



Is This All There Is?: On Resurrection and Eternal Life

Gerhard Lohfink , Linda M. Maloney (Translation)

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Is the Christian hope for resurrection still alive or has it become tired? How can we talk about the Resurrection today? Gerhard Lohfink takes up the question of death and resurrection in this new book. He argues against the dazzling array of today's ideas and expectations and seeks his answers in Scripture, the Christian tradition, and human reason. With his characteristically gentle but clear language, he reveals the power of Christian resurrection, showing it is not about events that lie in the distant future but rather occurrences incomprehensively close to us. They were long since begun and they will embrace us fully in our own death..

Is This All There Is?: On Resurrection and Eternal Life Details

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David says

I picked up this book expecting more philosophy and less theology. That's admittedly my own fault, but I was disappointed. Arcade Fire's song "Afterlife" asks over and over, "Where do we go?" And the music video for that song does about as much as this book does in tracing the threads of human existence in the face of death. Nevertheless, Lohfink's work with the Christian tradition and scriptures is solid. Anyone looking for that, here it is.

On a side note, I felt like Lohfink vastly oversimplifies religions and ideologies when it comes to their views on afterlife. There's not one Christian or one Buddhist or one Hindu belief concerning afterlife, but Lohfink sets them up as though they're static and monolithic sets of beliefs.

Johnny Mettlach says

No greater book on the deep (not pop, trendy or "ticket to heaven") look at heaven, hell (akin to CS Lewis), Judgement, mercy, justice and all things beyond our last breath here, with a beautifully "shocking" ending steeped in Kingdom theology brilliantly explained via scriptural exegesis (primarily but not exclusively of Jn 5:24, 25) and an outstanding look (in a way no other book I've read has come close) at eschatology by CENTERING it (between the Kingdom here now, however, not yet fully manifested but surely to arrive completely) on God and his ADORATION. Does an intriguing and surprising job of looking at purgatory that is both honoring to its basic premise (the Judgement Seat of Christ in I Corinthians 3) and to most non-Catholic traditions, by not insisting (rather questioning) the polemical minutia that traditionalists tend to cling to ferociously (as if it was as important as essentials like the divinity and humanity of Christ, Virgin Birth, grace, etc.) Others have written on this as well recently like <https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Hell-Pu...>

Can not recommend this book too highly.

Harry Allagree says

You have to love a theologian who begins his book with a statement like this: "There is one thing I have feared and tried to avoid as I was writing this book -- boring the readers." This is the second book of Lohfink's which I've read, and I would not consider him at all boring. As a Roman Catholic theologian, he strikes me as quite amazing in his insights & interpretation of Scripture, as well as in his setting the record straight on some long-held misrepresentative Catholic interpretations, the kind on which I was brought up.

The title just about says it all, in terms of what it is he develops: "Is That All There Is?: On Resurrection and Eternal Life". The process of answering that, as far as any human can, leads to other hard questions: "in the end [death] is there just nothing, or is there a resurrection of the dead?" ...And if so, how? when? does it involve me than just me as a human being (e.g., the universe? matter? animals? pre-human ancestors in transition to humanity? countless unborn lives stopped before they began?) I find Lohfink to be an exceptionally honest writer, asking questions & letting the chips fall where they may in attempting to answer

them. He says, "...everything in this book is about my own questions."

I wish more of Gerhard Lohfink's work were in English...he actually makes theology fun!

Jeff says

Though I have two degrees in Biblical studies and I have been employed in the field of ministry, I've never been able to wrap my head around death and afterlife. I affirm the words of the creed, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting," yet every time I am confronted with death I question that belief. It was in this context that I asked some of my friends in PhD programs and the ministry for book recommendations on the topic. A friend recommended this book and I was delighted when I find it on my public library app!

Much of the book is Bible 101. The Hebrew Bible/OT presents a very earthly view of life, death, and the "soul." However, by the time the last book of the OT (Daniel) is written, the Jews have developed a doctrine of the after life (I was reminded of Jon D. Levenson's *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*). Lohfink explains that Israelites had to free themselves from the surrounding cultures' theologies on death and the afterlife before they could develop their own. Then Lohfink goes on to explain Jesus' kingdom parables and how Jesus was the firstfruit of the resurrection (similarities to N.T. Wright's work here.)

All of this is groundwork for the final part of the book in which Lohfink theologizes about heaven, hell, the afterlife, and eschatology. There is a lot of deep thought here (and honestly, a lot of it was over my head). There were a lot of ideas that I may not have necessarily agreed with but definitely found worthy of mulling over:

- When we are raised, we are raised "in the flesh." We are intimately connected to the things that surround us in life. If, for example, we spent our entire life taking care of animals wouldn't make sense that animals are "resurrected" with us? Could such a person truly find bliss in the afterlife without animals?
 - The Catholic idea of purgatory does not necessarily have to be a definite time or space. Purgatory is the moment in which a person approaches God in all of God's righteousness
 - Hell is only for those who chose it (similar to C.S. Lewis' ideas). If are all intimately connected, than those that are loved will be raised with the ones they loved.
 - Afterlife exists outside of time. Therefore, when one dies, one is instantly in the eschaton "with Christ."
 - The Gospel of John subverts eschatology and resurrection is NOW.
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