

BOOK REVIEW

Jae Hyun Lee, *Paul's Gospel in Romans: A Discourse Analysis of Rom 1:16–8:39* (Linguistic Biblical Studies, 3; Leiden: Brill, 2010). xii + 568 pp. Hbk. US\$207.00.

This book is the third volume to appear in the Linguistic Biblical Studies series from Brill, following after T. Foley's *Biblical Translation in Chinese and Greek* (2009), and Y.M. Park's *Mark's Memory Resources and the Controversy Stories (Mark 2:1–3:6)* (2010). It is a revision of Lee's Ph.D. dissertation supervised by Stanley E. Porter at McMaster Divinity College in 2009.

According to Lee, the aim of this book is to 'answer the following three questions: Where is Paul's central peak(s) in Rom. 1.16–8.39? What is the content of the peak point(s)? And how can one identify the central point(s)' (p. xiii). In order to answer these questions, Lee brings in a rigorous linguistic methodology (discourse analysis) to analyze Rom. 1.16–8.39. The book has been divided into ten chapters. The first two chapters are related to methodology. Chapter 1 is a review of different approaches to Romans: social-scientific readings, intertextual readings, narrative readings, rhetorical readings, and linguistic discourse analysis. According to Lee, with the exception of his discourse analytic approach, all other readings 'share a common weakness that they do not seem to regard the text as the starting point of their analysis' (p. 23). In Chapter 2, Lee begins to illustrate his method of linguistic discourse analysis. He principally follows the Hallidayan model of systemic-functional linguistics, combining it with Georgakopoulou's concept of peak to design his methodology. Lee's method focuses on the analysis of topicality, focality and grouping of the text. His analysis of each unit involves the following procedure: text analysis of each unit in which Lee uses the analyzing charts of the OpenText.org; the analysis of topicality (focusing on the structure, semantic domains and logical relations); the analysis of focality, both at and beyond the sentence level; and a summary.

In the subsequent chapters, Lee demonstrates that Paul uses two descriptive frameworks to express the gospel of salvation: '(1) an interactive framework between God and humans; and (2) a contrast between the old realm and the new' (p. 431). Here is the content of Paul's gospel: salvation in the interactive framework is expressed as God's reward-gift to people who have faith; and in the two-realm framework it relates to the transition of believers from the old realm (under the power of sin, death, etc.) to the alternative new one (union with God's grace and eternal life). Chapter 3 deals with Rom. 1.16-17, which serves as an introduction to Paul's gospel as salvation to all believers. The next two chapters are about the interactive paradigm between human sinfulness and God's wrathful judgment throughout Rom. 1.18–3.20. Chapter 6 shows a new salvific interactive paradigm in Rom. 3.21–4.25, which focuses on 'the interaction between human faith and God's gracious salvation' (p. 213) in the forensic dimension.

Chapter 7 discusses the fact that Jesus holds the central role in Romans 5, which not only includes the previous topical issues, but also provides a more complete picture of salvation than before. It adds a relational dimension, an aspect of the future state, and introduces a two-realm framework in describing salvation in which believers are transferred from the dominion of sin and death to the new realm of God's grace.

In Chapter 8, Lee argues that in Rom. 6.1–7.25 Paul describes the two contrasting realms of a believer's life. The first unit, Rom. 6.1–7.6, focuses on the believer's new life in the realm of eternal life. In the second unit, Rom. 7.7-25, Paul shows 'the seriousness of sin in human life...through the depiction of a tragic situation of the unregenerate person in Rom. 7.7-25' (p. 378). In Chapter 9, Lee indicates that Rom. 8.1-39 gives a supplementary view on God's salvific works in which Paul provides a detailed explanation about the role of the Spirit in respect to the life of believers.

In the last chapter, Lee concludes that Paul's gospel about God's salvation has one peak point in Romans 5 and two sub-peaks in Rom. 3.21-26 and Romans 8, respectively. Appendices 1 and 2 are related to the analysis of Rom. 1.16–8.39 according to the frame of topicality and semantic domains, respectively.

This book makes a great contribution to biblical studies in terms of a linguistic discourse approach. Since not many New Testament texts have been considered from this perspective, such a methodology will

become more and more important as a text-orientated approach. It is a great achievement in modeling a new discourse analysis based on the analysis of semantic domains. Moreover, Lee's discourse analysis is a well-designed linguistic method. The analysis is logical and smooth. This method can help to determine the flow of thought of Paul's argument, which saves some seemingly controversial texts in Romans (e.g. 7.7-25) from unceasing debates.

However, there are a few things worth noticing. First, Lee determines Romans 5 as the central point of God's salvific gospel through his analysis of Rom. 1.16–8.39 without including the analysis of other chapters. Contrary to Lee's assumption that Rom. 1.16–8.39 is a central part of the Epistle, it is Romans 9–11 that recent scholarship has considered as the climax of the book. Secondly, Lee's analysis, though clear, seems overly simple. He does not explore some controversial but significant issues in depth. For example, Lee has not explained what he means by 'the Gentiles can be regarded as law-possessors by doing the law', when the Gentiles refer to non-Christians (p. 164). What does he mean by 'doing the law' here? Does he mean doing the whole law? Or doing part of the law? In addition, Lee has not explained the meaning of 'the doers of the law will be justified', except for pointing out that 'the statement in v. 13 functions to show how far God's justification is from the Jews who lack the obedience to the law despite their possession of it' (pp. 160, 166). Romans 2.13 is an important but controversial verse, which has been the subject of heated debates, but Lee does not refer to them. Furthermore, there appears to be some small errors in his book. For instance, according to Lee's text analysis, this reviewer counts that there are seven primary clauses in Rom. 4.9-12, not eight as Lee suggests (p. 250). Also, one editing error: p. 362 is blank, where there should appear the text analysis of Rom. 7.15-18. Overall, it is a good book worth reading. It will be helpful particularly in linguistically oriented approaches to biblical studies.

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