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Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2006). Pp. xix + 274. Cloth, US$40.00. ISBN 0-300-11735-3.

In this book Levenson counters theological claims about the unessential character of bodily resurrection in Judaism and the preference among contemporary Jews for immortality by demonstrating resurrection's centrality in Classical Judaism with roots in both rabbinic and biblical texts.

Levenson surveys the rabbis' exegetical rationale for resurrection in the Torah, claiming their "expectation of resurrection has far more continuities with their biblical predecessors' thinking than has heretofore been recognized" (34). Levenson convincingly supports this in Chapters 3–13. Here Levenson challenges standard opinions about death and the development of bodily resurrection in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism. Resurrection did not emerge *de novo* during the Seleucid persecution but developed organically from ideas already present in scripture, ideas he calls antipodes to death.

Sheol, Levenson claims, is not a locale but a mode of existence. Illness and adversity are death-like and contrary to life. Deliverance is viewed as rescue from Sheol and "so miraculous as to be in the nature of a resurrection" (p. 39). The one who dies after a fulfilled life does not go to Sheol but is gathered to his kin and lives on through his descendants and name (p. 78). Redemption (Chapter 3) and birth/progeny (Chapter 4), therefore, are antipodes to death and Sheol.

With its paradisiacal descriptions, the temple provides a spatial antipode to Sheol (Chapter 5). Its visitors experience an "intimation of immortality" because redemption and life

(Ps 133:3) prevail there. The stories of Elijah and Enoch both offer rare examples of a life that ends without death. These point to the possibility of a permanent existence with Yahweh to which one's experience in the temple only hints (see also Pss 49:15–16 and 73:23–28).

Levenson rightly emphasizes that the self in ancient Israel was much more group-oriented than our Western individualistic notions (Chapter 6). Resurrection is always tied to communal concerns. "[I]nfertility and the loss of children serve as the functional equivalent of death" in Ruth, Job, and the Patriarchal Narratives because they threaten the perpetuation of an entire family (p. 119). Birth and progeny, in contrast, restore the family to life (a theme evidenced in *Kirta* and *Aqhat*, too, Chapter 8). The actual resurrection of the Shunammite couple's son (2 Kings 4) illustrates this connection (Chapter 7): Yahweh raises the dead and restores familial wholeness.

Second Isaiah's message (Chapter 9), utilizing metaphors of "the return of the lost sons and daughters" (Isa 43:6; p. 143), "the patriarchal promise of posterity" (Isa 44:1–5, 48:17–19; p. 144), and the comforted barren/bereaved (Isa 49:14–26; p. 145) or temporarily abandoned (Isa 54:4–6; p. 153) woman, proclaim a virtual resurrection for Israel. Ezekiel 37 (Chapter 10) envisions restoration from exile as a metaphorical re-creation, a re-birth.

Levenson admits the biblical material he surveys is decidedly this worldly; that is, the antipodes to death and Sheol only hint at what would become physical resurrection. "[D]eath is universal and inevitable" generally in the Hebrew Bible (p. 179). But Levenson warns against imposing our notion of death as biological cessation upon what only looks to be metaphorical. For deliverance, healing, or restoration would be viewed in ancient Israel as rescue from death itself. Still, he sees a tension between a wholly negative view of death and Yahweh's promise of life (Chapter 11), which develops toward resurrection: "what had been a rare exception [i.e., rescue from death] in the early period became the basis for a general expectation in the late one" (p. 175).

Turning to Daniel 12 (Chapter 12), Levenson finds resurrection both an individual and corporate phenomenon. The people, identified with worthy individuals (p. 184), are raised to eternal life. There is a permanence to resurrection here lacking in previous texts. Although

having developed under the influence of apocalyptic, Levenson shows continuity between Daniel 12 and earlier biblical texts, especially in Yahweh's power to vindicate his people and restore them to life, and traces its specific intertextual connections with Isa 52:13–53:12, 66:22–24, and 26:13–21. He extends these connections in chapter 13 to earlier texts in Hosea (5-6, 13–14) and the textual complex associated with the Divine Warrior. Resurrection, Levenson concludes, is ultimately rooted in the Divine Warrior's cosmic renewal after his defeat of the powers of death.

Levenson's study is outstanding in tracing literary themes contributing to the development of bodily resurrection. But one senses the absence of other "social and cultural factors" (p. 196). He mentions briefly the impact of apocalypticism, the changing attitudes about a fortunate death (pp. 175, 213), and Ezekiel 18's new focus on the individual (p. 178). But these are undeveloped. Zoroastrianism's influence was indirect at best (pp. 157, 215–16); Seleucid martyrdom and the supposed crisis this had on divine justice was insignificant (pp. 180, 191–96). Levenson's sociological insight about ancient Israel's group-oriented notion of self is important. But might there have been a shift toward individualism in Israelite society during the Hellenistic period (e.g., consider the increasing importance of attributing authorship to literary works) that contributed to the rise of individual bodily resurrection? As Levenson presents it, full-fledged resurrection was a literary-theological development of the tension between the inevitability of death, the promise of life, and the power of the deity to make good on his promises, especially as the latter two are found in earlier scripture. Although certainly true, this seems too literary and intellectualist to be the whole story.

Especially valuable for its exegetical insights and important correctives to common thinking about afterlife and resurrection in ancient Israel (and contemporary Judaism), Levenson's book is worthy of prolonged study. (The lack of a bibliography and subject index diminishes the book's usefulness.)

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