

Despite Methuselah's 969 "years," Bible folks in general died just about when we modern Americans are hitting our adult stride: our "midlife" was their "old age" (e.g., 2Chron.36.17, which also does not allow for that even more modern stage, "adolescence"). Advantages both ways: we live longer and they experienced more dramatic (and so attention-grabbing) transitions. For us, the accordion opens wider; but they had all our experiences, so great biblical passages address adolescence and midlife--but we can't look up "adolescence" or "midlife" in biblical concordances, dictionaries, encyclopedias, wordbooks; we have to be content with "age," "youth," "old," "old age," "age, old," "aging, attitudes toward" (in THE INTERPRETER'S DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE, SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUME--but the earlier vols. have only "age, old"), "age and youth." Here, now, are some scriptures I've found helpful through a decade of "Midlife Exploration" groups:

1. LIFE-STAGES, except childhood:.....(1) YOUTH: Ps.119.9; Prov.1.4; 20.29; Eccl.11.9; 12.1; Lam.3.27; Tit.2.6; 1Jn.2.13f....(2) MIDLIFE (the Hebrew word for "half," "middle"): Against death in midlife (Ps.102.24), or desertion (Jer.17.11)....(3) OLD AGE: Ps.48.14; 71; 92.14; Prov.16.31; 20.29; Is.41.9f,14; 43.2; 46.4.

2. ALLIED TOPICS (See in concordance and other alphabetic Bible-helps): "Time" (catch Jn. Marsh's excellent article in Alan Richardson's A THEOLOGICAL WORD BOOK OF THE BIBLE --and Ps.31.15: Our life-time is "in God's hands," and we are called to "Choose life!" [Deut.30.19]). "Life," "Forgiveness," "Peace," "David/Bathsheba." Can you add to this list?

3. PASSAGES IN BIBLICAL ORDER:

- Gn.1 (on Jn. Locke's painting, my #1125)
- 2
- 3 (#1203)
- 6.3 (God says we have 120 years, but pessimistic David [Ps.90.10] gives only 70 or 80.)
- 12 (and 15.1-9a)
- 22
- 50 (magnanimity, the forgiving spirit: God as our model for behavior/attitude)
- Ex.20(esp.vs.12, on which cf. Ruth 4.15, Is.3.5b, Prov.23.22, and 1Tim.5.1f)--and Deut.5
- 3 (#950 on wilderness journey as life)
- Lev.19.32a (respect for the aged)
- 27.1-8 (age 60 as dividing line between adulthood and agedness)
- Ps.1 (#1171)
- 4 (#1173 & #1175)
- 13
- 23; 46 (#1125A)
- 84
- 90
- 92.14 (ripeness, fruition)
- Prov.10.27; sexuality, 5-8 (#805)
- Eccl.12.1-5 (age treated with tenderness and beauty)
- Job 42.16f
- Is.6.1-8
- 40.1-11
- Jer.12
- Mic.6.6-8 (#988[sermon]; #783)

- Mt.5-7 (esp.5.1-16)
- M.2.1-13 (#1024)
- L.10.25-37 (#1317)
- 15.11-32 (#16 & #1093)
- 16.19-31 (#991)
- 18.1-8
- Jn.21 NEB
- Ro.8
- 1Cor.13
- 2Cor.4.16-5.10
- Eph.3.14-21
- 4.1-16 (1-7: #1041)
- Phil.2
- 3.12-14
- Jas.5
- Rev.21
- 22

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