

Drafting Senior Citizens: Barzillai and Solomon
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Surprise! Your 401K is now a “201K” despite injection of a massive “porkulus” stimulant. Uncertainty reigns everywhere in our society except for death and taxes which latter are poised to explode. Seniors, however, dare not passively watch as America implodes. Let us heed our elders, Barzillai, Solomon and others. Even at eighty, Barzillai was not exempt from God’s draft to supply emergency rations for David’s disarrayed army in the wilderness (II Samuel 17:27). King Solomon likewise refused to be sidelined into senility. Rather, this aged king was inspired to write thousands of proverbs and songs (I Kings 4:32). Further, Solomon, serving as Israel’s “Preacher,” faithfully exposes as vanity any human endeavor not directed by God’s law (Ecclesiastes 1:2; 12:13-14).

There is urgent need for God’s faithful seniors to remain engaged in society even beyond that commonly considered to be our physical limits. In contrast to goal-exhausted young people, we are promised that “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31). We are charged (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) to pass on God’s law even to grand children and students as did Father Abraham in retirement with his grandson, Jacob (Hebrews 11:9). Sadly, some of our grand children will not be receptive as was the case with the lazy, bitter Esau (Hebrews 12:15-16).

But, Abraham’s grandson Jacob (the supplanter) has left us an inspiring, righteous heritage. His spirited defense, when separating Israel from Laban’s House, defines the work ethic to this day. “Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes” (Genesis 31:40). Viable business ventures always require the entrepreneur to tend to business both day and night in all kinds of weather (climatic or societal) except when observing the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). This “open secret” of business success still drives the U.S. economy. God thus continually empowers His people to supplant evil Esaus even in our troubled time.

In his old age, bed ridden Jacob, still CEO of Israel Industries, commissioned Joseph to organize two new businesses in Israel, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:5-6). Later, Jehoiada, the high priest, was well over 80, when he rescued infant Joash from mass murder of David’s heirs ordered by wicked Athaliah, Jezebel’s daughter (II Chronicles 22:10f). Also in his old age, Daniel was the high civil servant in Babylon used of God to facilitate return of God’s people to Jerusalem ending the Babylonian Captivity. Finally, both John and Paul were moved by the Holy Spirit to provide leadership and also augment Scripture for the early Church during their “golden years.” Paul’s infirmities are evident in a passing comment. “For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: . . . that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (II Corinthians 5:4).

As improved nutrition and state-of-the-art medicine push the physical envelope, we seniors with the Psalmist are subjected to critical scrutiny "as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. . . [and we pray] Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. . . Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come" (Psalm 71:7, 9, 18).

Saints with “seniority,” are well-positioned to understand the “deceitfulness of riches, [that] choke the word” of the kingdom of Christ (Matthew 13:22). Jesus sternly warns young and old alike that “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24). He enjoins His people to “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow . . . Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:33-34). God’s meek workmen are still destined to “inherit the earth” by their lawful labor (Psalm 37:8-11).