

Remember your Creator – NOW!
Ecc. 12v1-14.

WHAT WE ARE TO DO.

V1 'Remember' This does not mean to remember in the sense we often understand it. Once a year we remember Dunkirk or 'D' day. Going to the Cenotaph. Or remember 1690! We are being asked to do something more fundamental. 'He is asking us to make our Creator the foundation of our lives' Derek Tidball. He is to be at the centre and in control. It is trusting him and letting him have his way in our lives. Creator is a plural tense in Hebrew which presents God in all the fullness of his majesty and greatness. He must be at the centre.

WHEN WE ARE TO DO IT.

V1 'in the days of our youth' While we are young. Youth is the time when we are carefree and often do not take life seriously. Yet we ought to think about the serious issues of life then and our future, our relationship with God. The reason is that life is very brief and if we do not take things seriously now, it may very well be too late.

So the incentive to action is the brevity of life. The days of our youth are soon past and increasing age brings certain decline. The term 'evil' refers not to moral evil but simply to distressing times. If one does not respond before the evil days come it may never be made and the opportunity may be gone. The life of faith has been presented as one of enjoyment (2v24-26; 3v12f; 5v18-20; 9v7-10; 11v8-10). Here where God has been neglected, the capacity for joy has been lost.

V2 Do not need to let our imagination run away with us here, as some have in their interpretation.

'Sun...stars grow dark'. The imagery of the storm is here. No sooner has one passed, but another comes along. The loss of joy and the returning clouds picture a continual succession of sorrows. The inevitable problems of old age. There is always some new cause for upset.

V3-4 The 'keepers of the house' = probably the arms and the 'strong men' = the legs. These are not firm and muscular as once they were. The grinders are the teeth and the eyes are also being dimmed. There may be a picture of enforced inactivity, with the aged being cut off more from the hum of daily life (the grinding). Impaired hearing and light sleep may be here with the elderly being awake for the dawn chorus but not really being able to hear it, sleeplessness and deafness.

V5 again presents a picture of things typical of old age, fear of journeys and the almond tree blossoming pictures increasing grayness, the grasshopper image reminds us of the difficulty in carrying things and the decline of any sexual drive.

All these are signs that man is going home and is mourned by those who are left behind. Death may creep up on us.

So we have to get a right relationship before life ends. The act of dying is pictured in 4 ways. The silver chain breaks and the golden bowl falls and is shattered. The wheel and the pulley give way and the pitcher being held up falls to the bottom of the well. Death can come suddenly and life can in a moment be finished. That is why you need a relationship with God right now. Before the body returns to dust, the spirit returns to God.

HOW WE ARE TO DO IT.

V9 Listen to the preacher. The wise preacher took time to search out the message and set it in order so that he brought an interesting sermon. He would not as some today try to tell only funny stories or act like a comedian. With life and death issues at stake the important thing is not whether it is simply interesting and entertaining but whether it is true. It needs to be based upon God's word; it needs to be truth.

To really get right with God – to remember – we need to be willing to be challenged and guided by God's word, v11 'goads' are pointed sticks to poke the cattle. Words need to be taken in – like firmly embedded nails. The reason why this is so important is because they are from God, from 'one Shepherd'. So because it is from God and is truth, we need to take it seriously. In v12 we are reminded that we must listen to the warnings of scripture. The making of many books reminds us that there were no end of books and therefore theories which if you read them all would only weary you. Do not let yourself be led away from the truth of scripture. Test it all by God's word. Go by what the Bible says.

WHY WE ARE TO DO IT.

V13-14. Why are we to 'remember' him?

- Because in this book the preacher has explored the meaninglessness, the boredom, the emptiness and the absurdity of life without God.
- Because this is why you were created – to know God and obey him – is the 'whole duty of man'.
- Because you face God's judgement. You are accountable and you must meet him, reckon with him some day. He is not only your maker but also your judge. 'Remember' him now.