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Resurrection: A Symbol of Hope

by [Lloyd Geering](#)

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Published by Hodder and Stoughton: London, Auckland, Sydney, Toronto, 1971.

SUMMARY

(ENTIRE BOOK) A helpful examination of the Christian meaning of resurrection — including the difference between belief in Jesus' resurrection as an historical event, versus resurrection as an expression of faith in the risen Christ.

.Resurrection does not mean the endless prolongation of a conscious self but a life of such quality that, having no further concern for self-interest, can transcend death and rise to a fresh mode of manifestation in the lives of men and women who follow.

- Chapter 1: A Question of Meaning

Because the resurrection of Jesus has to do with faith rather than with objective historical fact, it can be described and understood in more than one way.

- Chapter 2: Can the 'bodily resurrection' be defended?

The chief arguments used to support the traditional view of the empty tomb story — known as 'bodily resurrection', and why many scholars today fail to find them convincing.

- Chapter 3: Was There a Tomb Found Empty?

The age-long tradition of the 'events' of Easter day, so old that it was caught up in the New Testament itself, can no longer be defended as an historical description of the resurrection of Jesus.

- Chapter 4: Where Does This Leave Us?

The idiom of resurrection came to be used as language in which men could express their hope for the future.

- Chapter 5: Resurrection is the Hope for the Return of Spring

Out of our earth-world there comes to us the message that death is the end of every creature and every form of finite life, but that always beyond death there is new life of some kind. This observation constitutes a ground for hope — a hope that finds an appropriate idiom in the word 'resurrection'.

- Chapter 6: Resurrection as the Hope for National Revival

In many ways the rise of the new state of Israel is the modern counterpart of the use of the idiom of resurrection to express in metaphorical form the hope of an historical renewal after the national life has been near to the point of extinction.

- Chapter 7: Resurrection as the Hope for the End-Time

In three to four centuries before Christ, the resurrection idiom found a new mode of expression, by which some Jewish believers proclaimed their hope for the final vindication of the faithful at the end-time.

- Chapter 8: The Diversity of Views on the Resurrection Hope

The Jewish belief in an eschatological resurrection became part of the Christian

expression of hope.

- Chapter 9. The Path Prepares for a Sudden Turn

The early Christians did not believe in the resurrection, as such, but in the risen Christ. The Easter faith was not an affirmation of the resurrection hope, but an affirmation about Jesus himself; expressed in terms of the idiom of resurrection.

- Chapter 10: Resurrection as an Idiom for Exaltation

The language of the eschatological hope of resurrection was used by the followers near the beginnings in order to express the Easter message. Thus a fresh use was found for the idiom of resurrection. It was now employed to describe the exaltation to heaven of a particular person, because his exaltation included the victory over his death.

- Chapter 11: Resurrection as an Historical Event

From Luke's Acts, the impression is left that the resurrection was a historical event, that it attributed to the risen Jesus a physical form. Resurrection became a historical event of the same character as the crucifixion. This view of the resurrection remained fundamentally unchanged until it finally collapsed within the last hundred years.

- Chapter 12: Resurrection as the Hope for Personal Immortality

The Jewish doctrine of resurrection had not only preceded the rise of Christianity, but was also the necessary background for the expression of the Easter faith in terms of the resurrection of Jesus. In the course of time resurrection was increasingly orientated to the interests of the individual person, so that it became the Christian form of the hope of personal immortality, guaranteed by the affirmation of the Easter proclamation.

- Chapter 13: What Can 'Resurrection of the Dead' Mean for Us?

The term 'resurrection of the dead' should not be interpreted as a hope for the prolongation or restoration of our own conscious existence, but rather a hope that human life has meaning, that when our conscious existence is ended, the historical life we have lived may be raised before the eternal Judge, and may be vindicated, as being of some value for that Kingdom which is eternal and for whose fuller manifestation on earth we ever pray.

- [Chapter 14: What Can the 'Resurrection of Jesus' Mean for Us?](#)

The meaning of the cross must not be forgotten in the meaning of the resurrection. It is the Jesus who truly died who has been raised to spiritual life in a new form in the community which bears his name. Life does not mean the endless prolongation of a conscious self but a life of such quality that, having no further concern for self-interest, can transcend death and rise to a fresh mode of manifestation in the lives of men who follow.

- [Bibliography](#)

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