

# **“OH, FOR THE GOOD OLD DAYS!”**

**By Roger Campbell**

As we live on this world, we observe changes. We see changes in technology, music, transportation, restaurants, books, movies, sports, families, health care, economic approaches, politics, and government policies. On the personal level, we also see changes in our own physical body, including what happens to our appearance, fitness, stamina, and mental functions.

It is not uncommon for people to make it known that they think, “Things were much better in the past.” For some of us, we have many pleasant memories of life as it used to be during our childhood years. Life seemed simpler. We were worry-free, concerned ourselves with trying to find fun things to do, and let “the big people” take care of all “the big stuff.” Then there came a point in our life when we were expected to act as mature people and take on serious responsibilities, being held accountable for our actions. It certainly was not as much fun, but that is the way life works. It is not possible to turn back the clock and return to our childhood days. Nor can we turn the calendars back to those years when society was not so chaotic and life did not seem so rushed.

Sometimes people’s longing “for the good old days” is foolhardy, and in some cases it is sinful. When the children of Israel were in the wilderness, a number of them complained against God, Moses, and Aaron. More than once they verbalized the idea that it would be better for them if they would return to Egypt. With fondness they recalled Egypt’s fish, melons, cucumbers, onions, and garlic (Numbers 11:5). On one occasion, the people “*hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage*” (Nehemiah 9:17). Seriously, you think your life as slaves in Egypt is better than being led by the compassionate Creator to the land He has promised?! At that point, the Israelites’ thinking was messed up, was it not?

Some Christians think life was better under a previous government. More than once I have had a member of God’s church express to me their “wish” that a former regime was still in power because, “Back then our money had more buying power. We lived better. Now things are worse.” Being able to take care of our family’s material needs is a matter that concerns all of us (1 Timothy 5:8). But what if the former government, under which we had better economic conditions, did not allow us the religious freedom to worship biblically or spread the gospel? Should we look at better food, better clothes, and better living quarters as more valuable than religious freedom? Surely not. If I lived decently from a financial standpoint, but at that time I was lost in sin, being without God and without hope, then that time in my life was *not* “the good old days.” Do you not agree?

There are other Christians who seem to miss their old life — the life they had before they became servants of the Christ. “Back in the good old days,” before their sins were cleansed by the blood of Jesus, they felt like they enjoyed true liberty. There were no restrictions on their behavior, and they could fulfill the lusts of their flesh. Now, they feel unhappy because God’s regulations limit their freedom.

New Testament letters written to Christians make it clear that when one claims Jesus as the King of his life, some changes are required — changes in thought, speech, and action. Following baptism into the Christ, God expects us to “*walk in newness of life*” (Romans 6:3,4), not continue with “the same old, same old.”

In another letter to first-century saints, Paul wrote, “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). If we are thinking properly, we have no desire to go back to our pre-Christian way of life. True conversion requires a change of heart that produces a change in behavior, “*works befitting repentance*” (Acts 26:20).

I cringe when I hear a child of God boast about his sinful lifestyle before he became part of God’s family. Friend, there is no glory in laughing about our past days when we were hateful (Titus 3:3), acted immorally (1 Corinthians 6:9,10), saved money by telling lies (Ephesians 4:25), or spoke filthy language (Ephesians 4:29). Before God and man, we ought to be too ashamed of our past transgressions to reveal them casually to others.

According to the Bible, “*the old man*” has to go (Colossians 3:9) and never return. In his place, we must “*put on the new man*” (Colossians 3:10). Here is what God desires for each Christian: “. . . *he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God*” (1 Peter 4:2). Some early Christians came out of a background in which they had walked in lewdness, drinking parties, and idolatry (1 Peter 4:3). After their conversion to the Christ, they ceased those unlawful activities. As a result, some people thought they were strange and spoke evil of them (1 Peter 4:4). Let the unbelievers mock us, criticize us, and despise us, brethren, but we will not compromise in order to be well-liked!

No person who has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb should ever long for any aspect of his old, sinful lifestyle. By His wisdom, God has set forth His plan for our holiness and happiness. Let us embrace it.