

TEACHING JOHN

Unlocking the Gospel of John for the Bible Teacher

DICK LUCAS & WILLIAM PHILIP

This book is short, unusual and valuable. Its aim is to help those who want to preach and teach from John's Gospel. However, it does not pretend to be a commentary. It will not replace exegetical work. Rather, it seeks to provide a key by which the expositor can extract the essential message of John's Gospel in his exposition. It is all the better for being a short work (and 'no more than a primer' in the authors' words, designed simply to 'whet the appetite'). It is a model of succinct clarity.

Robert Strivens

The Banner of Truth Magazine

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SERIES EDITORS: DAVID JACKMAN & ROBIN SYDSERFF

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SERIES PREFACE

The *Teach the Bible* series is for preachers and Bible teachers. Few commentaries are written specifically with the preacher or Bible teacher in mind, and with the sermon or Bible study as the point of reference. The preacher or teacher, the sermon or talk, and the listener are the key 'drivers' in this series. The books are purposefully practical, seeking to offer real help for those involved in teaching the Bible to others. *Teaching John* was the first book published in the series and we are encouraged by the publication of a number of additional titles.

Our thanks, as ever, to the team at Christian Focus for their committed partnership in this project.

David Jackman and Robin Sydserrff
Series Editors, London, March 2008

INTRODUCTION

For any Bible students, and for preachers in particular, John's Gospel is an inexhaustible treasure house. Throughout years of ministry, preachers will find themselves returning to it time and time again in order to proclaim its wonderful truths. So this book is designed to help and encourage Bible teachers of all kinds, but principally preachers who are preparing expository sermon series on books of the Bible, in rediscovering the spiritual riches that are in John's wonderful writing.

Teaching John is no more than a primer; it aims to open up the text for the Bible student and whet the appetite of the preacher. It is not an exhaustive exposition of the Gospel, far less a commentary on John. It is certainly not intended to take the place of the commentaries, as if these were unnecessary for the preacher. Quite the opposite; we try to point to helpful usage of these as we go along, and would encourage hard work on the text as a *sine qua non*

of the preacher's preparatory task. But few commentaries seem to be written with the preacher and the congregation specifically in mind, and the sermon as the point of reference that is being worked towards. In this little book, then, as we work through selected portions of John's Gospel, these things – the preacher, the sermon and the congregation – will always be uppermost in our minds. The aim is to help the Bible teacher find a way into the text that will enable him to use it for its given purpose: to be preached. Whether we succeed or not is another matter, but we shall at least try!

We have limited ourselves to looking at John's stated key to understanding the reason why he wrote his book: the very familiar couple of verses at the end of chapter 20. Then we take this key in order to unlock four chapters – four very famous chapters (Ch. 3–6) – by way of example. Hopefully this will open up some fresh insights, and act as an incentive to further study of this magnificent fourth Gospel. All the time the sole aim is to be helpful to those engaged in the ministry of the Word.