

Future Perfect

1 John 3:1-7

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Misleading Reviews

What They Said

A famous music journal wrote about this musician that his works were

incomprehensible, abrupt, and dark ... much of it is enormously difficult without there being some exceptional beauty to compensate for it.

This basketball executive was

widely recognized around the league as a basketball genius, a savvy executive with a deep understanding of the game, especially evaluating players. Other teams would literally track [his] scouting activities and use rumors about which players he was interested in to gain confidence in their own personnel decisions.

General Sir Alan Brook, British Chief of Staff, on a certain American soldier:

[He] as a general is hopeless! He submerges himself in politics and neglects his military duties, partly, I am afraid, because he knows little if anything about military matters.

Who Were They?

Ludwig van Beethoven

Stu Inman, the Trailblazers exec who drafted Sam Bowie ahead of Michael Jordan

Gen. Dwight Eisenhower

Guessing the wrong way

Present circumstances can lead us to overestimate someone's future, like Mr. Inman, whose past successes could not prevent him from making one of the bigger blunders in draft history. The same thing happened to those who invested in tech stocks in 2001 or Las Vegas real estate in 2007.

The same thing happens in reverse: not seeing the genius in Beethoven or the leadership in Eisenhower.

Biblical characters were no different.

Samuel saw Jesse's son Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord." They had to run through all the sons until finally they fetched David from tending the sheep.

Elijah was convinced he had no future: I am the only one left. God had to search him out to let him know

about the 7,000 faithful in Israel.

Jonah, Moses, Paul -- scripture is replete with people who couldn't judge even their own futures.

How do we gauge our future?

What lead us to those conclusions? Trusting the wrong clues, some sensory, others the product of imagination.

What do we trust to gauge the future for ourselves and others? Income? Charisma? Athletic ability? Beauty? Intelligence? Past successes? Popularity?

A different gauge: Jesus' resurrection

1 Jn 3:1-2 -- How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Easter is the true gift that keeps on giving: we are now the children of God (w00t!) but the future is even better: we shall be like him!

Who are we in this future? Kings and queens, sinless and holy, full of joy and community, fully satisfied, fully engaged, fearless, overflowing with love.

A future reality at work now

We live in a great tension, summarized by two different verses in 1 John: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1:8) and "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him" (3:6).

We need to be mindful of our sinfulness *and* mindful of our infinite, Easter-resurrection future. We are tempted to arrogance if we forget Good Friday. We are tempted to belittling God if we forget Easter.

The future is not limited to what we see. Our bad attempts at prediction should remind us of that. Our future is limited only by God!