

CHAPTER 1 *Preface to  
The 16 Writing  
Prophets*

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There is no substitute for the reading of the Writing Prophets themselves even as there is no substitute for the actual reading of the NT {New Testament} and the whole Bible. Like one Bible teacher said many years ago, "Read your Bibles, they will throw a lot of light

on the commentaries." Then again with something as difficult as the Writing Prophets, especially in order to ascertain the relevance for today, some guidance is helpful based on hours with those Writing Prophets. When Philip the evangelists' caught the Ethiopian reading from the queen of the Writing Prophets, Isaiah, Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The Ethiopian replied, "How can I except some man should guide me?" Thus each reader of the Writing Prophets or of a commentary such as this on the Writing Prophets needs to have some nudge like for the Ethiopian in the direction of Christ and other things most clearly known in the NT to help with the OT {Old Testament}. Often you will find in the pages of this commentary the statement "What God considers most important in the OT in order to quote in the NT"; and that is the real "study guide", that and the ASI for Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation. While this is a day of "itching ears" Bible teachers with either "private" interpretations of the Bible, out of the total context of the Bible; or even more popular Bible teachers and preachers who claim for themselves extra-biblical interpretations. {You know what I mean, those who say "The Lord told me" or "God gave me a word", as if, like Apostle Paul wrote in Corinthians, either "the Word came out of them or came to them only."} Yet Peter wrote in II Peter 1:20, and that Word of God still stands like a prophecy against any man or

woman who would claim to have a private interpretation that glories themselves and makes a profit, "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation". God Authorized a more public interpretation consistent with all the Apostles and Prophets; and it would be the API if it were not for the fact that academic scholarship or credentials or even popularity is not sufficient for the understanding and teaching of the Bible, hence the ASI for Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation. Perhaps the biggest mess ever made with the Bible of the OT among any society was by the religious leaders of Judaism during the life of Christ; and while we will not repeat here the labels Christ had for these scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and priests of His day, you will recall that they were blind, they could not understand, and they had come to substitute the teachings of men for the commandments of God. Well, that is happening again today as we see an unbelievable number of men and women who teach the Bible for profit; and we appreciate some of the extent today of the popular "heaping up of teachers with itching ears" of II Timothy 4:3,4, which matches if is not greater than the present intolerance among church members and denominations of sound doctrine.

### **1-1: God's Efforts to Collect a People for His Name.**

The history of the OT, indeed of OT and NT times, is a struggle on the part of God to get a people for His name that will keep His covenants. Since like the Apostle James said at the Great Jerusalem Conference, "known unto God are all His works from the beginning", God knew that it would be a struggle from the 80 years in the wilderness to cull a real people from Israel through the periods of judges, the united kingdom, the divided kingdoms, captivity, restoration, the time of Christ, the termination of the Jews for new people in the kingdom three and one-half years after the crucifixion, the increase in number of Gentiles as His people, all the way to the Fullness of the Gentiles with the spreading of the Gospel to every nation, and then the Falling Away of the Gentiles except for a remnant, much like what happened to two-thirds of the Jews during Daniel's period of the probational covenant. God expected all this; no doubt, He has a certain number of people in mind for His eternal kingdom, and perhaps one reason that the Second Coming has been extended so long is because God has determined that certain number. Even as He designated early in history and in Genesis that man would populate the whole earth, so He needs a certain number of kingdom members to repopulate the new earth. In short, all of the rebellion against God's covenants was expected by God, planned on by God, and God knew that it would take thousands of years to repopulate His kingdom while taking only a small remnant out of each generation that claimed some association with God.

### **1-2: 19 Writing Prophets.**

The impression that this is only the 16 Writing Prophets is somewhat of a simplification in that there is an introductory chapter on Psalms also, from the Prophet David, with a little of the Prophet Solomon from Proverbs, and even a little

from the Prophet Job as dictated by the Magic Outline of the Bible under 12 topics as used in all five volumes of the . However, we no way can such a chapter do justice to the extent of the messages in this Bible literature of Wisdom and Praise. In short, the bulk of this volume is on the 16 Writing Prophets, the 4 so called major prophets because of the size of their books--Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and the 12 minor prophets. Actually, to be more precise, this is on 19 Writing Prophets, the 16 major and minor with Moses, David, and Job.

### **1-3: The Message of the Writing Prophets.**

The message of the Writing Prophets, if we can consider that they have one most prominent and consistent message throughout all 16 books, as you will find discussed in the next chapter, goes something like this: "God's people are not acting like God's people; a more immediate disaster or disasters is here or on the way for punishment unless they repent as a nation, called a day of the LORD and Lord; and the ultimate and final day of the LORD and Lord is pending fulfillment with an eternal punishment for the unbelievers {this included God's people that cultivate "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God} and eternal reward for believers whose names are written in the book of life, the final disaster at the end of the Age after the Second Coming of Christ. Now all of this message is not in the 16 Writing Prophets per se; but the kernel is with slight explanations and further revelations to be given in the New Testament. As we study the message in these Prophets, having in this century as in the past two hundred centuries a complete Bible of 66 books, we reserve the right to use all of the Bible truth on each book.

There are two corollary messages to this "The Message" that we would seek to make clear from the writings of these 16 Prophets: (1) that God is in control of history, that God makes history on the daily and routine level as well as at the level of nations and the world, that God knows all His works of history from the beginning to the end, works on individuals and works on nations, and that God is actively and always involved in the making of history to the extent that the contemporary hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes with incidents also like 911 are under His immediate control {we will need to discuss how God has much of the natural and beyond world under automatic control, but always with the option of immediate intervention which He quite often exercises}; and (2) that the 16 Writing Prophets were writing words of God, and of Scripture, quite often they simply recorded words of direct dictation from God.