

Michael Cover. *Lifting the Veil: 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 in Light of Jewish Homiletic and Commentary Traditions*. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 2015. 303 pages. \$140.

In *Lifting the Veil*, Michael Cover examines Paul the Apostle's interpretation of Exodus 34 in 2 Corinthians 3:7-18. Cover's text aims to situate Paul's exegetical practices in the context of first century philosophical and scriptural traditions, turning largely to the exegetical work of Philo of Alexandria as a fulcrum and point of comparison to Paul's Corinthian correspondence. The overall result is a well written and thoroughly engaging work that offers fresh insight on the unique circumstances that helped shape Paul's epistolary interpretations.

In Part One, "Paul's Exegesis of Exodus 34 in Light of the Undisputed Epistles," Cover outlines how Paul's exegesis in 2 Cor 3:7-18 has presented a recurring challenge for interpreters, given its marked difference from the rest of the epistle. Given his historical focus, Cover recounts how historians have understood the 2 Corinthians passage broadly as either a literary insertion (e.g. Hans Windisch) or an authentic epistolary component and Pauline composition (e.g. Rudolf Bultmann). Cover asserts there is a significant link between this passage and Hellenistic commentary tradition, exemplified *via* an oft-used exegetical pattern in the work of Philo of Alexandria. The second chapter of this first section focuses on the diverse exegetical approaches found within Paul's body of work. Cover concludes that Paul's exegetical pattern in 2 Cor 3:7-18 represents a pattern of sequential exegesis that is distinct from the pattern observed in a selection of his other writings.

In Part Two, "Secondary-Level Exegesis in Hellenistic Commentaries, Homilies, and Other Exegetical Writings," Cover traces the parallels between the philosophical school commentary (particularly those by Philo of Alexandria) and the biblical commentaries of Qumran. He argues that Philo's commentary bears aesthetic and rhetorical similarity to Paul's exegesis in 2 Corinthians (133). Cover underscores the appearance of this exegetical pattern in non-scholastic genres of writing, such as homilies and Greco-Roman letters. By bringing together such a wide swath of material, Cover illuminates how secondary-level exegesis (that is, exegesis that holds the dual foci of text as well as theme/story) appeared across genres and served various purposes. This approach was often used within non-exegetical texts (particularly those directed at specific communities) as a way of producing authoritative digression (223). Cover argues that Paul's exegetical pattern in 2 Cor 3:7-18 reflects precisely this digressive aesthetic.

What is the significance of this digressive aesthetic, beyond providing evidence that Paul's pericope bears stylistic resemblance to contemporary writings of other genres? This question animates the discussion in Part Three, "Lifting the Veil: The Rhetorical Function and Theological Purpose of Paul's Exegesis of Exodus 34." Cover explores the digressive aesthetic in another slate of texts as a way of uncovering how exegetical digressions enabled writers to produce rhetorical and theological amplification. By comparing 2 Cor. 3:7-18 to contemporaneous texts from Seneca, Philo, and others, Cover produces evidence to support his belief that these authors share both a digressive compositional aesthetic and a desire to connect the content of such digressions to the larger bodies of text in which they appear (249). In other words, Paul's exegesis and its surrounding narrative (the passage of 2 Cor 2:14-4:6) are linked in ways that suggest literary unity. Cover goes further to argue that these rhetorical and thematic links suggest Paul's use of Moses' image and ministry in Exodus 34 as both a comparison and contrast to his own. Cover's final chapter underscores how Paul's exegesis of Exodus 34 in 2

Cor 3:7-18 reinforces the construction of Christian Mosaic exemplarity, wherein Moses represents an idealized model of God's revealed vision (302–3).

Though Cover's text is primarily oriented around textual and historical interests in New Testament and early Judaism, it is a valuable read for persons of various sub-disciplines with exegetical and rhetorical interests. Cover's sustained treatment of Paul's exegesis is especially helpful for explicating how stylistic and thematic influences operate across genres in meaningful ways. Part Two furnishes some intriguing insights for homiletics, particularly in light of how homiletic practices, ancient and contemporary, function as secondary exegesis of sacred texts and life themes. As a whole, Cover's volume achieves his hope for "a useful study in one of the hermeneutical faces of Paul" (26). I heartily recommend this text as an entry point not only into the study of Paul's writings, but also the exploration of broader phenomena in the realm of Jewish and Greco-Roman literary traditions.

Kyle Brooks, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN