

Survey of Isa. 7-12, 28-35

June 15, 1972

principal ways in which the prophets would deal with the people of their own day. Perhaps two-thirds of the material in the prophetic books might be called rebuke. The sin of people is pointed out. They are urged to turn away from their sin and to turn to God. The details of the sin are stressed, explained. The == God's dis- pleasure with them driven home. People are urged to forsake them. This rebuke was of tremendous importance to people then, and it also has a meaning for us == every bit of it, but it does not interest us as much nearly as much as some of the other sections.

Now the other point here == encouragement == includes a great part of the pro- phetic writings which seems to us more interesting, more important. It's immediate purpose in being given was not simply to satisfy curiosity. Not simply to say to the people, I'm going to give you a map of what's going to happen in the future. I'm going to write a history of what is going to happen. I'm going to satisfy your curiosity about certain details of God's dealings with the people. It was to encourage people who tend to become disheartened and discouraged in the face of the misery and the difficulties. So very generally in the prophetic books, rebuke comes first, encouragement afterwards. It is comparatively seldom that it starts == a section starts with encouragement. You find this particularly in the Bk. of Jer? where you find this in its simplest form. God will rebuke the people strongly for their sin and show them how God is going to send them into exile, God is going to punish them for their turning away from Him, and then it is as if the prophet looked at the people and saw among them those who were hardened in heart and were going on their own way and deserved these rebukes, to see among them here and there the many who truly loved the Lord and desired to follow Him. And this group of the Godly Jeremiah? sees, realizing that they are a part of the nation, realizing that they deserve punishment for the sin of the nation, that they are implicated in it, but they love the Lord, they want to follow Him, and he turns then and encourages them. The punishment is coming, yes, But God had great purposes of hope and blessing for you. God is going to bless His own. He is always going to have a remnant. He is going to accomplish tremendous