

similar issues; John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Philipsburg, NJ: P& R Publishing, 2010); John Whiteford, *Sola Scriptura: An Orthodox Analysis of the Cornerstone of Reformation Theology* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 1996); Don Kistler, ed., *Sola Scriptura: The Protestant Position on the Bible* (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009); Hans Heinrich Schmid and Joachim Mehlhausen, eds., *Sola Scriptura: das reformatorische Schriftprinzip in der säkularen Welt* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1991); Richard Ziegert, ed., *Die Zukunft des Schriftprinzips* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994); and Heinrich Karpp, *Schrift, Geist und Wort Gottes: Geltung und Wirkung der Bibel in der Geschichte der Kirche—von der Alten Kirche bis zum Ausgang der Reformationszeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992).

Despite these minor shortcomings, Peckham succeeds at engaging the ongoing scholarly conversation on theological method. While he describes what a thoroughgoing biblical-canonical theology might actually look like, and how it should be structured, it still is only hinted at and awaits detailed canonical exegesis and further exploration.

Peckham's greatest weakness is, at the same time, his greatest strength: "Because Scripture is afforded theological primacy by divine commission alone, there is no witness adequate to ground this primacy except God, whom we come to know through the Scriptures" (149n30). While an intrinsic canonicity cannot be proven scientifically, it is internally coherent as a concept and is unashamedly *sola fide* and, as such, fully *sola gratia*, i.e., utterly dependent upon God's grace and divine sovereignty. As such, Peckham is thoroughly Protestant in what he affirms from the canonical Scriptures and deserves a wide hearing and positive reception.

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Pierce, Ronald W. *Daniel*. Teach the Text Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015. xvi + 213 pp. Hardcover. USD 29.99.

Ronald W. Pierce, professor of biblical and theological studies at Talbot School of Theology (La Mirada, CA), has engaged in a "close reading of Daniel" with his students at Biola University for "nearly four decades" (v). In the present volume, he shares the insights that he gained along the way, while aiming to interpret "Daniel on its own terms" (1). Pierce divides each chapter of the book of Daniel into one to three manageable sections, which add up to twenty-nine units. The author also includes four excurses labeled "Additional Insights." Together with the introduction, these sections increase the book to thirty-four chapters. The standard chapters in this volume have the same length—six pages—in accordance with the series's format. Chapters devoted to the text itself are divided into three segments: (a) Understanding the Text; (b) Teaching the Text; and (c) Illustrating the Text. Chapters also contain at least two textboxes which highlight "The Big Idea" and "Key Themes" in the selected passage.

In the introduction, Pierce affirms a sixth-century BCE date for the composition of the book of Daniel, while conceding that "internal and

external evidence does not allow for rigid dogmatism” (1–2). He also supports Danielic authorship and considers the book “fully inspired and authoritative” and the narratives “historically accurate” (2). Pierce provides a summary of the criticism—from the time of Porphyry (third century CE) to the present—against the traditional date and authorship attributed to the book of Daniel, while also indicating and offering plausible responses. Pierce then interprets the four-empire schema as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece, attributing the persecutions in Dan 7–12 to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (3–4). He presents the literary structure of the book of Daniel as twofold (chs. 1–6 and 7–12), mentions the apocalyptic genre, and reaffirms his canonical-theological reading of the text (8–9).

As readers advance into the commentary, they will quickly notice this is a visually rich volume which contains a great number of high-definition color photos that are relevant to the book of Daniel. In addition, Pierce often provides information regarding the ANE context that might relate to the message of Daniel. At times, he also points readers to the larger OT background and to pertinent historical material.

Regarding the content proper, the author differs from early Talbot scholars, who operated under the Roman view (see Charles Lee Feinberg, *Daniel: The Man and His Visions* [Chappaqua, NY: Christian Herald Books, 1981]). Pierce, instead, adopts the Greek view by dividing Media from Persia and by conceiving the transition from Greece to God’s kingdom as a “spiritual inauguration . . . at Jesus’s first coming” waiting for “its full establishment at his return” (47). It seems that the lack of consensus among those who hold the Roman view on the transition from Rome to God’s kingdom (46), along with the perception that “Greek views are not divided over systematic eschatology” (194, additional insights on 194n4), may have played a role in the formation of Pierce’s position.

Other reasons Pierce gives to support the Greek view are, for instance, that: (a) Media and Persia “appear in close proximity, . . . yet always distinctly” in the OT (103); (b) “there is no ‘king’ of ‘Medo-Persia’ in Daniel,” instead, “the kings and people of ‘Media and Persia’ are always mentioned in the plural” (47); (c) there are no “extant [ancient] texts” calling the kingdom “Medo-Persia” (47); and (d) “there was no ‘Medo-Persian Empire’” (103). Technically, such objections can be addressed from other perspectives—for instance, (a) this does not preclude some sort of alliance at the time of Daniel; (b) this word usage could be a necessity that results from such an alliance, especially in the case of a coregency; (c) this may not be sensitive enough to political propaganda and is also an argument from silence; and (d) this is a claim constructed from outside the book of Daniel (not in Daniel’s own terms).

However, Pierce’s stronger arguments for the Greek view lie in the textual and thematic links that connect Dan 2, 7, 8, 9, and 11. From the Antiochene consensus in Dan 8 and 11 (144) and then following some of these textual clues, Pierce expands the Greek view, as others have done, to other chapters. Thus, the Antiochene view is read backwards—from the end (Dan 11) to the beginning (Dan 2) of the book of Daniel. A detailed examination of

this approach would be beyond the scope of this review. But Pierce's reading suggests that those who disagree with the Greek view must examine the issue and offer better alternatives than those presently available.

Lastly, another issue closely related to the separation or alliance of Media and Persia (i.e., the choice of Greek or Roman view) is the historiography that informs the interpretation of Darius the Mede. Pierce follows the basic narrative claim of Herodotus, in which Cyrus would have subjugated Media before conquering Babylon (99). This view is also endorsed by a face-value reading of available cuneiform sources. From such a scenario, there would be no Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon nor would there be a Medo-Persian empire—not even a short-lived coregency of a Median king (Darius the Mede) with a Persian one (Cyrus). Bound by such framework and having no extant extrabiblical corroboration for the specific designation “Darius the Mede,” critical scholarship considers that character fictional. Evangelical scholars, in turn, often look for a match from a pool of options that has been limited by the historical-critical discussion. Within these parameters, Pierce mentions two of the most often cited names for Darius the Mede in recent scholarship—Gubaru and Cyrus the Great—and opts for the latter (102–103). One significant issue with these alternatives is that they are selected from a narrative that collides with canonical data since Media is mentioned in Scripture in direct connection with the fall of Babylon; cf. Isa 13:17, 19; 21:2; Jer 51:11, 28. It also collides with the book of Daniel itself, which seems to portray Media in formal, not merely cultural, alliance with Persia by the time of the demise of Babylon (see 5:28; 6:8, 12, 15; 8:20). Furthermore, the sources for such historiography are questionable. Herodotus, for instance, states that he is reporting only one of the four stories about the accession of Cyrus he is aware of (*Histories* 1.95); and the available cuneiform inscriptions may refer to deliberate distortions with political aims. Hence, they cannot be equated with factual reports without prior critical examination.

Before the twentieth century, a large number of scholars followed the basic narrative pattern of Greek historian Xenophon. Contrary to Herodotus, Xenophon speaks of a Median king who followed Astyages, named Cyaxares (II), who was also Cyrus's uncle (*Cyropaedia* 1.5.2) and who had joined forces with the Persians to campaign against the Babylonians (“Assyrians” in *Cyropaedia*). Such storyline and identification seem to be corroborated by Josephus, who reports that Darius the Mede was “known by another name among the Greeks” (*Antiquities* 10.11.4), which led many to identify Darius as Cyaxares II. After the publication of cuneiform inscriptions at the end of the nineteenth century, which seemed to support the Herodotean narrative, Xenophon's account was largely disregarded, though several modern and contemporary interpreters still advocate for or notice it. For instance, the identification of Darius the Mede with Cyaxares II has been suggested by Richard A. Taylor, Gerhard F. Hasel, Charles L. Feinberg, and C. F. Keil and mentioned by John Goldingay, Andrew E. Hill, and Peter A. Stevenson, among others. In the last twenty years, stronger historical research has surfaced to support Xenophon's narrative and to account for the data presented by the

cuneiform records. One such work is S. Douglas Waterhouse's short article, "Why Was Darius the Mede Expunged from History?" in *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea*, ed. David Merling (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Institute of Archaeology, 1997), 173–190. Another important work is Steven D. Anderson's 2014 PhD dissertation (see his update, *Darius the Mede: A Reappraisal* [Grand Rapids: CreateSpace, 2014]), in which he critically examines the accounts of Herodotus and Xenophon while also assessing many other sources. Anderson argues convincingly for Xenophon's basic narrative and for the identification of Darius the Mede as Cyaxares II. Thus, in reviewing this historical issue, both Waterhouse and Anderson offer more viable scenarios for those pursuing a canonical reading of the book of Daniel.

Ronald W. Pierce's *Daniel* is an accessible and clearly written commentary. Readers who are looking for readily available information without excessive technicality may benefit from this user-friendly volume. Readers will also enjoy the large collection of images which illustrate the original context of the book of Daniel. A couple of potential drawbacks might be the methodological and historiographical considerations. Methodologically speaking, while the commentary attempts to offer a canonical reading of Daniel, in some instances, the author's interpretation will privilege extra-biblical sources. Historiographically, the Herodotean narrative that is used as the framework for this volume is, at times, incompatible with the historical data provided by Scripture in general and with the book of Daniel in particular. Despite these issues, Pierce's work hints at some inconsistencies within the traditional Roman views, and thus suggests the need for further study and constructive dialogue.

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FLAVIO PRESTES III

Porter, Stanley E. *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. xiv + 473 pp. Softcover. USD 40.00.

As the subtitle and the first paragraph of this book indicate (ix), Stanley E. Porter, by commenting on Paul's life, thought, and letters, attempts to differ from other recent publications on Paul that focus only on one of these three aspects. However, there have been at least two significant recent publications in Pauline scholarship that cover the same ground as Porter's book, namely, Udo Schnelle's *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), and especially his revised and enlarged second edition in German, *Paulus: Leben und Denken*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014) and the edited volume by Friedrich W. Horn, *Paulus Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

Further along in the preface, Porter clearly situates his work within Pauline scholarship. He "endorse[s] and even further support[s] traditional views of Pauline scholarship. These include the number of authentic Pauline letters, the major contours of Paul, the unity of the individual Pauline letters, Rome as the place of Paul's major letter-writing imprisonment, Galatians as the first letter to be written, to name just a few" (x). In addition, Porter also