

# #17 Northside Natter

15 July 2020

Today I'm taking a peek at **The Good Old Days**.

Remember the good old days? When everyone you knew went to church on Sundays and if they didn't, they were frowned upon. Back then no-one swore in public unless they were really bad men, people treated each other with respect, and men opened doors for women. Neighbours looked out for each other and took the others washing in if it started to rain while they were out. Children were extremely polite and obedient and schools were a trusted place to leave them.

These days, we find we're the only ones on this side of the street who go to church or dare to speak about God. Everyone seems to drop those naughty-word-bombs, no-one cares about their neighbour's washing, being treated with respect is a rarity and children rule the roost at home, on the streets and at school. Bring back the good old days, eh?

Reading Ecclesiastes, I came across this scripture in **Chapter 7:10** *Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.*

As I considered that a bit more, I realised that the sufferings of today are due to the evils of yesterday. The good old days were great on the surface but underneath they were filled with godlessness. Our old society was good at hiding all the rips in the fabric. Scandalous behaviour was constantly covered up so it didn't make it to the daily papers and ruin reputations. No-one wanted that kind of notoriety.

There were elements of the good old days that we'd all love to see back again because nowadays anarchistic minorities rule and anything goes. Literally. Yet, I thought to myself: wouldn't it make sense to look to the past to find out what went wrong? Unfortunately, people don't look to the past to find out what went wrong.

It seems that we humans never learn from past mistakes, never understand why things go wrong, and never get it right. Sometimes, I think the *Wailing Wall*, in the Old City of Jerusalem, would be better used for banging our heads against. It could be an annual pilgrimage.

**Judges 6:13** *And Gideon said unto him, O 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.*

During this time, the children of Israel gouged out dens in the mountains and found caves and other strongholds to refuge in. From there, they farmed the land and raised their stock, but the Midianites and Amalekites took the lot each year. Israel became impoverished instead of blest.

The Israelites eventually cried out to the Lord and he told them the reason for their sufferings. God had warned them through his prophets not to take on the gods of the Amorites but they hadn't obeyed him. They turned their backs on his instructions and these

next generations suffered for it. They didn't have the big picture and couldn't see what they were still doing was wrong. This becomes even more apparent in yet another Israelite tale.

Jeremiah had just finished prophesying to the Israelites in Pathros, Egypt, about their impending destruction. These Israelites had fled to Egypt to escape the destruction of Judah. Their response to Jeremiah was, 'As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee.' Here's what they said next:

**Jeremiah 44:17-19** *But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.*

This is the reason Solomon says: For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this. Who has the wisdom to know what to look for in the past? Or who can uncover the true reason behind the sufferings of today? These Israelites certainly couldn't and didn't. They were without the Lord; godless men of no understanding. They perceived all their blessings had come from another source. After all, isn't that why their kings, nobles, tribal leaders and fathers set the example for them to follow?

We walk in the Lord's ways and are filled with his Holy Spirit and to us the past is an example of what not to do. The Lord brings things to our memories that remind us constantly of what is required to have a happy and prosperous life. We are so blest and privileged to be in this age where Wisdom, knowledge and understanding is readily available to God's children. We can look back, recognise the evil days and understand why it all went wrong. We know that if it hadn't been for the Grace of God, we would be exactly the same in our thinking as these Israelites who escaped to Egypt. We would be blindly led by the blind and all falling into a ditch together. By the way, none of these Israelites survived, just as the Lord said through Jeremiah's prophecy. They were all consumed by the sword, or by famine. They became an execration (abomination), an astonishment, a curse and a reproach to the Egyptians. When the Lord does something, he does it thoroughly.

**Psalms 14:2-4** *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord?*

As we've seen, history can be a roadmap for evil or for good. However, it is only with the Wisdom, knowledge and understanding of the Lord that looking back can lead to good. As Jeremiah experienced, great chunks of people don't believe in the One True God. They prefer to believe in whatever god the heathen around them sprout and think it holds all their answers to a better life, or as they say these days, to true enlightenment. They are literally enlightening themselves to death. Their god lies in wickedness and blinds them to the Truth. The god of this world seeks out unbelievers to lay snares for them and to place them under the bondage of sin. Sin will keep them from God and godlessness will lead them to repeat the errors of the past. We have a tough battle to convince them otherwise, but we have to try. That's our job.