

The prophetic messages are characterized by a very full rhetoric. This necessitates the strong use of speech figures of a full sort. The whole gamut of figurative language is run...figurative in the sense of the use of figurative to convey exact meanings, not figurative in the sense of having a secondary meaning. The prophets use allegory at times also but their keenest thrust is to portray things in a literal fashion with strong figures of speech enhancing and enriching the message. Inability to recognize these figures may lead one to some pretty absurd conclusions in interpretation.

(3) The material is most often arranged in purpose of theme rather than in chronological or historical patterns.

The prophetic literature is not written so much in the "diary" fashion as in the scope of a didactic message. So less time is given to chronology and historical sequence. Ezekiel, however, is very chronological but that is the exception. Most of the other books are not. The arrangement of material must be seen in the light of the theme of the book and that makes it a bit complicated if one tries to master the exact historical sequence of all the patterns of thought.

(4) Much of the prophetic material is built around critique of culture.

This is a critique, of course, from spiritual grounds...often the failure of the people to follow the law in their pursuits. (A great book on this subject is Amos). But it means that as much of the culture as possible must be known to the Bible student if he is to see the fuller meaning of the critique. In this line we always note that the prophets speak more to their own times, in terms of direct discourse, than to later times. Their message becomes instructive for later times, however, when viewed in its historical perspective.

(5) Much of the prophetic material shows direct dependence on the law.

Critics do not see it this way but that is only due to the fact that they eliminate legal references as part of their original working hypothesis. Having set it aside as in the area of later additions, etc., they naturally do not find