

# Ecclesiastes 7:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.

## Analysis

**Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these?** (אֲל־תֹּאמַר מֶה הָיָה שְׁקִמִּים הָרִאשִׁימִים הָיוּ טוֹבִים מֵאֵלֶּה) al-tomar meh hayah she'hayamim ha'rishonim hayu tovim me'eleh)—The rhetorical question exposes nostalgia's deception. 'Former days' (yamim ha'rishonim) refers to the idealized past, imagined as 'better' (tovim) than the present.

**For thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this** (כִּי לֹא מְחַכְמָה שְׁאַלְתָּ עַל־זֶה) ki lo mechokhmah sha'alta al-zeh)—Such questions arise 'not from wisdom' (lo mechokhmah). The verb sha'alta means 'you ask' or 'inquire.' Nostalgia is unwise because it distorts reality, romanticizes the past, and blinds us to present opportunities. Philippians 3:13 counsels 'forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.' The question assumes decline when God remains sovereign over all ages.

## Historical Context

Every generation tends toward nostalgia—idealizing previous eras while lamenting present decline. The Israelites in the wilderness longed for Egypt (Numbers 11:4-6), forgetting their slavery. The exiles romanticized pre-exile Jerusalem (Psalm 137). Solomon himself witnessed Israel's golden age under David, yet warns against simplistic comparisons. The prophets consistently reminded Israel that past 'golden ages' included significant sin and rebellion (Ezekiel 20). This

verse counters both historical naiveté and generational pride. The principle applies to the church: each generation faces unique challenges and opportunities. Wisdom lives faithfully in the present rather than retreating to an imagined past.

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

---

1. What past era or season of life do you idealize? What realities of that time does your nostalgia overlook?
2. How does romanticizing 'the good old days' prevent you from engaging faithfully and hopefully with God's purposes in your present circumstances?

## Interlinear Text

---

אֵל	תֹּאמַר	מָה	הָיָה	שֵׁן הַיָּמִים			
H408	Say	H4100	H1961	days			
	H559			H3117			
		הָרָאשֹׁן יָמִים		הָיָה	טוֹב יָמִים	יָמָא לָהּ	כִּי
		not thou	What is the cause that the former	H1961	were better	H428	H3588
			H7223		H2896		
לֹא	מִחֲכָמָה		שָׂא לָתֶּ		עַל	זֶה:	
H3808	wisely	than these for thou dost not enquire		H5921	H2088		
	H2451		H7592				

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Judges 6:13** (Parallel theme): And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which

our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

**Isaiah 50:1** (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

---

From KJV Study • [kjevstudy.org](http://kjevstudy.org)