



## Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 13, 2 Kings

*T. R. Hobbs*

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The book of 2 Kings reads like tragic drama, telling the story of the closing decades of the divided monarchy in Israel and Judah-its failure, the Exile, the destruction of Jerusalem. If these are indeed God's chosen people, why has he allowed them to be so devastated?

In this insightful commentary, Dr. T. R. Hobbs focuses on 2 Kings as the purposeful attempt of its author to interpret the tragedy for those people-to give them new understanding of their past and renew their hope for the future.

Dr. Hobbs provides guidance in exploring several important themes emphasized by the author, among them:

- the prophet's role in the history of Israel and Judah, and the power of the divine word, particularly as transmitted by the prophet Elisha
- God's relentless insistence on faithfulness to the law of Moses (largely ignored by the people) as a condition for continuation of the Davidic covenant
- the dire effects of idol worship as practiced by the Canaanites and foolishly emulated by Israel and Judah
- inevitable doom as the fruit of disobedience, despite the occasional reforms instituted by some of the kings.

Dr. Hobbs's careful research has supplied sound reasons for acknowledging 2 Kings to be the creation of a single author, a master of literary expression whose skillfully crafted work fulfills its purpose. Particularly intriguing is the discussion on the deliberate imbalance in the author's selectivity of source materials and role models, both positive and negative; the perceptive analysis of literary techniques such as threefold repetition, word plays, and formulaic progressions; and the brief but penetrating overview of the nature of history and its relation to literary artistry.

The commentary includes a welcome commonsense examination of 2 Kings' complicated problems of chronology, and there is ongoing dialogue with scholars who hold to a view of double or even multiple redaction of the book. Throughout, Dr. Hobbs demonstrates the author of 2 Kings to be "faithful to the facts, to his readers, to future Israel, and to God, whose word he delivers."

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