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## Preface: Prophets and Apostles

The methods and goals of volume 1 of the LEARN CHRIST commentaries are straightforward, although ambitious: (1) to present the total and complete Bible story, both Old and New Testament, as a unity from the mind and heart of God, and under 12 simple messages sequenced by the Old Testament and from *Genesis* to *Malachi*; (2) within those 12 messages of 12 chapters, to allow the easier-to-understand and most complete interpretations from the Apostles in the New Testament books to explain the Old Testament books and subjects; (3) to LEARN CHRIST as explained by the Apostles and Prophets and according to the ASI {Authorized Semipublic Interpretation} which comes from the Bible demand itself that "no Scripture is of any private interpretation"; and (4) in the spirit and doctrine of II Corinthians 15 where the reigning Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father, to give God the glory in order that the Father may be all in all. However, volume 1, "The Prophets and Apostles" is written in the format of 12 simple subject-based messages simultaneously from the Old and New Testaments, most generally with four simple subject headings, so that if you fail to understand, or even chose to overlook, the awesome manner in which God wrote the Bible, you will still get 12 simple sermons. Albeit they are not simple sermons as you might expect of the generally know categories of textual, topical, or expository; but rather a combination of all three at once based on the very structure of the Bible as God dictated it over thousands of years. We have yet to appreciate the full implications of what the Apostle James meant when in Acts he spoke of how "known unto God from the beginning are all His works". And how God, the Great Maker of History, has in many ways continued since His initial Creation, through Christ and with the effecting power of the Holy Spirit, controlled and guided history especially has guided the writing of this glorious book of 66 books that we call the Bible. I love it; and I love the truth in it,

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especially the God and Christ in it: and I pray that some of that love of the Word will be imparted to you. Nothing will be held back of the best and brightest of New Testament interpretation as we come to Old Testament books as sequenced by the 12 chapter subjects. The whole story has been recorded, and the whole story will be presented. Perhaps few of Israel understood Daniel when it was written, nor perhaps did Daniel himself; but we will allow Jesus to explain Daniel as recorded in Mark 12 and Matthew 24. I am sure very few in Israel understood Paul's inspired insights on Jews and Gentiles as recorded in the book of Romans, in particular the answer to the interesting question "What Profit is it to be a Jew?";

but since we who have "eyes to see and ears to hear" can now understand the answers, then those become a part of the related subjects as we look at them in the twelve chapter-messages. Preach the 12 chapters as 12 sermons if you wish, but I guarantee you that you will not be able to cover all the Scriptures in one short sermon that are presented in each chapter.

### The Prophet Messiah

As we look at these 12 messages together under the title of "Prophets and Apostles, and in support of the commentary theme of LEARN CHRIST from the Apostles and Prophets, you should recall of how the Bible is a story about the Lord Jesus Christ, especially if you keep in mind that at the end Christ will deliver the kingdom to God the Father; and that while we are considering the Prophets of the Old Testament, the last of which is considered to be John the Baptist, that Jesus was and is "The Prophet Messiah". You will find that the Prophet Moses promised to Israel and recorded in his first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, of how God would send another Prophet like him. How that the people must listen to Him, and furthermore that all who would not listen to Him would be cut off. Someone tells the story of a certain large Bible so designed that when you stood back to look at any page, you would see outlined around the text an image of Christ. So it is with the story or message of the Bible. Christ is the Bible, and the Bible is Christ. How appropriately the Apostle John first received in Revelation the proper word of "Word" to represent the Lord Jesus Christ, then later in the writing of the Gospel of John started the story of the Life of Jesus with the "Word made flesh" as a proper label for Jesus. The word "Word" for Jesus and the word "Word" for the Word of God are more closely related than we will ever know this side of eternity. **(Karl Barth has made a contribution here in his book on the Word.)** Each of us must interpret Christ for our own generation. The accuracy of that interpretation can be measured in terms of our faithfulness to the Bible as the Word of God. There are many official and un-official interpretations of Christ even as there are many man-made religious organizations which claim to properly interpret Christ for our times. Rather than sling mud about which ones and how many of them are really part of the body of the Christ of the Bible, and incidentally of the presently living Christ who is the only head of the real body of Christ...that is, I say, rather than trying to separate who is and who is not a member of the real body of Christ, the more positive approach is to get back to the Bible with good Bible-based principles of hermeneutics, or Bible interpretation, setting forth the real Christ of the Bible and what it is to Learn the Christ of the Bible. If forced to select two verses from the Bible to represent a single focus for THE LEARN CHRIST COMMENTARY, it would have to be Ephesians 4:20,21.

**"But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus..." (Ephesians 4:20,21 NJKV)**

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Let us face up to realities: Even as some church members in the church at Ephesus, the church where the Apostle Paul had labored the longest, had not really heard Christ and had no really been taught by Christ, even so many more in American religious organizations, having lesser leaders than Paul and Christ, have not heard Christ and have not been taught by Christ. **{You will learn more about this focus later.}** Right now, we need to relate the "Preview of the Bible", the subject of this first chapter, to that

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focus. The claim is that the story of the whole Bible is ultimately a story about the learning of Christ. If you look at the outline of the Bible below, you will notice the Gospel of Christ as number 8 of the complete 12 of the subject outline of the Bible. You will also find Christ dominating roman numerals 4,5,10,11,and 12 as well as an integral subject matter of each outline division. The reason is simple: the Bible is a story about the Lord Jesus Christ! And if you don't learn Christ, the Christ of the Bible and the Christ of God the Father, the Creator of the Universe, then you do not learn the Bible!

Subject Outline of the Bible.

- I. The Living God of the Living
- II. Righteousness of God and Man
- III. The Composite Witness of the Bible
- IV. God, Man and the Son of Man
- V. The Resurrection
- VI. Wisdom From God
- VII. The Gospel
- VIII. Listening More Important Than Sacrifice
- IX. What Happened to the Jews as the Chosen nation?
- X. The Salvation of God
- XI. The New King of Israel
- XII. The Living God Wants Others to Live

What is amazing is that the whole Bible of 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament, can be outlined under 12 major subjects! I will tell you upfront why that is possible: because of the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament, and because the New Testament provides the proper interpretation of those Old Testament quotes **{ASPI}**.

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#### **ASPI**

Where the LEARN CHRIST COMMENTARIES make the most significant contribution to Bible study is in the mythology of the API, for the Authorized Public Interpretation of the Bible. Since the Bible tells us dogmatically that "no Scripture is of any private interpretation", we must naturally look for the Public Interpretation. Of course, as we do more study on the teachings of Jesus, especially as related to the parables, we find that it is not inclusively public. Jesus as He explained the parable of the Seed and the Sower to

His disciples, told them first that all spiritual matters are spoken in parables; second that since the religious leaders did not have the eyes to see and the ears to hear, that was the reason that the method of teaching to the world was different from the method of teaching to disciples; and further that it was only real disciples that are given understanding of the mysteries of the kingdom. We probably should call it something like ASI for Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation.

You will find as you search the commentaries as you search the Scriptures that most commentators can not get away from a method of the history of previous comments on the Bible. It is a PhD, academic acceptance, and publication acceptance along with expected style from which they just can not free themselves. The only new commentary I have found recently that just right out to let the Bible say what it wants to say, and to interpret the Old Testament according to the explanation of Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament, is one where Lloyd Ogilvie is the chief editor. **{Admittedly the goal as one of the writer's admits, Sinclair Ferguson, is to provide preaching material. There is nothing wrong with comments for preachers: that is what we like about Carroll's INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE, who managed to be intellectually thorough like grounded in good exegesis and hermeneutics; and by the way, that is the way Southwestern Seminary started; and continued for many years, "Lee, keep the Seminary anchored to the Master", until the fundamentalists of the fundamentalists in the falsely called "conservative resurgence" years ago decided to anchor it to themselves.}** If you desire an exercise in futility, then read some of the commentaries on Daniel where in spite of the clarifications of Jesus in Matthew 24 on the "abomination of desolation", and in II Thessalonians from Paul on the Falling Away, the authors ignore either completely what is in the New Testament or they do not start with the explanation of quotes in the New Testament as the easiest to understand first, then from there go to the more difficult. Even F.F. Bruce who once wrote truly evangelical and conservative in the New International Commentaries, now writes like most other commentators in the Word Biblical Commentary. You would like there is a union of commentators with the union constraint of a Certified Manual of Style which dictates first and foremost look at what trash has previously been written. **{Even the good ones like McComiskey quickly bore you as they systematically dismiss all the unwanted comments of past history, disappointingly they keep Darby's comments for popularity among the fundamentalists; and you just know that they have in mind the "intellectual honesty" of Trueblood if not academic acceptability.}** We had better worry more about our accountability to God, rather than the academic community which by and large is liberal and has strayed in favor of the world. There is far more pressure on Seminaries, Bible colleges, and Bible courses to conform to the world and certain worldly academic and intellectual standards, such as the scientific method long ago adopted also by the social sciences, than there are people and groups who will pressure such to be accountable to God and the ASI of the Word of God.

How do we do it in the 3 "Old Testament According to the New Testament" of the LEARN CHRIST

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FROM THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS in order to make sure it is the ASI method of Bible study. Well in each of the three as we come to a new book of the Bible, from Genesis to Malachi, first we look again at what the Apostles and Jesus explained from that book as recorded in the New Testament. In other words if we do not the second and third time, give the quote in the New Testament from the Old Testament, we must give the corresponding explanation from the apostle or Jesus who quoted it. And at any point, you can check these explanations with the Appendix at the back of each of the three books--

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(1a) Prophets, Apostles, and the Spirit of Jesus; (1b) The Prophet Messiah; and (1c) The Great Maker of History. This outline of all the quotes in the New Testament from the Old Testament, ordered by a most probable sequence of the Old Testament, purports to be a complete listing of every quote in the New Testament. **{As you might expect, it is Paul and Jesus that quote the Old Testament most often, and that is quite often from the Prophet Isaiah and the Prophet David in the Psalms.}** I say "purports"; because it is subject to some human limitations; and there is some internal evidence in a reading of the New Testament that some of the quotes do not come from the 39 books which we have in our Old Testament Canon. Can we still say that the Bible as the Word of God is "sufficient" while we are describing it as "divine in origin" and "absolute in authority"? Yes, the Apostle took care of us there with what they wrote and quoted in sort of a New Bible for the Jews and Gentiles. Yes, I am referring to the 27 books of our New Testament Canon, 14 of which were written by the Apostle Paul with many quotes.

#### Appendix A & B on The Prophet Messiah

The "Old Testament According to the New Testament", Appendix A, and "The Prophet Messiah", Appendix B, are placed in the Appendix in the same spirit as the approach of the book of placing the methodology of Bible study in the background to the subjects of Bible study. However, let me explain both of these appendices. "The Old Testament According to the New Testament" which can also be called the "Gospel" is a listing of approximately all the quotes in the New Testament from the Old Testament. I say "all" because who is to know when we have all of them; and some references to the Old Testament come so close to being quotes, that the decision whether to include them becomes difficult. That is one reason that you will find some quotes listed in Robertson's HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS that you will not find in Appendix A or B. Also you will find that some obvious quotes in the New Testament can not be found in our Old Testament of 39 books; and while this is by far no effort to dispute with the sufficiency of the Canon of 39 books, it is to say that those quotes do make a significant contribution in the New Testament. {One such quote is that by James of "the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy", and even in the Old Testament Canon, I am sure that you can with enough searching find an equivalent in thought if not in exact words. Of course, we must remember how the Old Testament has gone through Hebrew, Greek, and into English in order to come to us today as the Canon; and how marvelous it is, both in the messages and in the preservation!} Appendix B, the Prophet Messiah, gives those special quotes in the New Testament from the Old Testament that are in reality predictions or descriptions about the Lord Jesus Christ.