

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

takes a stand against the new perspective in Pauline scholarship and argues that “in Paul’s eyes, Judaism would at best be characterized as a system that depended upon grace *and* works” (119, emphasis original). In following a traditional reading of Paul, he clearly differs from the publications mentioned above, since they represent a critical standpoint.

The book is divided into two major parts, “The Pauline Tradition” and “The Pauline Letters.” Each part consists of six chapters. Whereas the first part focuses on Paul’s life and thought, as well as issues regarding the form of his letters and the formation of the Pauline corpus, the second part provides a discussion of the introductory questions and a summary of each of the thirteen letters that Porter considers authentic. Major portions of this book’s material have been previously published as two chapters in Lee Martin McDonald and Stanley E. Porter, *Early Christianity and Its Sacred Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000). Since this book is no longer in print, Porter decided to edit this material, update its bibliography, and add discussions on recent issues and summaries of all Pauline letters, which eventually led to this publication (xii).

A brief comparison of *Early Christianity and Its Sacred Literature* (2000) and *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters* (2016) indicates that Porter edited the main text only minimally. Except for the added summaries of each epistle, the text is basically identical. His footnotes in the first part of the book, however, are significantly updated with literature published after 2000. In these footnotes lies the real value of this volume. Porter provides access to relevant literature on almost anything that has been discussed recently in scholarship regarding Paul’s life and work. Unfortunately, he did not have the same vigor for updating the footnotes in the second part. Some discussions, like those on the unity of 2 Corinthians or on the authorship of Colossians, remain almost completely without footnotes.

Porter claims to contribute unique insights in the following areas: First, Paul “had at least seen and heard Jesus during the course of Jesus’s earthly ministry.” Second, “Paul, not one of his closest followers or a later associate, had a major role to play in the initial gathering of the Pauline letter collection.” Third, “there is significant evidence . . . that pseudepigraphal authorship was not widely accepted in the ancient world.” Fourth, Porter adopts “differing views on Pauline chronology.” Fifth, he claims to bring together Paul’s Greco-Roman background and his Jewish heritage “in a unique way.” Sixth, he believes “that there is greater continuity between the Paul we observe in and through his letters and the Paul depicted in the book of Acts.” Last, he proposes a differentiation of “two major levels of his [Paul] theological thought—the assumptions that he brings to his thought and the developed thoughts that elaborate his major ideas” (xi). To evaluate Porter’s claim of unique contributions, it seems to me that his first and second points are unique, whereas his material from the third point onwards is also found in other Pauline scholarship that has adopted a more traditional point of view, such as, the introduction by D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005]), whose first

edition was published back in 1992. Therefore, I only will discuss the first two points in detail.

Reading Porter's argumentation for his unique contributions regarding the relationship of Paul and Jesus and the formation of the Pauline corpus, I was not convinced by either one. Porter believes that Paul most likely met Jesus in person, which would have implications on the question of continuity and discontinuity between Jesus's and Paul's theology (33–38). He believes that their parallel lives, the dialogue on the street to Damascus, and Paul's statements in 1 Cor 9:1 and 2 Cor 5:16 all indicate that Paul must have known Jesus in person before his crucifixion. Whereas the parallel lives of Jesus and Paul may provide the necessary ground for such a speculation, Porter's attempt to prove this speculation on an exegetical level, based on the mentioned passages, remains only an attempt. There are stronger ways to prove the continuity between Jesus's and Paul's theology than Porter's attempt to prove the speculation that they knew each other in person.

Similarly speculative is Porter's argument that Paul initiated the collecting of his own epistles to form the Pauline corpus. Besides the assumption that Paul followed the custom of his times, keeping a copy of each letter for himself, Porter's only argument is \mathfrak{P}^{46} , a papyrus dated around 200 CE, containing most of the Pauline epistles with the exception of 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, and the Pastoral Epistles. Porter argues that the condition of the manuscript indicates that, at one point, it might have included the missing epistles (170, 176). However, this papyrus simply cannot serve as proof that Paul, who died, at best, a century earlier, initiated the collection of the letters. In addition, if this papyrus has Hebrews between Romans and 1 Corinthians, it makes me wonder why Porter argues that Hebrews "is not Pauline in the same sense as the other thirteen letters" (177n67).

The second part of the book contains Porter's discussions on the thirteen epistles that claim Pauline authorship. Porter aims "not so much to convince the reader of any one position as to present each reader with sufficient data to arrive at their own informed decision" (183–184). Reading the second part, Porter indeed covers all the major critical issues and presents each viewpoint in a fair and comprehensive way. However, readers should know that Porter allows himself to "take position and draw conclusions" (183). In doing so, the way he presents the data understandably favors mostly the traditional position, with the exception of advocating the south Galatia hypothesis and, thus, an early dating of Galatians.

Readers of this volume definitely get a well informed and comprehensive introduction to Paul's life, thought, and letters. Thus, this volume fits any need of an introduction to Pauline Theology from a traditional viewpoint. The only downside I can think of, besides my disagreements with some of Porter's unique contributions, is that Porter does not go beyond the data that is found in other introductions to the New Testament with a traditional approach. Overall, those volumes have the advantage over this work in that they cover relevant material beyond Paul and the Pauline corpus, such as the

Gospels, the synoptic problem, Acts, the general Epistles, Revelation, and the process of the formation of the New Testament canon.

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DOMINIC BORNAND

Provan, Iain. *Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. Discovering Biblical Texts. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ix + 214 pp. Softcover. USD 22.00.

Iain Provan's introduction to the first book of the Judeo-Christian canon is to be commended for some achievements, of which the most important is its selective—nevertheless wide—presentation of Genesis's reception history. As such, it is not alone in the contemporary scholarly panorama. It follows the same lines as the third section of Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen, eds., *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, VTSup 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2012); and Peter Thacher Lanfer, *Remembering Eden: The Reception History of Genesis 3:22–24* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Unlike these authors, however, Provan seeks to introduce the reader to what he calls the “literal sense” of Genesis's text. In the process, Provan aligns his work with theoretical conventions accepted in some contemporaneous works. He is in line, for example, with John Walton's avoidance of reading Genesis as speaking to modern notions regarding history and historiographical causality in *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), and with Robert Alter's view of Genesis as representing a high level of literary artistry in *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

The introduction of the book proposes a literary structure of twelve acts within Genesis, based on the *toledot* formulae, which serves as an outline for Provan's further exploration of Genesis. The next two chapters are dedicated to discussing the history of the interpretation of Genesis from the earliest stages of its reception to modern interpretation. These chapters show a selective approach to the data, betraying the author's project of demonstrating an interpretative concern with the literal sense of Genesis throughout the ages. The fourth chapter is designed to place Genesis in history and time. Chapters 5–11 unpack Provan's reading of Genesis's proposed twelve-act structure, and further display the reception history of specific passages.

The assessment of primary sources in regard to the reception of Genesis is an important feature of this book. I agree with the scholars who endorse the book on the back cover, that this characteristic is to be received as a real contribution. Provan extends his analysis to the visual arts, which allows the reader to assess the impact of Genesis—mainly—on Western culture. I find, however, that this is not the first impression for the unaware reader. The chapters dedicated to the discussion of the interpretation of Genesis are, rather, a presentation of the overall lines of interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in history and only somewhat focused on texts from Genesis. I was not able to see a real contribution in this area until I reached the chapters dealing with the textual commentary, where Provan discusses the reception history