

is,) after the pattern of mythological usage.

(5) "Burden" ...is a term often used for a particular type of prophecy...especially a word of judgment or the announcement of some impending doom.

## 2. Special Problems in the Study of the Prophetic Books

(We assume that the student will understand the earlier problems of history, culture, context, etc., are also problems in the prophetic section and we will not repeat these at this time.)

### a. Language

A lot of confusion exists about the understanding of prophetic language and I am not sure we can end it or illuminate it very much at this point. But our thought has consistently been that there is but one hermeneutic for Bible interpretation and we call that the literal hermeneutic. It says:

Words should be taken at their normal and literal meaning unless absurdity, contradiction, or plain statement indicates otherwise.

By absurdity we do not mean something we cannot understand but rather something that introduces a calculated impossibility into the text...like the trees of the forest talking. By contradiction we mean an idea that obviously disagrees with other parts of the Biblical narrative and by a plain statement we mean some note in the immediate context that the passage should be taken otherwise. Essentially there are four ways in which language may be understood...

#### (1) Literal.-.as above...but note:

(a) The idea is that the term used actually describes the entity suggested.

(b) It is not to be confused with letterism in which the term used is the entity suggested.

(c) literal language does not prevent the occurrence of speech figures...they are part of its normality but they are consistent as given (a man who is as "strong as an ox" is not a speech figure for one who cannot help oneself.)