

Prophets -23-

I describe what he is doing and talk about him and say, "He is doing this, you've done this; he is doing this," to switch to the second and back to the third seems very, very strange. It seems much more natural when he turns ^{he} to second, to think he is looking back to a people who ~~has~~ been previously addressing as second, wouldn't it? Think that through for tomorrow and see which seems to you the more likely interpretation of it.

Prophets -2- Second part.

We have now reached what is perhaps the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament. At least there is no passage in the Old Testament which deals more directly with the very center of Christianity than this passage to which we have now come. It is a passage which simply taken by itself out of context as something given by the prophet is very difficult to interpret. Just what does it mean from that viewpoint? Well, of course, you answer immediately, you should never interpret anything by itself out of context. You have to have context for proper understanding of anything anywhere that you want to interpret. You must not read into it from the context. See what it says in itself but to understand it fully you will almost certainly be helped by context if there is a context, as there is in this. This is a section in the midst of this book and we have been looking at the background in order to be ready to understand the section. The critics have great difficulty interpreting this passage. Some say that Isaiah is describing his own sufferings, but comparatively few say that. Some say that the second Isaiah is describing the sufferings of his contemporary, Jeremiah, in Palestine. The tendency among Jewish expositors is to say this is a description of Israel which we have here, and it is rather hard to find a satisfactory explanation, from that viewpoint. There is no really satisfactory explanation of it except in the light of the context, and in the light of the context it gives the answer to the problems that have been raised before. It reaches a high point