

REVIEW

Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity: Doctrine, Community, and Self-Definition*

(Leiden: Brill, 2004), paper, xii + 191 pp.

Reviewed by Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, University of Cordova (Spain)

The book by Claudia Setzer admirably describes the development of the belief in resurrection in early Judaism and early Christianity.

In the first chapter, the author studies the concept of resurrection among Sadducees and Pharisees, using material from Josephus, the Gospels, Acts, and the Rabbinic literature to examine how each conceives the idea of resurrection and the symbolic boundaries through which it builds an identity. The second chapter analyzes the idea of resurrection among the first followers of Jesus including in the Corinthian Church. In the third chapter, Setzer describes the views of the Apostolic Fathers and the fourth deals with objections to Christianity from mainly Celsus and Caecilius. These accusations focus on the lack of socio-cultural and political integration within the Empire. In the fifth chapter the author discusses the importance of the belief in resurrection in terms of community self-definition, including funerary inscriptions. The sixth chapter deals with Christian apologists who defend the belief in the resurrection of the flesh such as Irenaeus of Lyon (2nd century) and Tertullian.

According to the Jewish writings in the early period, perhaps influenced by Persia, the bodies of the dead will rise on the Day of the Judgement. By the Second Temple period the idea of the resurrection had developed into a Pharisaic dogma, in opposition to Sadduceean belief.

One noticeable feature is that of the martyrdom, which later influenced early Christianity through Paul's writings. Paul, who had a similar approach to the Rabbis, turned it into a boundary-marker and later Christian writers developed it into a new religious framework. Thus the idea of resurrection although founded in a Jewish framework is deeply influenced by Greco-Roman belief. The interests of Jews and Christians, therefore, moved towards fields of different eschatological self-definitions, even though they were both influenced by Greco-Roman culture.

The author, perhaps, should have paid more attention to the relationship, as understood by the rabbis, between the resurrection, 'ōlām ha-bā' ("world to come") and the 'Messianic era'. It would also have been interesting to elaborate on the differences in early Christian writings on resurrection, eschatological resurrection, and the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ or "First resurrection", for example, had a great impact in the later Byzantine rite such as a mystical proclamation of the triumph of Christ over the power of death. But in the Byzantine liturgy it is not so much Christ's physical resurrection from the tomb that is celebrated as the resurrection of humanity by his harrowing of hell. An excursus on the so-called 'Apocalypse' of Isaiah (Is 24-27) would also have been helpful.

This is a splendid publication and a fitting testimonial to one of the several beliefs which were circulating in those early days of the "transition" from Judaism to Christianity. Claudia Setzer has produced a well-informed study which represents a fine addition to the growing library of contemporary hermeneutic studies on early Jewish and Christian writings.