



Editor's Preface

First and Second Kings (really one long book) contain some of the most well-known Old Testament stories (think of the Queen of Sheba or Elijah and Elisha) and yet remain some of the least known books of the Old Testament. How has this turn of events come about? In part, at least, it is because we tend to cherry-pick exciting stories and take them away from their Bible context.



INTRODUCING 1 & 2 KINGS

There is nothing inherently wrong with that if we make every effort to understand the stories correctly, but the truth is that the best way to read a story well is to read it in its context – and for us that means reading it as part of a larger book.



These two Old Testament books are narratives. I prefer to call them Old Testament story – not in the sense that something is made up, but in the sense that most of us would understand: these are not history books, for example, or lists of facts and figures. Rather, they are wonderfully and expertly crafted accounts with pace and character and important dialogue.

Our doctrine of the Bible means that we know that these stories are divinely inspired. They are part of the ‘breathing out’ of Scripture that Paul describes to young Pastor Timothy (2 Tim. 3:16). However, the mechanism of inspiration is that human authors are carried along by



Editor's Preface

the Spirit and thus we have more (though not less) than divine stories. We have accounts which stir the human emotions. We smile. We cry. We laugh. We get angry. We are amazed. It's impossible to read 1 & 2 Kings without feeling all of this and more.

What we need then is some basic help to read these books well. Each volume in this little *Introducing* series started life as a much longer book, in this case *Teaching 1 Kings*. Our Teaching series is written by preachers for preachers and teachers to help them proclaim the Scriptures faithfully. Each book takes readers carefully through the Bible material, pointing out the big themes and main topics as well as helping in how we should apply the Scriptures as Christians.

Teaching 1 Kings was written for us by Bob Fyall. Bob is an experienced preacher himself and a long-standing teacher of



INTRODUCING 1 & 2 KINGS

teachers. He is thus able to get right into the groove of 1 Kings and help Bible preachers and teachers wrestle with the things they need to get right. If you enjoy this little introduction and you have any Bible teaching role in the church, we heartily recommend the longer volume.



However, Bob is also a good pastor. He is able to connect the Bible text to Christ (as all preachers must) and do so engagingly and winsomely in a way that makes the stories come alive for twenty-first century Christians. He does this by getting the basics right – which is why this little introduction is so valuable. Here are Bob’s basics on 1 & 2 Kings! You will – I’m sure – find them very helpful indeed.

Perhaps you’re about to read 1 & 2 Kings in your devotions? Perhaps there’s a series starting at church or in your small groups? Perhaps it’s a part of the Bible you don’t know that well? Whatever your circum-



Editor's Preface

stance, you will discover that this little introduction will stir your interest and help you to get to grips with the text – which is, after all, what we all want.

God has spoken, and God continues to speak in His Word. Our sincere prayer is that this little accompanying volume will help you hear His voice. For the book of the Kings is truly a book for today.