

3 UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH

tempted to give way to despair as they hear of coming punishment for sin, and seeking to comfort true believers by assuring them of God's continual presence and by showing them wonderful pictures of the glorious future blessings that He plans to give. Some of these pictures are rather brief, but some are quite extensive. Recognition of this rather frequent alternation is often helpful in interpreting specific passages.

Translations

This book is based on the readings of the "King James Version." This version, which was prepared at the command of King James I of England and first published in AD 1611, is one of the best translations of the Bible ever made. Yet its present value for general use is very greatly limited, as the English language has changed greatly since the time when it was written, both as to meanings of words and as to grammatical forms and usages. From time to time reference will be made to a version that was published in 1901, which is sometimes called the "Revised Version," sometimes the "American Revised Version" and sometimes the "American Standard Version." For many years the American Standard Version was widely used, particularly by Bible teachers in the United States. Since 1952, when a committee issued the "Revised Standard Version" and tried to get it accepted as a new King James Version, the King James Version has generally been referred to in the United States as the King James Version (or the K.J.V.), though it is still called the King James Version in England. In this discussion we shall follow the text of the K.J.V. but wherever its meaning is not clear to present-day readers explanations will be given, and some references will be made to readings in the American Standard Version.

General Structure and Background

Even a casual reader of the Old Testament is immediately conscious of a great change in literary style when he reaches the book of Isaiah. It is almost like going from Mexico into the United States. A similar difference is found when one gets to the end of Isaiah and begins to read Jeremiah.