

THE SEVEN AGES OF MAN

By Rod (with a little help from the Bard)

Based on Psalm 90

CAST

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Man

Woman

Narrator 1 The seven ages of man. With grateful thanks to William Shakespeare.

Narrator 2 The first age is when we are born.

N1 At first the infant,
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
(Enter woman with baby in arms)

N2 We arrive into the world unable to do anything for ourselves. We
 dribble. We cannot keep ourselves clean. We need to be fed.
(Feeds baby with trainer beaker. Wipes with cloth, etc)

N1 Yuk.

N2 The second age is when we go to school.
(Enter man (as boy) wearing school cap, carrying satchel)

N1 Then, the whining school-boy with his satchel
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail
 Unwillingly to school.
*(Woman as mother straightens tie and pushes him off to school. He goes to sit on
chair by desk as if at school)*

N2 We learn how to read. We learn how to write. We learn how to count.
 We learn about the world.

N1 The best days of my life. Apart from Latin that is .. and cross-country
 runs.

N2 The third age is when we learn about love.
(Woman is now object of boys affection.)

- N1 And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow.
- N2 Somewhere along the line boys learn about girls.
(Boy looks up and sees girl open-mouthed)
- N1 And girls learn about boys.
(Girl looks across to boy coyly)
- N2 Boys even write poetry.
(Boy scribbles poem. Takes across to girl. She holds it to her heart.)
- N1 I never went that far.
- N2 The fourth age is when we are soldiers.
(Boy removes cap. Woman puts on military hat. Gives sword which he puts in belt. They kiss. He turns and marches off while she waves handkerchief.)
- N1 Then, a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth.
- N2 We arm ourselves with the weapons of power. We make our way in the
world. We build our reputation.
- N1 I can't say I ever grew a beard. Perhaps that is where I went wrong?
- N2 The fifth age is the age of wisdom.
(Re-enter man as judge. Eg Gown, wig. Woman is accused in court.)
- N1 And then, the justice,
In fair round belly, with a good capon lined,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws, and modern instances,
And so he plays his part.
- N2 We use our worldly wisdom to judge others. We enjoy our success. We
spread our wisdom around.
(He points as if passing sentence of guilty. She sobs. Collapses to knees.)
- N1 I think that is what they call middle-age spread.

- N2 The sixth age is old age.
(He loses gown etc. Grabs stick. He shuffles across stage supported by her.)
- N1 The sixth age shifts
 Into the lean and slippered pantaloons,
 With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
 His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
 For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
 Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
 And whistles in his sound.
- N2 We have lost our youthful vigour. Our bodies are failing and we grow
 thin. We are short of breath, eyesight is fading and we are growing
 deaf.
(He hold up ear trumpet)
- N1 Pardon. Can you speak up please.
- N2 The seventh age is incapacity.
(He gets into wheel-chair pushed by her.)
- N1 Last scene of all,
 That ends this strange eventful history,
 Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.
(She feeds with trainer beaker, wipes with cloth – exactly as in first scene.)
- N2 We are unable to do anything for ourselves. We dribble. We cannot
 keep ourselves clean. We need to be fed.
- N1 The end. *[Pause]* A bit depressing isn't it? Life is all rather
 meaningless.
- N2 I reckon we've been missing something.
- N1 How do you mean?
- N2 Let's try it again.
(Man and woman now back to normal. He is centre stage.)
- N1 OK
- N2 The first age is when we are born again.

(Woman places hand on his head.)

N1 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

N2 We are helpless in our sin, but Jesus has done everything for us so we can be born into the kingdom of God.

N1 Thank you Jesus.

N2 The second age is when we go to school.
(Woman gives man a bible. He opens and starts to read.)

N1 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

N2 We learn about what Jesus has done for us using the bible as our guide.

N1 Amazing book the bible.

N2 The third age is when we learn about love.

N1 This is love: not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

(Woman give man a cross)

N2 As we learn how much God loves us it helps us to love him in return.

N1 And how to love one another.
(They hug one another)

N2 The fourth age is when we are soldiers.

N1 Put on the whole armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

(Using bible as sword he marches on the spot)

N2 We arm ourselves with the weapons God provides We make our way in a hostile world. We build His reputation.

(Uses bible as shield.)

N1 We learn what it means to be soldiers of Christ.

- N2 The fifth age is the age of wisdom.
(Goes back to reading bible carefully and thoughtfully)
- N1 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
- N2 We learn what true wisdom really means, aware that..
- N1 The foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom.
- N2 The sixth age is old age.
- N1 My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in
 weakness.
(He sinks to his knees in prayer)
- N2 As our physical bodies fail we learn more and more that the true source
 of power is not ours but His.
- N1 Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
- N2 The final age is incapacity.
- N1 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of
 it..
- N2 As we face the close of our earthly life, we realise that we are helpless
 in our sin, but Jesus has done everything for us so we can be born into
 the kingdom of God.
*(Still on his knees he opens his arms wide to simulate handing over to God
 completely.)*
- N1 The BEGINNING!

THE END