



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

Resurrection Power

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Have you ever wondered why it is that right around Easter, we are bombarded by chocolate bunnies, colored eggs and baby chicks? Have you asked yourself, “What do these things have to do with Jesus’ resurrection from the dead?”

The answer is simple: Nothing! Absolutely nothing. There is no connection, real or imagined. So why is this annual ecclesiastical holiday connected with these symbols? What are they symbols of?

The answer is debated, but the evidence points to fertility symbols connected with ancient pagan gods and goddesses. The Scientific American says this: “Eggs occupy a special status during Easter observances. They’re symbols of rebirth and renewal—life bursts forth from this otherwise plain, inanimate object that gives no hint as to what it contains. In this regard it is a handy symbol for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but it is a symbol that has held this meaning long before Christianity adopted it.” (Beyond Ishtar: The Tradition of Eggs at Easter)



How did such symbols find their way into Christian practice? Again, the Scientific American is correct when it says, “it is well known that under the Roman Empire, Christianity did indeed adopt the pagan rituals of conquered peoples in an effort to help convert them. It worked pretty well as a strategy as it allowed the conquered peoples to continue a semblance of their observances as they remembered, and with time the population would be replaced with those who only

knew the new traditions. This is not a secret.” This policy of syncretism was promoted by Pope Gregory the Great, who reigned from 590 – 604 AD.

Clearly this is not a Biblical practice. There is no serious Biblical basis for these practices. And in reality, what the Scriptures teach far surpass anything any pagan religion ever offered to its adherents.

Paul writes this in Philippians 3:10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death*; The power of His resurrection! This is what Paul longed to know – the power of Jesus’ resurrection. As we believe in Christ, we are united to Him in both his death and his resurrection. Through our union with Christ, we are now dead to sin and alive to God. We can and do live in the power of the

resurrection, pursuing righteousness by His Spirit, who dwells in us.

This new life that we have in and through our Risen Savior not only equips us for our present lives in this world, but it prepares and empowers us for the life we will live for all eternity in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

These are high and holy truths, that lift us up to Christ, who is seated in glory in the heavenly places. And we are seated with Him in the heavenlies! These things belong to us now, and we ought to yearn for a fuller enjoyment of these things in the days to come!

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Mnemonics...

- **4/9 Worldview Movie Night**
- **4/11 Joint Service at Bethel in Oostburg**
- **4/13 Session Meeting**

John Ploughman

Chapter 11: Things Not Worth Trying

THAT is a wise old saying, "Spend not all you have, believe not all you hear, tell not all you know, and do not all you can." There is so much work to be done that needs our hands that it is a pity to waste a grain of our strength. When the game is not worth the candle, drop it at once. It is wasting time to look for milk in a gate post, or blood in a turnip, or sense in a fool. Never ask a covetous man for money till you have boiled a flint soft. Don't sue a debtor who has not a penny to bless himself with—you will only be throwing good money after bad, which is like losing your ferret without getting a rabbit. Never offer a mirror to a blind man: if a man is so proud that he will not see his faults, he will only quarrel with you for pointing them out to him. It is of no use to hold a lantern to a mole or to talk of heaven to a man who cares for nothing but his dirty money. There's a time for everything, and it is a silly thing to preach to drunken men; it is casting pearls before swine. Get them sober and then talk to them soberly; if you lecture them while they are drunk, you act as if you were drunk yourself.

Do not put a cat on a coachbox or men in places for which they are not fitted. There's no making apples of plums. Little minds will still be little, even if you make them deacons or elders. It's a pity to turn a monkey into a minister or a maid-servant into a mistress. Many preachers are good tailors spoiled, and capital shoemakers turned out of their proper calling. When God means a creature to fly, He gives it wings; and when He intends men to preach, he gives them abilities. It is a pity to push a man into the war if cannot fight. Better discourage a man's climbing than help him to break his neck. Silk purses are not to made out of sows' ears, and pigs will never play well on the flute, teach them as long as you like.

It is not wise to aim at impossibilities—it is a waste of powder to fire at the man in the moon. Making boards out of sawdust is a very sensible scheme compared with what some of my London friends have been aiming at, for they have been trying to get money by buying shares in companies; they might quite as soon catch the wind in a net or carry water in a sieve. Bubbles are fine fun for boys, but bubble companies are sharp-edged tools that none should play with. If my friend has money which he can afford to lose, there is still no reason why he should hand it over to a set of knaves. If I wanted to get rid of my leg, I should not get a shark to snap it off for me. Give your money to fools sooner that let rogues wheedle you out of it.

It is never worthwhile to do unnecessary thongs. Never grease a fat sow or praise a proud man. Don't make clothes for fishes or coverings for altars. Don't paint lilies or garnish the gospel. Never bind up a man's head before it is broken or comfort a conscience that makes no confession. Never hold up a candle to the sun or try to prove a thing which nobody doubts. I would advise no one to attempt a thing which cost more than it is worth. You may sweeten a dunghill with lavender water, and a bad living man may keep up a good character by an outward show of religion, but it will turn out a losing business in the long run. If our nation were sensible, it would sweep out a good many expensive but useless people, who eat the malt which lies in the house that Jack built; they live on the national estate but do it little service. To pay a man a pounds earning a penny is a good deal wiser than' keeping bishops who meet together by the score and consult about the best way of doing nothing. If my master's old dog was as sleepy as the bishops are, he would get shot or drowned, for he wouldn't be worth the amount of the dog tax. However, their time of reckoning is nearing, as sure as Christmas is coming.

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Long ago, my experience taught me not to dispute with anybody about tastes and whims; one might as well argue about what you can see in the fire. It is of no use plowing the air or trying to convince matters of no consequence. It is useless to try to end a quarrel by getting angry over it; it is much the same as pouring oil on a fire to quench it or blowing coals with the bellows to put them out. Some people like row—I don't envy their choice; I'd rather walk ten miles to get out of a dispute than a half-mile to get into one. I have often been told to be bold and take the bull by the horns; but, as I rather think that the amusement is more pleasant than profitable, I shall leave it to those who are so cracked already that an ugly poke with a horn would not damage their skulls. Solomon says, "Leave off strife before it be meddled with," which is much the same as if he had said, "Leave off before you begin." When you see a mad dog, don't argue with him unless you are sure of your logic. Instead, get out of his way; if nobody calls you a coward, you need not call him a fool—everybody knows that. Meddling in quarrels never finds answers: let hornets' nests be alone, and don't pull down old houses over your own head. Meddlers are sure to hurt their own characters: if you scrub other people's pigs, you will soon need scrubbing yourself. It is the height of folly to interfere between a man and his wife, for they will be sure to leave off fighting each other and turn their whole strength upon you—and it would serve you right, too. If you put your spoon into other people's broth and it scalds you, who is to blame but yourself?

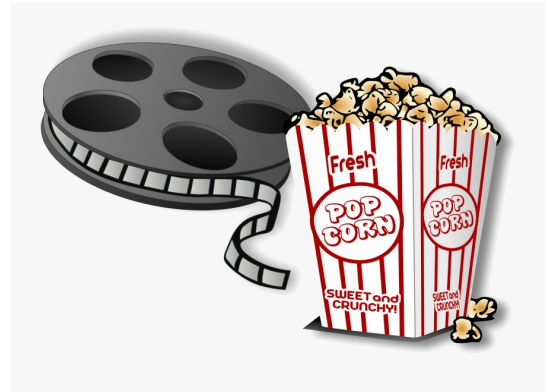
One thing more, don't attempt to make a strong-minded woman give way, but remember:

"If she will, she will,
You may depend on it.
If she won't, she won't,
And there's an end to it."

The other day I cut out of a newspaper a scrap from America, which shall be my endpiece: "Dip the Mississippi dry with a teaspoon; twist your heel into the toe of your boot; send up fishing-hooks with balloons and fish for stars; get astride a gossamer and chase a comet; when a rain storm is coming down like the cataract of Niagara, remember where you left your umbrella; choke a flea with a brickbat! In short, prove everything hitherto considered impossible to be possible but never attempt to coax a woman to say she will when she has made up her mind to say she won't.

Worldview Movie Night

Our Worldview Movie Night is Friday, April 9th at 7:00 pm
The movie is "One Foot in Heaven" starring Frederic March
and Martha Scott. Popcorn & drinks provided, other refresh-
ments welcome. Invite a friend.



“Grow in the root of all grace, which is faith.
Believe God's promises more firmly than ever.
Allow your faith to increase in its fullness,
firmness, and simplicity.”

C.H. Spurgeon



April Birthdays

Jay Buyze	1st	Sara TenPas	21st
Warren Gillmer	4th	Toni Barthels	22nd
Pastor Brian De Jong	5 th	De Lou De Jong	22nd
Nancy Harmelink	7th	Jeff Froh	22nd
Randy Jensema	10 th	Emile Blasczyk	24th
Mary Gillmer	12th	Chris Kaeiser	24th
Audrey Voskuil	17th	Christian De Jong	28 th
Gail Moody	18th	Rodney Nyhof	28 th
Sue Gross	20th		

April Anniversaries

Jason and Emily Will
 April 8th 5 Years

Josh and Stephanie Arndt
 April 13th 8 Years

Joe and Heidi Mamazza
 April 20th 9 Years

Update from Woody and Laurie Lauer

OPC Japan Mission, Yamamoto Japan. For more information and photos, please visit www.opcjapan.com and Facebook pages: OPC Japan and Nozomi Center.

Laurie's account of the night of the earthquake and its aftermath-- Feb.13, 11:08 p.m. Exhausted and looking forward to God's planned Sabbath rest, I was winding down a last task for the night. With no rumbling outside and no emergency signal via the phone, suddenly the house was shaking fiercely in a way we had never felt before. In that moment, exiting was the only safe plan if the house fell down. Dropping everything, I called upstairs to the 2 sleeping girls, Sara (daughter and missionary associate) and Anna (our granddaughter), to leave the house immediately, but the roar of the quake prevented them from hearing anything. Upon reaching their room, I found them praying aloud, terrified they might be injured trying to leave. We escaped, grabbing only blankets on the way out. The quake lasted more than 2 minutes. We drove to pick up Woody at Nozomi Church where he was studying, fearing the need to evacuate in case of tsunami. Calling inside through the window, Woody responded, but was digging his way out of 10 inches of avalanched books in his office. He had held onto his computer during the quake, but most of his books had fallen, obstructing the door and preventing a quick exit. One bookshelf even pulled out of the wall. The sleepy region was suddenly lit up, and cars were leaving for higher ground. The happy announcement that no tsunami was expected followed, and we set about to visit the elderly and those living alone. Visibly shaken neighbors, crumbled concrete walls, and water main breaks were evident, but we were glad to find that people were safe. Returning home after 1:30 a.m., we were numbed to the shattered glass, broken dishes, and scattered books, as the quakes continued and helicopters flew above for hours. We were in God's hands, and his power was shown afresh. Psalm 46:1-3 rightly states, "God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride."

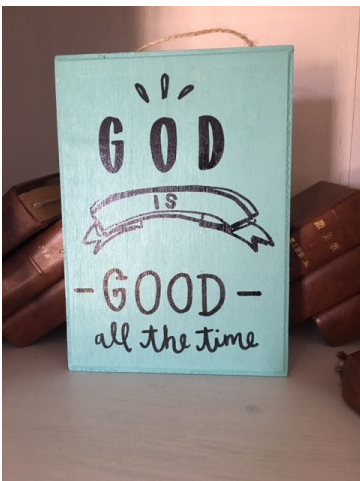
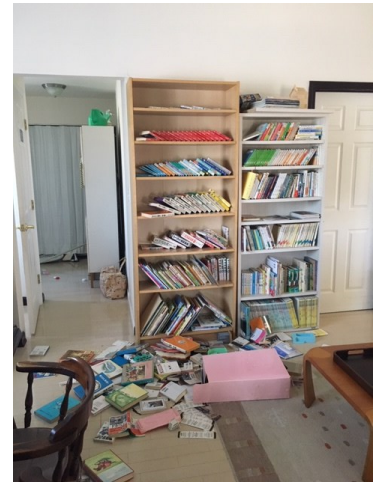
Sunday morning, we found Nozomi Church in disarray. By 3 p.m. we had cleaned up enough to hold worship (postponed from 10:30) and to praise God for his mercies. Later that afternoon, running water was restored to our neighborhood. Within the first 24 hours, we experienced 43 aftershocks. By **Thursday**, after working continuously, the building was back in good shape (save cracked walls and lost dishes), and we plunged again into activities from that day on. Late **Thursday**, the town announced that water was restored for everyone. The only large hospital in town suffered significant damage with walls falling down and broken water pipes. All out-patient services were closed for 2 weeks, and the emergency room is still unusable. Many elderly are dependent on this hospital; at least the trains are running which enable the possibility of going north for medical help. Significant roof damage was evident as we visited homes throughout the town. Damage estimates for one Christian family just south of Yamamoto are \$100,000.

We have yet to complete clean-up of our own house, and there is much more visitation which we long to do. Aftershocks are unsettling, and the authorities warn that a bigger quake could be coming soon. Though the aftershocks had stopped after 10 days or so, we had 6 more this weekend, a few more disconcerting than others.

People here learn from these quakes that life itself is important; material goods are insignificant by comparison; and the lives of those around us are significant. Five days after the quake, a 90 year old neighbor died of a heart attack. Mr. Sayama was greatly touched by this, and the fact that the elderly lady's son was able to visit with her even for a few minutes before she lost consciousness. Oh, that our neighbors would become convinced their idols are useless and would come to know their Creator, see the glory of his greatness, and know his everlasting lovingkindness!

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The Aftermath of the Earthquake



Update from Peter Chikaonda

Sent: March 5, 2021

Subject: Greetings

Good Morning Rev Ivan

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ,how are doing I thanked Lord because all of us we are doing well including our churches we thanked the lord because of His grace we see number of cases of pandemic now it goes down we are still praying for this pandemic.

Always we pray for you because we know that your heart is here in Malawi that was your desire, I hope if you would be 50 years old you would have been here as our missionary and I thanked Lord because he has blessed you with many years and good work It is our prayers always that God should bless you with abundantly life and good health .

When you told me that you were effected by covid-19 all our churches we had been on fasting and praying the whole day if there is some problem need to pray please let me know that we can take part to pray for it , next week I expect to visit some our churches at chiladzulu and this week I visiting certain church here this is a new group but I will travel by motorcycle thanks greetings to your family yours in Christ Peter Chikaonda.

Sent: March 13, 2021

Subject: Thanks giving

Good evening Rev Ivan

How are doing , I had good and safely journey and good meeting at chiladzulu and I bought seven Bibles I distribute them after a meeting, [tomorrow](#) I will visit another church I had already told you that this is new group I will send you another picture [tomorrow](#) after services , 7 Bibles I cost each Mk 8,500 × 7 =mwk 59,500 which US\$ 76,282 people are very thankful because it was their needs and they request hynms if shall be possible to consideration them next trip below is a picture after meeting greetings to your family in Christ Peter chikaonda.

Update from Peter Chikaonda Continued...



MISSIONARY PROJECT FOR COLLEGE MKs

A few of our Ladies have suggested we put together care packages for “Missionary Kids” who are in college in the States.

For those interested in helping with this project we will be getting together on Thursday, April 15 at 1:00 at Church.

This should be a fun and rewarding projects for our Church to help the missionary families.

We will be putting up a list of item that may be donated.

Anyone with questions please see Phyllis Nyhof, Ellen Mc Neese, or Dorothy Wingard.

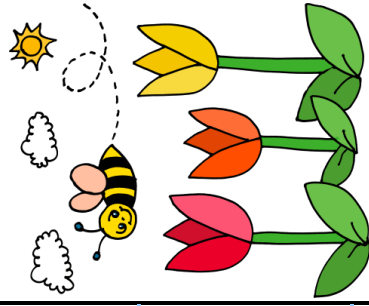
Grace OPC

April 2021

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 Worldview Movie Night	10
11 Joint Service at Bethel in Oostburg	12	13 Session Meeting	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Lord's Supper	26	27	28	29	30	



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SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES 2021

March 21, 2021	Fellowship Lunch	Ladies Group
April 9, 2021	Worldview Movie Night	Pastor Brian
April 15, 2021	Missionary Package pack-up	Dorothy & Ellen
May 2, 2021	Evening Fellowship Meal	Ladies Group
May 15, 2021	Shalom Wildlife Zoo Outing	Roger & Deb
May 23, 2021	Fellowship Lunch	Ladies Group
June 9, 2021	Moms & kids park outing	Stephanie Arndt
June 24, 2021	Mini Golf	Wendy
July 5, 2021	Golf – Sunset Hills	Jeff
July 11, 2021	Men Serve Fellowship Lunch	Pastor Brian & Crew
July 14, 2021	Moms & kids park outing	Alyssa Arndt
July 16 or 23, 2021	Fire on North Beach	Jeff
August 5, 2021	Church Picnic	Ladies Group
August 14, 2021	Bike Ride	Roger & Deb
September 9-11, 2021	Church Campout / pitch in supper	Pastor Brian
September 24, 2021	Worldview Movie Night	Pastor Brian
October 2, 2021	Ladies Crafts	DeLou
October 8, 2021	Sub / Game night	Sara / Wendy
October 30, 2021	Reformation Conference - Snack	Ladies Group
October 31, 2021	Reformation Conference Lunch	Ladies Group
November 13, 2021	Harvest Home	Ladies Group
November 25, 2021	Thanksgiving Football Game	Jonny Arndt
December 5, 2021	Evening Fellowship Meal	Ladies Group
January 7, 2022	Bowling / Pizza / Game night	Pastor Brian
February 11, 2022	Taco / Game night	Ladies Group



Showing forth the
excellencies of
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Spurgoen Corner

“And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.” Leviticus 1:4

Our Lord’s being made “sin for us” is set forth here by the very significant transfer of sin to the bullock, which was made by the elders of the people. The laying of the hand was not a mere touch of contact, for in some other places of Scripture the original word has the meaning of leaning heavily, as in the expression, “thy wrath lieth hard upon me” ([Psalm 88:7](#)). Surely this is the very essence and nature of faith, which doth not only bring us into contact with the great Substitute, but teaches us to lean upon him with all the burden of our guilt. Jehovah made to meet upon the head of the Substitute all the offences of his covenant people, but each one of the chosen is brought personally to ratify this solemn covenant act, when by grace he is enabled by faith to lay his hand upon the head of the “Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.” Believer, do you remember that rapturous day when you first realized pardon through Jesus the sin-bearer? Can you not make glad confession, and join with the writer in saying, “My soul recalls her day of deliverance with delight. Laden with guilt and full of fears, I saw my Saviour as my Substitute, and I laid my hand upon him; oh! how timidly at first, but courage grew and confidence was confirmed until I leaned my soul entirely upon him; and now it is my unceasing joy to know that my sins are no longer imputed to me, but laid on him, and like the debts of the wounded traveller, Jesus, like the good Samaritan, has said of all my future sinfulness, ‘Set that to my account.’” Blessed discovery! Eternal solace of a grateful heart!

“My numerous sins transferr'd to him,
Shall never more be found,
Lost in his blood's atoning stream,
Where every crime is drown'd!”

Evening, April 13th, C.H. Spurgeon

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Front Page Concluded...

So as you are munching on the head of a chocolate bunny, think about the power of Jesus’ resurrection. Ponder how the risen Christ now empowers you to live unto God in righteousness and holiness.