

God led the people of God to a unanimity as to which were the true books written by the true prophets, the books that God had inspired. So we find he tells here about these false prophets who were opposing him, and 2:11 says, "If a liar and deceiver comes and says, I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer, he would be just the prophet for this people." Thus he denounces these prophets, and right between vv.11 and 12 you have a sharp change.

"I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel." You cannot combine vv. 11 and 12 together in one paragraph. There is a sharp change. But before that he has been discussing the sin of the people. He has been declaring the punishment God is going to give and then he suddenly in the rest of the ch, describes how God is going to gather the people, going to bring back the remnant of Israel, going to increase their number and one "who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through the gate and go out. Their king will pass through before them, the Lord at their head."

It was another 150 years before the people of Judah were taken into exile. Micah has predicted the exile, but here he looks beyond the exile another 70 years to see how God is going to gather them and how they are going to break out and return with the Lord at their head. It is a prediction of their return from the exile. It is written in such terms that it can be taken as a figurative expression of how God will deliver us from the prison house of sin, of how Jesus Christ is our king at our head who breaks the way open and leads us out. But specifically what it is talking about is deliverance from the exile.

Then the second main division of the book starts with ch. 3 and again we have the sin described. "Listen you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel." In the time we have I don't be able to look much at these passages describing their sin but I would like to urge you to read them carefully and think about them. Because they all have analogies to the sins of our day. Not only to the sins we see about us in the paper, but the sins that are so easy for us to fall into. So God preserves the passages dealing with sin and the punishment for sin, not merely that we could know about people in ancient times but that we could be blessed in our souls by being protected from them and warned of them.

I wish we had time to look at them in detail but we want to in the time we have look more particularly at the discussions of the wonderful predictions of the future--predictions of blessing. This prediction in ch. 3 begins with a discussion of sin, and then goes on to the punishment God is going to give. The punishment in this case is found simply in one verse: "Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets." You notice it is like the prediction about Samaria. He mentions three different names--Zion, Jerusalem, and the temple hill. The city of Jerusalem and the visions of it--that v. 12 in ch. 3. Notice how ch. 4 just fits with that. "In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it." The KJV says "people will flow to it." Now if it's raised up above the hills how will people flow to it? You flow downhill instead of uphill!