Whether you accept that conclusion regarding that immediately--I think one would inevitably when they get on a bit further and in fact when they finally find Cyrus even named by name, but at this point you are not assured who it is but there is definite evidence that it is a specific individual doing this specific thing. That is, unless you are one