

gap between the historical context and the textual data. The reconstructions need to be based primarily on the text and only secondarily on the historical context rather than the other way round. The book does recognize that some Pauline epistles discuss the issue of opponents more explicitly than others. Therefore, the question of opponents will be more critical for the interpretation of Colossians than it is for Romans.

Any serious Pauline scholar has to wrestle with the issues raised in this volume. It is a needed reference resource for scholars in biblical studies and other areas of theological enquiry. This book will also raise interest in other passages of the New Testament (such as Johannine writings) that tend to wrestle with similar issues.

Michael Sokupa

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

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*Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise. Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, by Zdravko Stefanovic. Boise: Pacific Press, 2007. Pp. 480. ISBN 978-0-8163-2212-1. Hardcover. US\$ 34.99.

Zdravko Stefanovic teaches Old Testament languages (Hebrew and Aramaic) and biblical studies at Walla Walla University. Among Seventh-day Adventist scholars, particularly those who have written on the book of Daniel, Stefanovic's volume appears to be the broadest in terms of exposition and application, as can be seen in the symbols and images in Dan 7–9 which are applied throughout church history to different people and events. Concerning his approach, the author follows the traditional view (i.e., Daniel wrote his book in the sixth century B.C.), while at the same time being open to its challenges. In line with other Seventh-day Adventist biblical scholars, he uses the historical grammatical method to respond adequately to the question of 'what it meant, and what it means?'

In the introduction to the commentary, the author provides an overview to all the relevant issues of the book. This is followed by his analysis of chapter one. Stefanovic believes that this chapter should be treated separately as it is a "prologue that records the historical setting for the entire book" (p. 43). The rest of the chapters are then divided into two main sections, i.e., chapters 2–6 and 7–12. Within these two main sections, a separate section is assigned for each chapter, dealing directly with the text. Each main section begins with a general overview of the background and the issues related to each chapter. The overview of the first section is mainly on narrative and historical issues. The second is on prophecy. The author employs the same approach throughout the entire commentary in order to facilitate the use of the volume. In doing so, he identifies in each verse the

important or difficult word or phrase and then translates it from the original text, which is followed by the discussion of its original meaning and historical context. Having discovered the possible original meaning, the author then exposes and applies it historically.

In the introduction the issues of authorship, biographical background of Daniel, dating of the book, literary features, and the historical setting are briefly discussed. Stefanovic's analysis of the critical issues in the introduction is fair and reasonable. Due to his presuppositions and the external and internal available data, he believes that Daniel, who is mentioned in the book and was taken captive to Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, is the sole author of the book (p. 14). The sub-sections on the historical background are unique as they contain detailed information about Daniel's time including the layout of the city and its location on the world map. Finally, the author brings out the richness of the different literary features of the book and the variety of approaches that are used by scholars to study them.

The next section deals with the second chapter of Daniel. Stefanovic joins other scholars in saying that this chapter "functions as a miracle story, because its main point teaches that only God gives the kind of wisdom that can reveal the mysteries of life" (p. 80). This is followed by the third chapter dealing with the golden image of Dan 3. Apart from the analysis of the text, the background discussion mainly focuses on the dating of this event. According to the author, the evidence of the official Babylonian records and from Jer 51:59-61 suggest that this event's date should be dated around 594 B.C. This, of course, would happen around the tenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar's reign and not on the eighteenth year as others have suggested. The next section deals with Dan 4 and records the second dream of king Nebuchadnezzar. In chapter 5, the feast of King Belshazzar is narrated and set in the court (p. 177). This event reveals the fall of the Neo-Babylonian empire in 539 B.C. Chapter six deals with Daniel in the lions' den in which the author also joins with others in classifying the chapter as the "story of a contest between [two] immutable laws: 'the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked' (v. 8), and the law of Daniel's God" (p. 207).

The second division (also known as the prophetic section of the book) begins with Dan 7, recording Daniel's first vision. This chapter is also considered by the author to be the center of Daniel's book and one of the summit chapters of the Bible (p. 245). An appendix is included, detailing different approaches commonly used by interpreters of Daniel. According to the author, these interpretive frameworks are not generally accepted by Adventist interpreters (including literalist, futurist and preterist approaches)

(pp. 286–92). However, his usage of the word “generally” in the previous sentence suggests that the author is aware of Adventist interpreters who believe otherwise. Certainly, this is alarming as there should be no compromise concerning the method of interpretation. According to Stefanovic, the message of Dan 8 is parallel to that of chapter seven but is enlarged (p. 293). Moreover, it is written in classical Hebrew and not in Aramaic as in chapter seven. Again, another appendix follows detailing similar interpretive approaches and their understanding of the text. Chapter nine is again parallel to the two previous chapters but stands as the centerpiece of Daniel’s visions. According to the author, the central concept in this chapter is the covenant God made with his people at Sinai (p. 335). In chapter ten, the author states that this chapter is classified as a “prophetic call vision,” and it serves as a prologue to the vision given in chapters 11 and 12, which form a single unit with chapter 10 (p. 377). Dan 11, according to Stefanovic, contains “the longest and the most detailed oracle in the book” (p. 395). He goes on to say that anyone who has studied this book agrees that this is the most difficult chapter to deal with. The final chapter twelve is the shortest. In this, the author compares and contrasts the life of Daniel and John the Revelator as important background information, in trying to understand and correctly interpret their prophecies. He also disagrees with some who suggest that the career of Daniel was a straight ascending line. Instead, he emphatically says that it was a series of ups and downs. After this, the author deals with the main content especially the rise of Michael, waiting for the end, and the resurrection of Daniel.

Although this commentary does not make use of all the exegetical tools in the search for the meaning of the text, the author has undertaken an extensive discussion of the text throughout his commentary. Moreover, his high view of Scripture is commendable, as he is trying to stick to the meaning of the text and is not easily sidetracked by the opinions of critical scholars. I highly recommend this commentary to any person who is interested in the Book of Daniel for personal studies, as it is designed and written to be understood by scholars, students, pastors, and even lay people.

Ronald Stone

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES