

## Prophets 19

start you with this." He isn't anywhere near ready to start with that until he has gotten a great many other principles of physics and has gone from the simple to the less simple and from one point to another and worked down until he gets into the more complicated things, and that is, I think, one great error in a great deal of prophetic study. People take a very difficult problem in the prophets and then they jump into it and try to solve it immediately without first going through the stages of solving easy problems in the prophetic books, and this, then, is a problem, what part is historical and what predictive in which in this particular instance we are not equipped at first sight to give the answer to it, because we find the answer Matthew gives is different from the one which we would give, but it certainly is no argument for doing as some do, throwing up their hands and saying, "Oh, let's spiritualize the whole thing and see what the New Testament says and just say, 'That's what the Old Testament means.' " Why bother with having an Old Testament if it is that way. God gave us the Old Testament as an authoritative source of knowledge but it often takes study and effort to learn how to interpret it correctly and you can't expect to interpret its difficult sections before we have learned the principles that come out as we study its more simple sections.

Now a third problem on which I wish you to do considerable thinking during the course of this year is this. What part is primarily for their contemporaries and what part primarily for future generations? You notice I put in the word "primarily". The reason I put that in is not to say that everything a prophet spoke was meant for future generations at all, because I believe God often sent prophets in ancient times who gave a revelation which had immediate tremendous importance for the immediate situation and was of no particular interest to future generations but in such cases I don't think he caused them to be written down and preserved for us. There wouldn't be much point to that. I believe the very fact that God caused that a prediction or a statement of a prophet should be written down in a book that was inspired of the Holy Spirit for future generations is proof that that statement has a real meaning for future generations. It is of