



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

The Intrigue of History

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Over the past century, Evangelical Christians have been intrigued by the future. From the early 1900's onward, prophecy conferences were wildly popular. The preachers at these conferences would often weave together current events with Scriptural prophecies to come up with predictions concerning the future.

Of particular interest – especially in the late 70's and early 80's – were specific pronouncements on the return of Christ to earth – the second coming. I recall one booklet that was floating around in those years entitled “88 Reasons Why Christ will Return in 1988.” Not surprisingly, it disappeared from the shelves in January, 1989.

Even today, the more popular Christian television outlets often host prophecy teachers making all manner of predictions about what’s “just around the corner.” It must have an audience, or they wouldn’t continue airing such material.

For my part, I’m far more intrigued with the past than I am with the future. History has a pull that far outweighs the speculations about what tomorrow may bring.

Don’t get me wrong – I am confidently awaiting the return of Christ, the judgment day, the new heavens and the new earth. All of those glorious events, foretold so clearly in Scripture, are far better than we can possibly imagine. The worst day in the new heavens and the new earth will radically eclipse the best day of past history.

Yet, history beckons and invites our attention. It draws us back into forgotten

stories of people who lived and died long ago. It tells us tales that inspire us, or alternately that terrify us. History is narrative, when properly considered. It is not dry and dusty collections of dates and names. It is the tale of lives lived that evoke the powers of our imagination. They take us back in time to observe the triumphs and tragedies that have characterized the human race over the ages.

My research into the life of you-know-who (AFP) is a case in point.

The more I’ve researched, the better I’ve understood what went on in the years of his ministry – especially his trial. It seems at times like I’m in the gallery, watching the prosecutors and the defense councilors sparring. I’m on the edge of my seat, listening to catch the testimony of the witnesses. I’m not just a detached and distant observer, but it is as if I’ve become part of the

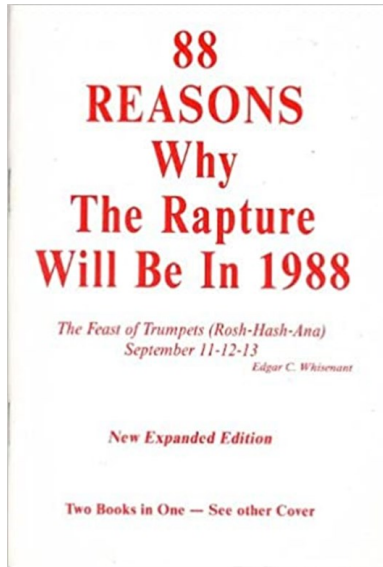
narrative as my imagination is engaged.

During my years at RTS in Jackson, our Church History professor was Dr. Albert Freundt. He was as good a historian as he was bad at lecturing. His classes were dull from a delivery standpoint, but fascinating from a content standpoint. What he said was scintillating. How he said it was BORING. Yet despite his dry delivery, he successfully challenged us to engage with church history in active ways. Get into the story, and think about the challenges they faced, the decisions

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Mnemonics...

- 9/8, 9/15, 9/22, 9/29 Prayer Meeting
- 9/14 Session Meeting
- 9/9-9/11 Church Campout
- 9/17-9/18 Presbytery

Chapter 21: Things I Would Not Choose

IF IT were all the same to other folks and I might have things managed exactly as I liked, I should not choose to have my homely book pulled to pieces by fellows who have not the honesty to read it but make up their minds beforehand, as Simple Simon did when they put him on the jury. However, as the rhinoceros said, "I have not a very thin skin; and if it amuses others to find fault with me; they are as welcome as they are free." The anvil is not afraid of the hammer. They tell me those London editors cut a page open, and then smell the knife, and fall to praising the book up to the skies or abusing it without mercy, according as the maggot bites them, or according to what they have had for dinner. John Ploughman hopes the publisher will turn down this leaf when he sends his book to the papers, and he hopes the following word to the wise will be enough: I hope my pears won't fall into pigs' mouths. I should not choose, if I might have my own way, to see a dozen of these pages brought home wrapped round the butter the next time we send to the shop; but it is not at all unlikely to happen, so I must put up with it, as Tom Higgs did when he had only turkey and plum pudding for dinner.

I should not choose to plow with two old horses, spavined and broken-winded and altogether past work: pity the poor horses, and pity the poor plowman, and no pity at all for the farmer who keeps such wretched cattle. When I see a man whipping and slashing a poor brute of a horse, I want to kick him; but at the same time, I feel glad that Violet and Dapper go well enough with the sound of the whip without needing to be paid like lawyers for all they do. A man who Mocks a horse about ought to be put in harness himself and be driven about by a butcher. There's a good deal to be done with animals with kindness, and nothing with cruelty. He who is unmerciful to his beast is worse than a beast himself.

I should not choose to be a bob-tailed cowl in summertime, nor a servant with a score of masters, nor a minister with half-a-dozen ignorant tyrants for deacons, nor a man who lives with his mother-in-law. Nor should I like to try the truth of the old saying:

"Two cats and one mouse,
Two women in one house,
Two dogs to one bone,
Will not agree long."

I had rather not be a dog with a tin kettle tied to his tail, nor a worm on a fisherman's hook, nor an eel being skinned alive, nor a husband with a vixen for his wife I would much rather not fall into the jaws of a crocodile or the hands of a lawyer: the only suit that lasts too long is a lawsuit, and that would not suit me at all. I would not choose to be gossiped to death by wild washerwomen, or pestered by a traveling bookseller wanting me to take in sixpenny numbers of a book that will run on forever like old Jimmy's debts.

I would be very hard up before I would choose to sleep with pigs or live in some people's dirty houses. I would not choose to own half the cottages poor laborers are made to live in; no farmer would be so mean as to keep his horses in them and they are not goods enough for dog kennels. Think of father, mother, a grown-up son, and two daughters sleeping in the same room! It is a burning shame and a crying sin on the part of those who drive people to such shifts. It won't bear to be thought of, and yet it is not at all uncommon. Squires and landlords, how would you like it? If any man defends such a systems half-an-hours hanging would be a good thing for him.

To be servant to a miser, to work for a wasp, to be cats-paw to a monkey, or toady to a lord without brains, I would not choose; nor go to the workhouse, nor apply for parish relief; I'd sooner try Grantham gruel, nine grits and a gallon of water. I would not go round with the hat for my own pocket, nor borrow money, nor be a loafer, nor live like a toad under a harrow—no, not for all that ever thawed out of the cold hand of charity.

Bad off as I am, I would not choose to change unless I could hope to better myself. Who would go under the spout to get out of the rain? What's the use of traveling to the other end of the world to be worse off than you are? Old England for me, and Botany Bay for those who like to transport themselves.

I would not choose to drive a pig, nor to manage a fibbing nag, nor try to persuade a man with a wooden head; nor should I like to be a schoolmaster with unruly boys, nor a bull baited by dogs, nor a hen who has hatched ducks. Worse off still is a preacher to drowsy hearers; he hunts with dead dogs and drives wooden horses. I would as well hold a service for sleeping swine as sleeping men.

I would not buy a horse of a horse dealer if I could help it for the two or three honest ones nobody ever heard of. A very honest horse dealer will never cheat you if you don't let him; an ordinary one will pull your eyetooth while your mouth is shut. Horses are almost as hard to judge as men's hearts; the oldest hands are taken in. What with bone spavin, ringbone and splints, grease, crown scab and rattail, wind galls find cankers, colic and jaundice, sandcracks and founders, mallenders and sallenders, there is hardly a sound horse in the world. It's a bad thing to change horses at all. If you have a good one, keep it, for you will not get a better; if you have a bad one, keep it, for ten to one, you will buy a worse.

I would not choose to make myself a doormat nor a poodle, nor a fellow who will eat dirt in order to curry favor with great folks. Let who will tell lies to please others. I'd rather have truth on my side, if I go barefoot. Independence and a clear conscience are better with cold cabbage than slavery and sin with roast beef.

I would not like to keep a tollgate at the top of a long hill, nor to be a tax collector, nor the summoning officer, nor a general nuisance nor a poor postman with half enough to live on and twice as much to do as he ought; it would be better to be a gypsy's horse and live on the common with no hay and no oats but plenty of oak cudgel.

I would not choose to be plucked like a goose, nor to be shareholder in a company, nor to be fried alive, nor to be at the mercy of a Roman Catholic priest. I would not stand as godfather to anybody's child, to promise that the little sinner shall keep God's holy commandments and walk in the same all the days of his life. Of the two, I would sooner promise to put the moon into my coat sleeve and bring it out again at the leg of my trousers, or vow that the little dear shall have red hair and a snub nose. Neither would I choose to have lies told over my baby in the hope of getting on the parson's blind side when the blankets were given away at Christmas.

I would not choose to go where I should be afraid to die, nor could I bear to live without a good hope for hereafter. I would not choose to sit on a barrel of gunpowder and smoke a pipe, but that is what those do who are thoughtless about their souls while life is so uncertain. Neither would I choose my lot on earth, but leave it with God to choose for me. I might pick and choose and take the worst, but His choice is always best.

Church Campout

Our annual Church Campout pitch-in supper will be on **Friday, September 10** at Kohler-Andrae State Park. Bring some food to share, and a camp chair for an evening of food and fun around the campfire. See Pastor Brian for more details.



“You will never know the FULLNESS of Christ until you know the EMPTINESS of everything else but Christ.”

- Charles Spurgeon



September Birthdays

Howard Voskuil	7 th	Virginia Berenschot	22 nd
Bennett Arndt	10 th	Stephanie Friberg	22 nd
Mark Berenschot	12 th	Joshua Arndt	25 th
James Bingham	14 th	Henry Bingham	27 th
Elizabeth TenPas	16 th	Harper Arndt	29 th
Amelia Will	21 st		
Kristen Berenschot	22 nd		

September Anniversaries

Carl & Phyllis Nyhof September 3rd
55 Years

Harlan and Nancy Harmelink September 4th
63 Years

Jonny and Alyssa Arndt September 24th
5 Years

Roger and Deborah Arndt September 24th
38 Years

Paul and Linda Damkot September 28th
47 Years



September 2021



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
5	6	7	8 Prayer Meeting	9 Church Campout	10 Church Campout & Pitch-in Supper @ 6pm	11 Church Campout
12	13	14 Session Meeting	15 Prayer Meeting	16	17 Presbytery	18 Presbytery
19	20	21	22 Prayer Meeting	23	24	25
26 Lord's Supper	27	28	29 Prayer Meeting	30		

PUMPKIN MUFFINS WITH PECAN STREUSEL

Ingredients

For the streusel:

- * ½ cup all-purpose flour
- * ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- * 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- * pinch of kosher salt
- * 5 tablespoon cold unsalted butter, cut into small chunks
- * 1 cup chopped pecans

For the muffins:

- * 1 ¾ cups all purpose flour
- * 1 teaspoon baking soda
- * ½ teaspoon salt
- * ½ tablespoon cinnamon
- * 1 ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- * 1 ½ cups sugar
- * ½ cup canola oil
- * ⅓ cup water
- * 1 cup pumpkin puree
- * 2 eggs
- * 1 teaspoons vanilla extract



Instructions

- * Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line two muffin tins with paper liners or spray with cooking spray. Set aside.

To make the streusel:

- * Combine the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt in a medium bowl. Using a pastry blender, cut the butter into the flour mixture until the mixture looks like coarse crumbs. (If you prefer, you could also combine the dry ingredients and butter in a food processor and pulse to blend.) Stir in the pecans. Set aside.

To make the muffins:

- * Whisk together flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a medium bowl. Set aside.
- * In a large bowl, whisk together sugar, oil, water, pumpkin, eggs, and vanilla extract. Whisk until smooth. Slowly fold in the flour mixture. Mix until ingredients are combined. Add ¾ cup of the streusel to the mixture and stir until the streusel is just distributed throughout the batter.
- * Divide batter among the muffin cups and top each muffin with remaining streusel. Bake 18 to 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of muffin comes out clean. Allow to cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Spurgeon Corner

“Who of God is made unto us wisdom.”

1 Corinthians 1:30

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Man’s intellect seeks after rest, and by nature seeks it apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Men of education are apt, even when converted, to look upon the simplicities of the cross of Christ with an eye too little reverent and loving. They are snared in the old net in which the Grecians were taken, and have a hankering to mix philosophy with revelation. The temptation with a man of refined thought and high education is to depart from the simple truth of Christ crucified, and to invent, as the term is, a more *intellectual* doctrine. This led the early Christian churches into Gnosticism, and bewitched them with all sorts of heresies. This is the root of Neology, and the other fine things which in days gone by were so fashionable in Germany, and are now so ensnaring to certain classes of divines. Whoever you are, good reader, and whatever your education may be, if you be the Lord's, be assured you will find no rest in philosophizing divinity. You may receive this dogma of one great thinker, or that dream of another profound reasoner, but what the chaff is to the wheat, that will these be to the pure word of God. All that reason, when best guided, can find out is but the A B C of truth, and even that lacks certainty, while in Christ Jesus there is treasured up all the fulness of wisdom and knowledge. All attempts on the part of Christians to be content with systems such as Unitarian and Broad-church thinkers would approve of, must fail; true heirs of heaven must come back to the grandly simple reality which makes the ploughboy’s eye flash with joy, and gladdens the pious pauper’s heart—“Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” Jesus satisfies the most elevated intellect when he is believingly received, but apart from him the mind of the regenerate discovers no rest. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” “A good understanding have all they that do his commandments.”

Evening, September 25th, C.H. Spurgeon

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they made, the outcomes that resulted. Dr. Freundt hooked me on church history!

Sadly, many people today dislike history. It seems uninteresting to them, so they close their eyes to the past. They want to live in the present, with dreams about the future. But, as George Santayana said in The Life of Reason in 1905, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

This theme – the importance of history – runs throughout the Bible. It comes to expression in Hebrews 13:7 *Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.* This is why we must study, and not forget history. God

calls us to remember – to remember so that we may learn, and learning, we may imitate the faith of godly men. Then we too will enjoy similar results as they experienced!