

The Former Days Were Better

- It is difficult to look at the moral and cultural changes in American and not feel a sense of loss.
- The schools were safer, TV was cleaner; Marriage was for life; Gambling along with Drugs, Porn and Homosexuality were vice.
- People believed the Bible was inspired and when shown they were wrong they would change.
- Churches made many converts both with gospel meetings and individual Bible Classes.
- It was a “kinder gentler world.”

The Former Days Were Better

- Those who were active in evangelism also look back with longing:
- Churches doubled every few years.
- 8-10 Bible Classes each week.
- People often came forward for baptism.
- Yet the title is misleading:
- “**Do not say**, *Why were the former days better than these? For you do not inquire wisely concerning this*” Ecc. 7:10

The Former Days Were Better

- **“Do not say, Why were the former days better than these? For you do not inquire wisely concerning this”** Ecc. 7:10
- Why not? Why is it not wise to so inquire?
- It was a better time for evangelism.
- Today the ground is harder/results diminished
- Sin has become much more blatant.
- The spiritual environment in Western Civilization has entered a “post” Christian age.

Nothing New Under the Sun

- *That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. 10 Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us. Eccl 1:9-10*
- This has all happened before.
- God has seen this many times.

Changes can occur in One Generation

- We are not the first generation to see things change so quickly.
- As Israel left Egypt, that generation was rebellious and died in the wilderness.
- Only Joshua and Caleb lived to see Canaan where *“Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua”* (Josh. 24:31).
- Yet those who took Canaan lived to see *“another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD”* (Judg. 2:10-11).
What a bitter time to live through.

Changes can occur in one Generation

- David and Solomon brought Jerusalem to its zenith yet the next generation saw Jeroboam lead the ten tribes into apostasy.
- How tempting to see the former days as better when “*the Levites left their common- lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests*” (2Chr. 11:14)?
- Yet to become bitter or despondent changes nothing.
- We can’t joyously serve the Lord while bemoaning the *former days*.

Were The Former Days Better?

- Sin just wasn't as gross or blatant as today.
- God needs us just as much today as then.
- The war is different, the fighting harder and more bitter, but we are still soldiers
- It is easier to be a soldier in times of relative peace but God still needs us in time of severe strife.
- We can't get bogged down in nostalgia or what might have been.
- We have to “*fight the good fight of faith*” (1Tim 6:12); and “*suffer hardship as a good soldier of Christ*” (2Tim 2:3-4)

The Former Days Were Better

- *“Do not say, Why were the former days better than these? For you do not inquire wisely concerning this” Ecc. 7:10*
- Why Not? They certainly were!
- God wants us to ignore it.
- He wants us to live in the present
- He wants us to plan for the future.
- There is too much today to waste time on yesterday.
- What might have been and what was must not compete with what can be.

The Former Days Were Not Better

- *“Do not say, Why were the former days better than these? For you do not inquire wisely concerning this” Ecc. 7:10*
- *forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ...press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” Phil 3:13-14*

The Former Days Were Not Better

- Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. Heb 11:35-40

Our Task as Long as we Live

- God knows we can't control the changes in our body and mind or the attitudes of a new generation.
- But He wants us to be active, living with the present challenges and working as hard as we can regardless of obstacles or changes now barring the way.
- We must seek the wisdom to make whatever adjustments are needed to continue to be the light of the world and salt of the earth.

Live Each Day Facing the Challenge

- The gospel must be preached as effectively as possible in every generation.
- So what will we do?
- Bemoan the weakness of our body and the ungodliness of our age and do nothing?
- Or, will we “*forget those things which are behind and reach forward to those things which are ahead?*”