

TIM MEADOWCROFT, *Like the Stars Forever: Narrative and Theology in the Book of Daniel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2020). Pp. xiv + 174. Hardback. £65.00.

“*Like the Stars Forever*,” a quotation from Dan 12:3, immediately points to the final chapter of the work entitled “Election, Eschatology and the Kingdom of God: A Theological Conversation with the Book of Daniel.” There, in a bold step, Tim Meadowcroft evaluates the comments of systematic theologians about Daniel and/or apocalyptic, with respect to history and eschatology, viewed through the message of Jesus in the New Testament and/or the subsequent church. He concludes that “insufficient allowance (has been made) for the continuity between the apocalyptic vision, as seen in the book of Daniel, and the emergence of the Kingdom of God in the New Testament.” Here he draws particular attention to the way in Daniel that the “historical experience interfaces with a vision of the future,” thus prefiguring the Kingdom of God as both present and in the eschaton. Further, the earlier stories in Daniel model “faithful living.” In coming to these conclusions, Tim Meadowcroft is utilising the fruits of his labour as evidenced in the eight preceding chapters, published previously in a variety of works between 1997 and 2017. As such, they differ in their levels of complexity according to the audience targeted by the original publication. Nevertheless, together they provide insights into literary and theological aspects of Daniel and, in some chapters, their applicability to the Christian life today.

The first three chapters concern aspects of Daniel 1–6. The first, “Points of View and ‘Camera Angle’ in Daniel 4: An Experiment in Narrative Criticism,” presents a resolution to the change from first person to third person to first person in Daniel 4. The second chapter, “Metaphor, Narrative and Interpretation in Daniel 2–5,” examines the correlation between metaphor, sometimes apparent in the text as a dream and sometimes as an “event” and their interpretation. The third chapter, “‘Belteshazzar, Chief of the Magicians’ (Dan 4.9 NRSV): Explorations in Identity and Context from the Career of Daniel,” considers the court tales showing that while the context is the foreign court, the wisdom is God’s and that it directs the actions of Daniel and friends. A theological conclusion is drawn via Daniel 7 to the Christian life. Daniel 7 itself is revisited in Meadowcroft’s Chapter 6 where a closer examination is undertaken, particularly of the figure of a son of man and its correlation with later Christian interpretation in the New Testament and among theologians.

In Chapters 4 and 5 Meadowcroft shows that there is the same kind of two-sided reference that he sees as apparent in “One like a Son of Man” in Daniel 7. In Chapter 4, “Exploring the Dismal Swamp: The Identity of the Anointed One in Daniel 9.24–27,” Meadowcroft presents, through an excellent linguistic analysis, a very credible resolution to the identity/identities of the Anointed One/Anointed Ones and shows that it has implications for the Christian life. In Chapter 5 Meadowcroft asks, “Who are the Princes of Persia and Greece (Daniel

10)?" He answers this question in the second part of the title of the chapter by indicating that they "Provide Pointers to the Danielic Vision of Earth and Heaven." Again, linguistic analysis leads to his conclusion, which once more highlights that in Daniel there is a forerunner to the New Testament's Kingdom of God.

Chapter 8, "History and Eschatology in Tension: A Literary Response to Daniel 11:40–45 as a Test Case," addresses the difficulty presented by that passage, which appears to be factual but is more likely to be prophecy/failed prophecy, as Meadowcroft shows through calling attention to literary aspects redolent of eschatological language.

In Meadowcroft's Chapter 7, "Daniel's Visionary Participation in the Divine Life: Dynamics of Participation in Daniel 8–12," he demonstrates the continuation of the theme of the wise man. The inner dynamics of Daniel's relationship with God are displayed through his visions and his responses. The shift in Daniel 11–12 is to the need for fidelity in difficult times. Again, the views of some theologians are presented.

Overall, the collection is worth publishing. This reviewer senses that the true interest of the author is in the message of Daniel for the Christian believer, a matter he brings very ably to the fore as the result of impressive literary, linguistic and theological abilities. It is to be hoped that the future readers of the work extend beyond Old Testament scholars to New Testament ones and Systematic Theologians.

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JOHN M. G. BARCLAY, *Paul and the Power of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020). Pp. xviii + 190. Paperback. US\$22.99.

At 159 pages plus bibliography and indexes, John Barclay's *Paul and the Power of Grace* offers a shorter yet just as compelling companion to his *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015). Barclay identifies it as an extension of this previous work, but with less of the academic technicalities, expanding on his previous focus on Galatians and Romans to include other letters in Paul's corpus and an application to contemporary situations (xi).

In the prologue, Barclay considers definitions of grace, including what is often spoken of as "'pure grace,' 'sheer grace,' or 'free grace'" (xiv). Pure grace can represent "God's relation to the world" as consisting "only of love, benevolence, and kindness" and without "any notions of wrath or judgement." As such pure grace "signifies unmixed, unqualified love, on the understanding that God has adopted the singular stance towards the world in Christ, without reservation and without limit" (xiv). Sheer grace and free grace have other connotations,