Disembodied Souls: The Nefesh in Israel and Kindred Spirits in the Ancient Near East, with an Appendix on the Katumuwa Inscription

Richard C. Steiner

A reevaluation of the concept of the soul based on the latest evidence

Biblical scholars have long claimed that the Israelites “could not conceive of a disembodied nefesh [soul].” Steiner rejects that claim based on a broad spectrum of textual, linguistic, archaeological, and anthropological evidence spanning the millennia from prehistoric times to the present. The biblical evidence includes a prophecy of Ezekiel condemning women who pretend to trap the wandering souls of sleeping people. The extrabiblical evidence suggests that a belief in the existence of disembodied souls was part of the common religious heritage of the peoples of the ancient Near East.

Features:
- A reexamination of the evidence for and against disembodied souls in the Hebrew Bible
- A new look at the nature and behavior of disembodied souls in the Hebrew Bible
- A new study of the meaning and sociolinguistic background of the Katumuwa inscription

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