

The “*Good Old Days*”

- It is bittersweet for a Christian who is old enough to look back on the past 30 years or more.
- The country we grew up in is not the same.
- We feel a sense of loss looking at changes in what is seen as right and wrong.
- Schools were safer and the teachers feared parents.
- More people were married
- 60 years ago the vice squad sought out those involved in gambling drugs, pornography and Homosexuality because they were all illegal.

The “*Good Old Days*”

- Many believed the Bible was inspired and when shown they were wrong they would repent.
- Churches made many converts both with gospel meetings and individual Bible Classes.
- Many churches doubled every few years.
- Preachers had 8-10 Bible Classes each week.
- There were more sound churches.
- 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 “*Good Old Days*”

- “*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.
- The churches were stronger and more numerous
- Sin has become much more “*in your face.*”
- The spiritual environment in Western Civilization has entered a “post” Christian age.
- Hope for the future has diminished as the world become more wicked.

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.
- Noah faced far worse in his generation ... But
- God still needed Noah to live during those days to continue His plan.

God Needed Noah in the Present

- *But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. 9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. Gen 6:8-10*
- Earth was filled with violence, Every imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts were evil continually, the earth was corrupt.
- But God needed Noah focused on His commands and needs in that moment. The “good old days” were only a distraction ... must live in the present.
- *Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did. Gen 6:22*

Changes can occur in One Generation

- We are not the first generation to see things change so quickly.
- As Israel left Egypt, the three generations were so evil they all died in the wilderness.
- Only Joshua and Caleb lived to see Canaan and saw Israel at one of its zeniths of faithfulness “*Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua*” Josh. 24:31
- As that generation began to pass away, the faithful witnessed exactly what we are seeing today.
- “*another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD*” Judg. 2:10-11
- What a bitter time to live through.
- Yet, once again, God needed the faithful focused...

Changes can occur in one Generation

- David and Solomon led Jerusalem to its highest point of faithful service ... David conquered Jerusalem, Solomon built the temple. 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 living in the past, feeling nostalgic is not helpful
- God needs the faithful focused on what they can do today. It is never wise to inquire of the former days.

Were the “*Good Old Days*” truly Good

- Sin just wasn't as gross or blatant as today.
- God needs us just as much today as then.
- The battle is different, in some respects the fighting is harder and more bitter, yet we march on
- It is easier to be a soldier in times of relative peace but God still needs us in times of severe strife.
- We can't get bogged down in the nostalgia of the past. What might have been, will now never be.
- We have to “*fight the good fight of faith*” 1Tim. 6:12
- “*suffer hardship as a good soldier of Christ*” 2Tim. 2:3-4

What if 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 in many ways!
- Yet 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 is and yet 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*
- The NT echoes the same truth ...
- *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 always 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*

What Still May Be

- *There is a generation that curses its father, And does not bless its mother. 12 There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, Yet is not washed from its filthiness. 13 There is a generation — oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. 14 There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, And whose fangs are like knives, To devour the poor from off the earth, And the needy from among men.*

Prov 30:11-14

- We haven't reached this bottom yet.
- Things *may* get a lot worse than they are now.
- We can't control the attitudes of a new generation.

Habakkuk Witnessed these Changes

- *O Lord, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save. 3 Why do You show me iniquity, And cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; There is strife, and contention arises. 4 Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds. 5 Look among the nations and watch — Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you. 6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. Hab. 1:2-6*

Does God's Answer Surprise Us?

- *Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. 3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. 4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. Hab 2:2-4*
- Habakkuk was living in the final days before the coming of Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem.
- Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel lived to see those days.
- God needed them all to be focused on the work of the present and not the glories of the past

Live Each Day Facing the Challenge

- For the Hebrew Christians Rome's coming was imminent and God gave the same answer.
- *For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. Heb 10:36-39*