

10 KINGS

WALK BEFORE ME FAITHFULLY

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First published in Great Britain in 2019

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-912373-68-0

Designed by Diane Warnes

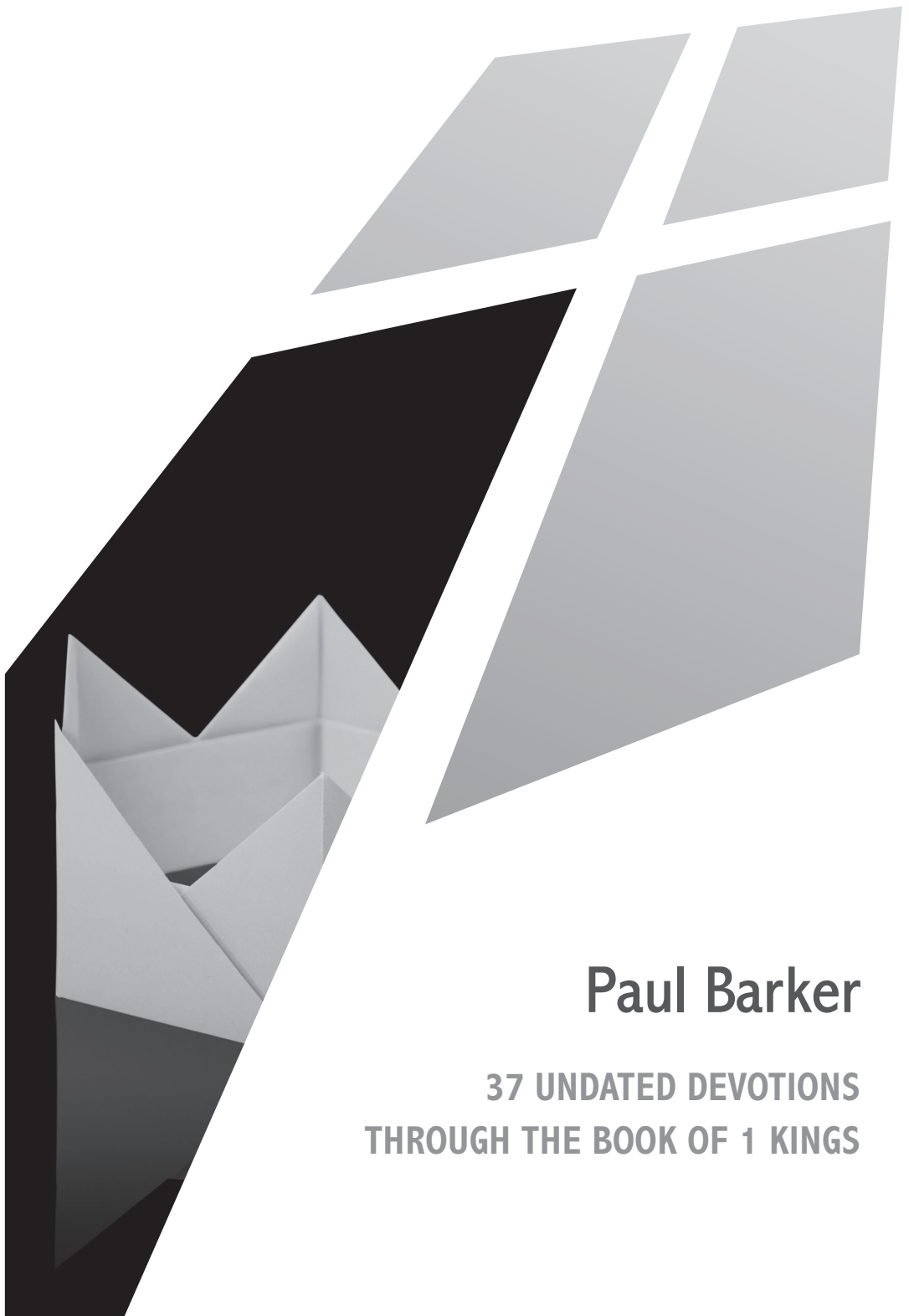
Printed in the UK

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**37 UNDATED DEVOTIONS
THROUGH THE BOOK OF 1 KINGS**

Leadership is a significant issue in the Bible, and in church and society today. The Books of Kings will keep reminding us of this theme. King David, great but far from perfect, is dying. Which of his sons will succeed him?

The eldest remaining son, Adonijah, ‘put himself forward’ to announce he would be king (v. 5). He forms an alliance of backers, like a coup, and has a celebratory feast. Immediately we are meant to be on alert because of his character of pride. Here is not a man after God’s own heart, as David had been, but one whose pride shows him to be self-serving.

Whether of a nation or a church, proud leaders end up serving themselves and putting their own egos and reputations first. Who are the greatest leaders you have known and what made them so? Where have you seen a leader’s pride be part of their downfall?

In modern times, we often value people by their good looks. So we might expect a very handsome man like Adonijah (v. 6) to be popular. King Saul had also been handsome, but he proved a failure as king. Exactly how is attractiveness prized these days? Why should we be more concerned with good character instead?

David was keen not to lift a hand against Saul, despite David being anointed to succeed Saul. When we remember David’s angry reaction to the man who killed Saul, we ought to be wary of anyone who seeks to depose the Lord’s anointed king, as Adonijah is seeking to do. Even though David is old (v. 1), and by implication ineffectual as a leader, he remains God’s choice. His attendants’ quest for a woman to sleep beside David, non-sexually (v. 4), suggests simply that his blood circulation is poor.

No one is perfect, and yet so often instability in church, and society, is brought on by pride against chosen leaders. Christians ought to be slow to oppose their church leaders.

REFLECTION

Pray for your church leaders to enjoy the support of God’s people and to be loyal to God.

In contrast to Adonijah, those loyal to David engage in successful diplomacy with David (vv. 11–27). Nathan orchestrates this, enlisting Bathsheba’s help to bring about David’s announcement that Solomon would succeed him (v. 30).

When the Lord promised David that his offspring would reign for ever (2 Samuel 7), nothing was said about whom he wanted to succeed David – whether Adonijah or Solomon. So is Nathan’s statement that David has chosen Solomon true or is Nathan making it up (v. 13)? We cannot be sure, though David finally makes this oath himself in verse 30. David commands Solomon to be crowned urgently (vv. 32–35). The old king is suddenly alert and in control. The instructions are carried out without delay. Solomon is crowned in a public ceremony with ‘all the people’ (v. 40) acclaiming him.

Key to this transition of power is David’s assurance of the Lord being behind Solomon. David’s oath (vv. 29–30) appeals to the Lord, as does Benaiah’s prayer (vv. 36–37). Solomon will be great indeed if the Lord is with him, as he has been with David. Note that confidence in the Lord being with Solomon comes from God’s promises to David back in 2 Samuel 7 about an everlasting Davidic dynasty.

The foundation is therefore God’s faithfulness and not Solomon’s own ability or goodness.

All great leadership of God’s people requires the Lord’s presence and empowerment. No leader can do it ‘alone’. Nor should a leader depend on his or her own ability rather than on God’s presence and power. What character and attributes ought the church be looking for in discerning a godly leader? How do these differ from the attributes that our society looks for in leadership?

Solomon is the first instalment of God keeping his promise of an everlasting dynasty for David. That promise finds its fulfilment in the greater son of David, Jesus Christ, our eternal King. Think on the leadership attributes of Jesus and how different they are to those of our society. What did it mean for God to be with Jesus, as Benaiah prays for Solomon (v. 37)?

REFLECTION

Do you see your leaders relying on God sufficiently, and therefore being humble?