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GLORY DAYS?

The latter half of my “growing up years” occurred during the 1980s. Ah, the glory days. My Philadelphia Phillies began the decade by winning the World Series in October of '80. It was a decade of economic growth and prosperity. And it was the era of Ronald Reagan, the man whom I consider to be the greatest president of my lifetime. Life was good then. Really, it was!

However, in hindsight things seem to look even better than they actually were. We tend to forget the cares, fears, and challenges of the past, and reminisce on days gone by as if they were without trial. In the Old Testament of the Bible we see the people of Israel struggling with this very tendency. When things got difficult after God had led them out of Egypt the people complained, saying “Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” (Num. 14:3, NKJV). The past, even a past of slavery and oppression, seemed more glorious and rosy than their current circumstances!



Ronald Reagan (1911-2004)
40th President of the United States (1981-1989)

As good as the decade of the 1980s was, it was not without its serious challenges on a national and global scale. In fact, living through those days this thing called “The Cold War” seemed like a global crisis of epic proportions with immanent catastrophe around the corner. A 1983 TV movie called *The Day After*, watched by more than 100 million people in its initial broadcast, was a fictional story of nuclear war between the US and its allies and the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact nations.¹ Though *The Day After* was fictional, the potential for such a devastating global conflict seemed all too real. The news media also seemed to accentuate the possibility of such a scenario. I remember referring to the “World News” which aired from 6:30-7:00 at that time, as “The Scary News”, and I did not want to be in the room when it was on. And while many will now give Ronald Reagan credit for helping to end The Cold War, some of his opponents at the time saw him as the president who would blow up the world. I remember those moments of fear and anxiety, sometimes wondering if I would even live into adulthood, and have the opportunity to marry, have children, and pursue my vocational desires.

Yes, for all of its glory, even the '80s had a persistent, seemingly never-ending crisis. And yet here we are 20-plus years later: the Berlin Wall has come down, and Communism as we had known it has crumbled, the US became the World's lone military superpower, and life moved on. We face a different set of problems and crises in our current era. The problems and crises over the past 4 or 5 years have been primarily economic in nature. And yet many probably are feeling a similar fear and anxiety about the future to what we did in the '80s. While many of the media personalities have changed since the

¹ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Day_After

80s, the media's propensity to accentuate the negative and highlight potential "worst-case scenarios" has not changed. And finally, the same God who was on the throne in the 80s is still there today, and will be as we move forward. So while we may be tempted to look at days gone by through rose-colored glasses, let us remember that each previous era had its own set of problems, challenges, and even crises. And while we don't know or have any guarantees as to what the future holds, let's consider the possibility that solutions to our current problems could be on the horizon, and the possibility that the "worst-case scenarios" may never come to pass.

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