

# *Consider the Years of Many Generations*

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

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**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.**

- I. God views man and his history forward and backward by generations, not by the present only.
  - A. The word “generation” or “generations” appears in the Bible 206 times.
    - 1. Just for some perspective on this the word “grace” appears 159 times; mercy 261 times; forgive only 98 times in all its forms.
    - 2. The word is mentioned 7 times in the story of Noah.
    - 3. The genealogies are carefully given a number of times in the Bible.
    - 4. Just that quick little study proves that it is an important matter with God.
  - B. We have a strong tendency to only look at the present; at our own generation, and our own experience.
    - 1. This makes our view, and therefore, our comprehension of everything that matters very small and narrow.
    - 2. Judging and discerning truth by our little life and our few short years of experience on this earth is certain to cause us to err from the truth.
- II. Wise people have always understood the importance of history and taught it to their children.
  - A. Even pagan and savage tribes very often have a high regard for their elderly people and for their history.
  - B. It is not only their identity, but it is also their wisdom for living that has been learned and passed down by the generations before them.
  - C. Foolish people live only in the present, and doom the generations after them because of it.

**Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.**

**Proverbs 30:12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.**

**Proverbs 30:13 There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.**

- 1. So the generation that has it all figured out by their own experience and understanding is a generation of fools.

- III. This blindness and ignorance about generations is the cause of apostasy, moral collapse, and the loss of all things to the following generations.
  - A. The roads that lead to these calamities have been traveled before and previous generations have left us safeguards and warnings to keep us from falling into the same traps that have lead to the destruction of peoples and nations and churches and families so many times before.
  - B. Every generation has had its victories and its defeats; its gains and its losses; its knowledge in certain things and its ignorance in others.
  - C. Every generation has had its fads and fashions.
  - D. Every generation has had its music.

- E. Every generation has had its religious bandwagons and movements and cults.
- F. Every generation has had its spiritual and wise people who stood for the truths of God and left some kind of heritage for its children and grandchildren.
- G. Every generation has had its religious renegades and misfits who always did much harm to the cause of Christ and the kingdom of God.
- H. Every generation has had its shames and its honors.
- I. Every generation has died with regrets and with thankfulness.
- J. And it is absolutely certain that this generation now will have all the same things that other generations have had.
- K. There is no generation that has discovered anything new about human nature, or sin, or God, or righteousness.
- L. There is no generation that has ever found a new way to deal with sin, raise children, love your wife, or worship God.
- M. The best ways for all things have all been figured out long before any of us came on the scene for our short little journey.
- N. The truths of God and life and the right way to live and die has always been available to those who will look beyond their own proud heart and their meager experience of life.

IV. The Bible gives us the entire history of man from the beginning until the last days.

- A. What works and what does not is as obvious as the blue sky to all who will read and study it.
- B. We have the written record of the cycle of man's sin and foolishness and what it brings upon him and his children and his children's children.
- C. It never changes, and it works the same way every time, and yet every generation is led by fools who take it upon themselves to try it one more time.

Jeremiah 6:16 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.

- D. What does it take then for a generation to turn this train wreck around?
  1. It takes a real turning to the righteousness of God, and not just a religion focused on self and sacrifice and duty.
  2. It takes a generation that will get over themselves and look at their fellow man like Christ did, and does.

Isaiah 58:3-11 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

- E. “Progressive” is a word that people who have rejected God use to usurp all righteousness and all wisdom from previous generations and from God himself.
  - 1. Being a “progressive” does not work when it comes to truth and righteousness.
  - 2. The only thing that works is to look back and learn from the past.

Isaiah 58:12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

- F. Study history, especially the history in the Bible.
  - 1. Those things are not in the Bible so we have stories to tell in Sunday School; they are for our ensamples and admonition, so that we do not make the same mistakes and commit the same foolishness.
- G. Read sermons, books, poems, and hymns from previous generations, and pay attention to the wisdom, the opinions, the focus they had on life and God and eternity.
- H. Study the effects one generation had on the ones following and pay attention to what certain attitudes, values, and behaviors produce in the next three or four generations.
- I. Pay attention to fanaticism and what it produces in the next generation. (hint: it produces infidels and ungodliness)
- J. Pay attention to what separatism produces when it becomes what that religion is about, and turns into Pharisee-ism.
- K. If you will avail yourself of all this knowledge and wisdom that is available for you, and then apply the lessons from “many generations” you will be a better Christian while you live on this earth, and you will leave a goodly heritage for your posterity.

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.

Isaiah 61:4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

- L. It is basically what we have always called a “revival.”
  - 1. It is a renewal of what has always been known, but has been pushed aside and forgotten and ignored.
- M. As long as we live with our view of life confined to the narrow peephole of our few short years of experience we will make foolish decisions and have foolish opinions and we will be foolish in our judgment of good and evil, and we will reap the harvest for generations following us.
- N. If we will step up a little higher and look over the confines of the present, we will be able to have understanding for the times in which we live.
- O. And we will be able to serve our generation like David served his, for the honor and glory of God, and raise up those old wastes, and repair the things that have been let go to ruin, and our children and grandchildren will have a chance.
- P. Let us not live only for our generation, but for those to come, and to honor those who have come before us.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,