

# *The Good Old Days*

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Jeremiah 6:16-17 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.

- I. Every generation has its doomsayers and critics.
  - A. That is because every generation has many things in common.
  - B. As a whole, human nature never changes except to become more and more evil collectively.
  - C. There is sin and evil in every generation, and there is good to be found in every generation.
    1. However, there is a cycle of good and evil, and as it progresses the pendulum swings more and more to the evil and it becomes completely dominant; that is where we were are now.
    2. So it always seems that things are getting worse, and they are.
    3. We just never seem able to have a bright view for the next generation.
  - D. The cycle of good and evil happens a lot faster than most people realize.
    1. From the time the pillars of righteousness begin to be pulled down until the total destruction of a people is 3 to 4 generations, and the Bible bears this out, as well as secular history.
- II. Our Scripture is from a time when destruction was at hand because their sin had come to the full.
  - A. The counsel given by God to this people was to “stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, ...”
  - B. The counsel of God for days like these is also found in Deuteronomy 32:7:

Deuteronomy 32:7 Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.
  - C. Now the devil will lie to us about everything, so he will interfere with what God is telling us here, also.
  - D. He works both sides:
    1. The devil tells the good people that the “old days” were so much better that they forget what it was really like and like in a romantic nostalgia about a utopia that never existed.
    2. They want to change things back to like they were, but that is a fantasy that will never happen.
    3. The devil lies to the people who are loving the lascivious atmosphere where sin is not only permitted, but protected, promoted, and praised by telling them that the “old days” were oppressive because all the people back then were stupid and mean with their religious madness.
  - E. The truth is that the “good old days” were not such “good old days,” BUT there were some things about them that were much better than where we are now.
  - F. God said we need to “stand ye in the ways, and see.”

1. We are stop considering everything else and look carefully and honestly at the differences between then and now.
- G. It is very obvious that we are headed toward destruction or defeat or dissolution of some kind in this generation.
1. It is not just a generation having fun and enjoying life; things simply cannot possibly continue as they are, and everyone, lost and saved, knows it.
  2. Where did we get off the track? What are we missing that folks in the past had?
- H. God tells us to “ask our father” and to “ask for the old paths” where is the good way.
1. That is another thing the devil tries to stop by telling this generation that they are the wisest that has ever lived on earth.
  2. He tells every “last generation” that before their destruction.
  3. How will we know what it was really like in the previous 2 or 3 generations if we do not ask our fathers and our grandfathers?
  4. It is always close enough for us to get a first-hand witness’s account of how things were and how the world worked 3 generations before us.
  5. How many people have availed themselves of this great source of wisdom and understanding about the times we live in?
- I. We are to ask about what was right, not about what was wrong?
1. We are to ask for the “good ways.”
  2. What made the world a better place back then?
  3. They can tell you if you will ask them and listen to what they tell you.
- J. Here are some things they will tell you:
1. There was order, because there was law.
  2. There was more justice because there was law and order.
  3. There was order in the home, the church, the government, the schools, the courts, the prisons, the military, the workplace, the hospitals, the businesses, everything had order.
  4. The milkman wore a uniform, the police wore uniforms, the nurses wore uniforms, people dressed up to go grocery shopping, out to dinner, to church, to the doctor, or to any kind of social activity at school or in the public.
  5. There was respect, because there was order; Respect for everyone; it was a thing that parents taught their children, a thing that was demanded and required in school, and practiced by adults in public.
    - a) Things like simply being polite, saying “Thank you” and “You’re Welcome.”
    - b) Like opening a door for not only a lady, but the person behind you.
    - c) Like not using profanity in public, and especially in front of women and children.
  6. If we would ask the old folks that are wise and will speak the truth they would tell us that there was a healthy fear of God and a healthy respect for the churches.
    - a) They would tell you about a world where the Bible meant something and almost everyone had a fear and reverence for it, even though they might not know hardly anything about it.
  7. They would tell us about a world where teachers were held to a much higher moral standard and they actually taught the children and young people instead of whatever it is that they are doing now.

- K. They would also tell us that life was harder back then for everyone.
    - 1. It was harder for mom and it was harder for dad.
    - 2. Work was long and hard and never ceased for dad or for mom.
    - 3. A 60-year-old woman looked her age and did not try to hide it with paint, hair color, and belly squeezers to make them look like they are 30-year-old models. (if you don't look too close)
  - L. They would tell us about what it was like to not have electricity, running water, air conditioning, telephones, and on and on.
    - 1. But those things are some of the "good ways" the Bible is telling us to ask about because the inconvenience and hard things of days gone by are the things that made the "Greatest Generation" truly the greatest generation.
- III. Well, we cannot recreate the past, and we cannot try to live the way they used to live without electricity or the modern conveniences, but that is not what God is telling us here.
- A. What was it that made the previous generations able to look forward to the future for their children and grandchildren with hope, while we now are so apprehensive about it?
  - B. The answer is obvious: God and truth and its place and influence in their lives.
  - C. The world and the devil did not have such open and unhindered access to their minds as this generation and our children do.
  - D. The thing most troubling to us now is the fact that we cannot keep our children's minds from being polluted by the world around us.
    - 1. Some folks try hard, but there is just so much you can do without isolating yourself behind four walls and make life a prison for them and you.
    - 2. Other folks just do not try at all and give their children open access to all that the world has, and gives the world access to all their children have.
    - 3. Besides the children, what about ourselves? How to do guard our own minds and hearts in this evil time?
  - E. We better regard the world around us in this generation as a big whirlpool.
    - 1. If we are in the water it is continually pulling us toward the drain.
    - 2. If we get too close to the drain we are going down it and will not be able to stop.
  - F. As children of God we are the light of the world in this generation.
  - G. We are definitely in this world and this is the generation that God put us here to live our lives in.
  - H. We are in this world, but not OF this world.
  - I. We CAN live separately from this world, and we better, if we do not want to go down the drain with them.
  - J. Find the things of true value from the past that are good, true, right, holy, godly, healthy, wise, and walk therein.
  - K. Let us "consider the years of many generations" – not just the past 4 or 5 decades; man has been living life and going through these same cycles of good and evil much longer than that.
    - 1. The bigger the picture we consider, the more wisdom we will have about how to walk in this untoward generation.
  - L. Someday in eternity we will see that the days we lived in were very much the same as the days in which others lived – in the things that really matter.