



Daily Verse and Comment

Ecclesiastes 7:10

(10) Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?"
For it is not wise to ask such questions.

New International Version

The times we live in are indeed becoming steadily more difficult. Christian values are consistently being attacked. Under such circumstances, a person is apt to say what Solomon warns us against saying. It is easy to let ourselves become "down." But we need to be careful because discouragement is a child of impatience. In difficult situations, we want the trouble to pass quickly. However, be aware that in such times it is easy to allow one's carnality to take the bribe of doing a "quick and dirty," less-than-good job to make life less stressful and tiring.

Taking a quick-and-easy approach is understandable because conditions in this nation give no sign of positive change. Those governing us seem to be delivering us into the hands of the nation's enemies. Others who are illegally invading us appear to be dragging us into the gutter, and much of the nation's wealth is flowing into the hands of the few. Jobs are becoming scarcer.

These things are true to some degree, but we have to resist allowing this influence to get a firm grip on us, as it indicates that our focus is too much on carnal men and all their self-centered flaws rather than on what [God](#) is accomplishing to fulfill His promises. Yes, living is growing less comfortable, but He is telling us to focus on what He will accomplish in the future. God wants us to evaluate honestly what we have received by virtue of His calling.

Consider an interesting aspect of the mindset of father Abraham. [Genesis 13:2](#) describes him as very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. [Hebrews 11:10](#) reports that despite all that wealth, he looked for a city whose Builder is

God. We know that Abraham was wealthy enough to put together an army of over 300 men, but in this way, God shows us what dominated his mind.

What lay in the future, not the present, motivated his life. Abraham bought no land to call his own, and [Hebrews 11:9](#) records that this very wealthy man lived in tents. A tent is a symbol of temporariness, as well as lack of wealth and status. The wealthy live in solid homes; the poor live in tents because they can afford nothing better. Yet, Abraham was not merely wealthy but *very* wealthy.

Abraham was aware of the riches of [the world](#) around him. He came from Ur of the Chaldees, a prosperous city. He visited Egypt, the world's most powerful and wealthiest nation at the time. What [Hebrews 11:9](#) does not say is that, all the while he lived in what appears to be a lowly status, he was heir of the world ([Romans 4:13](#))! To a person of [faith](#) that means a great deal.

Some may mistakenly think that everybody lived in tents in Abraham's time, so the way he lived was the way every wealthy person lived. Thus, there is nothing unusual in the Bible pointing these things out. Not so. The way Abraham lived reflected where his heart was, a glimpse into his faith, vision, and humility. Archeologists have compiled a great deal of evidence about the time Abraham lived. The people of that day built fine houses and huge buildings. The cultures were highly developed, and their building projects were grand and extensive.

It has been said that the “good old days” are the result of bad memory and good imagination. Old folks are prone to declare, “The old was better.” That is true sometimes. Solomon's advises that, though we must look back to learn, the future must nonetheless dominate our minds. A person looking over his shoulder while trying to move forward at the same time is likely either to crash into something or to trip and fall over an impediment. [Jesus](#) cautions in [Luke 9:62](#), “No one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Solomon is urging *us*, the called, to move on with life and its problems by looking and working toward the future. In context, then, the “former days” refers to the time before we were converted, not some earlier time in the history of our culture. This makes this warning more individual and potent.

Being called creates new difficulties, but especially now because we are living in nations that are losing both their moral and economic powers. What we are experiencing can create feelings of despair that keep us focused on just merely making it. This kind of attitude is not good.

God warns us in verse 10 that it is not wise to hold a strong opinion that former days were better. He wants us to keep our minds on His sovereign power and purpose while accepting His governing judgment on the circumstances of our times. We do not want to be guilty of calling Him into account, but that is exactly what we would be doing. We must never forget that He rules—constantly!

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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