

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? (אַל-תֹּאמֶר מָה כִּי שָׁבָטִים בָּרָא-שָׁנִים בַּיּוֹם טוֹבִים מֵאַלְהָה) —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 (קַי לֹא מְחֻקָּה שָׁאַלְתָּה עַל-זֶה) —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

אָל	שָׁ	כִּי	הַ	מִ	הַ	תֹּאמֶר	כִּי	הַ	מִ	הַ	תֹּאמֶר	אָל
H408			H4100		H1961							
Say					days							
H559					H3117							
						בְּ	אֲשֶׁר	יְ	בְּ	אֲשֶׁר	יְ	
						H1961			H428		H3588	
						not thou	What is the cause that the former			were better		
						H7223			H2896			
מִסְכַּת	לֹא	שָׁא	לֹתֶ			זֶה:	עַל					
H3808			H2451				H5921					
wisely					than these for thou dost not enquire							
					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.

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