

caution to all of us that we are careful not to let our emotional reactions deprive us of some truth from the Word of God.

2. Language: More likely to be a problem in the prophetic literature than elsewhere, it is one of the features for which background help is most needed. Knowing how language is used in the prophecy is of critical importance. This and the following item need to be treated together but when I put them together they always come out confused...so if one is going to be confused it is just as well to be confused by one thing at a time as well as by two together! Language is expressed in the following modes (generally):
 - a. Literal: the entities used accurately describe the items mentioned or discussed. (Wow!)
--note that literal language is not letteristic, makes full use of speech figures (accurately) and is the way most of us talk most of the time.
 - b. Figurative: (or allegorical): the entities used portray something of secondary meaning beyond what is expressed. This is sometimes called "spiritualizing" but the term is not really apt.
--note that allegorical language presents the hidden potential of being easily misunderstood unless a key is supplied by the original spokesperson.
 - c. Typical: the entity used prefigures another and predicts (to some degree) its occurrence.
--you will see something of this in 1 Corinthians 10 and in John 3. It is an attractive area of Bible study although it has the capacity for being taken to great extremes.
 - d. Technical: the entity used is given a special meaning which it always has when used in such a capacity.
-- technical language is usually quickly distinguished...
"the arm of the Lord", for example.

It is very possible that one prophecy or one prophetic passage may make use of all of these...or perhaps just one. Each passage must be studied carefully for itself bearing all these things in mind. The principle I suggest is that the normal approach is the literal one unless the context, related passages, or some contradictory ideals make one of the others necessary...or if the passage plainly makes another form of language obvious by direct statement.

3. Character of account: Important indeed! Is the account a sketch of history, an allegory, an analysis of an existing situation? Is it the response to a question? Is it the breaking in of something newly being revealed. In 1 Kings 18:15 and following you will see an account where the prophesy seems literal but where the understanding of the nature of the account makes it obvious it is not. The nature of the account is part of the context and we will treat this in a later setting at some length.