

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
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**ECCLESIASTES XII v.1 -7**

by

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I have been asked to explain the recitation of Ecclesiastes - Chapter 12 verse 1 to 7 during the third degree and after consulting various sources I have compiled this explanation.

Chapter 11 of Ecclesiastes verses 9 and 10 set the theme for the wonderful passage that is quoted often during the raising ceremony and surely must make an impression on every mans' mind as he lies in a prone position contemplating the ceremony in which he is at that moment participating. So in Chapter 11 we read "Rejoice O young men in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth".

Then in Chapter 12 Verse 1 begin the wonderful words we all know 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not nor the years draw nigh". Here is a reminder to think about God while we are still young for the time will come when life as we know it, will be meaningless. "When Thou shalt say, ' I have no pleasure in them"

"While the sun or the light or the moon or the stars be not darkened nor the clouds return after the rain". Youth lives in the sunlight and can still see clearly, but here he is being warned about fading eye sight and the continuation of this affliction even after much weeping. Then the writer begins to describe all the afflictions of old age when he said, "In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble". The hands and arms begin to shake, "and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few.". Our teeth begin to fall out, "and those that look out of the windows be darkened". another reference to failing eye sight, the eyes being considered the windows of the mind. "And the doors shall be shut in the street when the sound of the grinding is low". With old age come loss of hearing, the ears in this case being the doors and all sounds of the outside world are cut off.

"And he shall rise up at the voice of a bird". The old men like many old people are unable to get a good night's sleep and wake up with the birds at the break of day and all the daughters of music shall be brought low". We begin to loose our strength of speech. "Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high". Heights become terrifying to an older person. "and fears shall be in the way". With old age we become fearful of the busy world around us that it affects our ability to live a full life.

"And the almond tree shall flourish". Our hair, like the almond blossom becomes white. "and the

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grasshopper shall become a burden". To an old man, even the weight of the grasshopper is too much. "And desire shall fail". All passions and appetites diminish. "Because men goeth to his long home". Eventually man dies and he is placed in his "long home" the grave "Or ever the silver thread be loosed". Before the cord of life, the spinal cord snaps. "Or the golden bowl be broken" Before the skull breaks apart and all our accumulated knowledge dissipates. "or the pitcher be broken at the fountain" This is a failing heart. "Or the wheel

broken at the cistern" With old age comes kidney and bladder failure. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was". Earth to earth, ashes to ashes and dust to dust.

The surrounding darkness of the lodge room and the presence of the emblems of mortality emphasize the ever present threat of death, but Ecclesiastes hints at a life after death. "and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" Here the candidate is reminded of a new dimension of life which as we say in a later part of the raising ceremony "The eye of human vision cannot penetrate unless assisted by that Light which is from Above." This leaves us with the hope that there is life after death and that one day we will ascent to the Grand Lodge Above, where the worlds Great Architect lives and reigns forever.

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