

SERIES PREFACE

Like many other books containing Old Testament story, 1 and 2 Kings are both well known and obscure. Certain stories are remarkably familiar and part of regular Sunday school curriculum material. Others are hardly ever preached or taught and contain gems of familiarity only because they pop up from time to time in reading plans.

This mix is to be lamented as God has divinely inspired the whole Bible, including books within it. The books of 1 and 2 Kings stand as a whole and whilst providing fertile passages for family services, it is good for the preacher or teacher to consider them in their unity, rather than as a collection of stories from which we selectively pick and mix.

Teaching 1 and 2 Kings (of which this is the first of two volumes) is, therefore, an important contribution to our series. We need help getting the familiar parts right and tackling the less well-known stories. Bob's volume does both of these things, appropriately pointing us to the King who would one day come in David's line.

The volumes are purposely practical, seeking to offer real help for those involved in teaching the Bible to others. The preacher or teacher, the sermon or talk, and the listener are the key 'drivers' in this series. The Introductory Section contains basic 'navigation' material to get you into the text of Kings, covering aspects like structure and planning a preaching series. The 'meat' of the book then works systematically through the major sections of Kings, suggesting preaching or teaching units, including sermon outlines and questions for Bible studies. These are not there to take the hard work out of preparation, but as a starting point to get you thinking about how to preach the material or prepare a Bible study.


Teaching 1 Kings brings the number of published volumes in the series to fourteen. We are encouraged at how the series is developing and the positive comments from the people that really matter – those at the chalkface of Christian ministry, working hard at the Word, week in week out, to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ.

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David Jackman & Adrian Reynolds
Series Editors
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE



Three outstanding history teachers in my school days gave me an abiding love for the subject and showed how the past could live in the hands of gifted and imaginative communicators. This easily transferred to a love of biblical history and narrative. The books of 1 and 2 Kings have therefore been a part of Scripture I have long enjoyed, and when I started to study the Old Testament seriously I returned to them with renewed interest and with a growing appreciation of their great importance in the big story and their powerful message for today.

Probably like most preachers who tackle these books, I turned first to the Elijah/Elisha stories with their compelling characters and strong narrative drive. However, it soon became apparent that these stories were even more compelling when seen in the overall flow of the books.

Over the years I have preached both longer and shorter series on the books. In my first ministry in Bannockburn, Scotland, I did a series of moderate length on Elijah and

Elisha. In my years in Durham, England, in the congregation now known as Christchurch (then Claypath) a number of series were preached and, I trust, a growing understanding of the overall message emerged. A longer series, covering much of both books, was preached in the Tron Church, Glasgow, over the period 2008-10.

I have also had the privilege of teaching large sections of the book in other contexts. In 2002-05 I taught a module on 'Preaching OT narrative' in Cranmer Hall, St John's College, Durham where I was once on the staff. That module was repeated at the International Christian College, Glasgow in 2007. At Cornhill Scotland, I often use material from Kings, especially when teaching how to preach biblical narrative.

Plainly I have gained a great deal from those who have commented on the sermons and lectures and I am most grateful for that. I have also learned much from commentators, and mention that in the 'Further Reading' section. As always, I have learned from those I disagree with and am thankful for all whose work has fed into mine.

This *Teaching* book has also given me the opportunity to engage with parts of the books I have passed over lightly in the past. I trust it will encourage others to study Kings as a whole and not simply pick out the purple passages. The length can be daunting, but when we consider that the time covered is some five hundred years we see that the author has been ruthlessly selective in including what carries on his theme.

Like the other *Teaching* volumes this is not a commentary, although it engages closely with the text, nor simply a collection of sermons although there are suggested sermons and Bible study questions. Thus it will be most useful if the

reader does some detailed exegetical work on the text first. Often there is more than one suggested sermon outline to emphasize that once you really get into what the passage says there are many ways of expressing and applying the message.

It is my prayer that this book will help many to explore the books of Kings and be captured by their riches, and preach and teach their God-honouring and Christ-anticipating message.

Bob Fyall
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