

PRELIMS. Solomon has been stating loud and clear that life **is** meaningless - **without God!** He has **tried everything** himself: pleasure, music; success; work; intellectual study!

A TIME for EVERYTHING

Historians, even secular ones, say that the Apostle Paul was born **exactly** at the **right** time. If he was born 30yrs earlier or later, the gospel would **not** have spread the way it did!

For **everything** “*there **is** a season and a time for every matter under the heaven*”[1] even the movement of a cow and a spider! There **is** a **purpose** for every **little detail** of life! Because **God planned** it all! Everything ‘clicks’ into the ‘**system**’ which God designed!

Solomon has just been outlining how life seems to be in such a **mess** without any order or sense to it - as far as **man** can see! But **not** for God “*Known unto God are **all** His works from the beginning of the world*”[Acts 15:18AV] Paul told the Athenian philosophers “*in Him (God) we **live and move and have our being***”[Acts 17:28] and he was **quoting** from a Cretian poet/philosopher ‘Epimenides’!

There is a right time for everything to happen! You/I do **not know why** things happen, but God does. We only know a very little of why things happen! You and I can only tell in **retrospect!** *In 1871, half the inhabitants of Chicago were killed/burned in a fire started by a **cow** kicking over a lantern! *If Robert the Bruce did not look at the precise moment a spider made 7 attempts to climb a ledge inna cave, historians say Scottish history would have been oh so different!!

Every one of us can look back on our lives and point out an incident which **changed** our **whole lives** which we did **not know** would bring that change at that time! How many times have we said ‘If only....’

The list that Sol has given us here, is a list of **contrasts**. Building/pulling down; laughing/crying; loving/hating; tearing/sewing. That was not always in the world. Originally there was only one positive element in life. Sin brought about additional elements in life.

Life, as it is now, is made up of **two** main elements - **construction** and **destruction!** Sin having entered the world, has **added** another dimension to life! **Originally**, before the fall, there was no need to 'get rid' of anything - although Adam was to **build** and **improve** the earth, there was nothing 'evil' or needing to be removed - but now there is! *There was **no** such thing as **dieing** before the fall, or a time to "**pluck up what was planted**" or a time to "**heal**" or a time to "**break down**" and a time "**weep**"!! But now there is!

Sin has **changed** our world and made life much **more difficult!** We cannot just 'go ahead' and start doing some things - because sometimes things have to be **removed** first! You cannot just plant seed in a stoney field! There is a time to "**cast away stones**"!

There is now at work in the world an **evil principle** which can **ruin** many good constructions! There also needs to be **preservatives** now. There might **not** have been any **decay** in the world through **ageing** before the fall! If you buy a **new jacket**, and just hang it up on a rail without wearing it, and go back after 50yrs, you will **frayed edges!** Jesus told us there is a time to 'throw away an old garment'! **Why?** Because sin has entered the world and brought **decay!**

Sin has made life **more complicated!** That is why there are so many **social workers** who are unsuccessful in helping people. They **start** off by **assuming** mankind is **good** at heart and all man needs is a good environment and a good upbringing! No! Man has a corrupt heart and has a **tendency** to evil - there are things that must be eradicated from our thoughts. Obviously, his upbringing and teaching will make a great difference, but the **potential** and tendency is **always** there in man to do evil. The most **unlikeliest** of candidates for marriage breakup **have** broken up! I have witnessed that recently!

So Sol starts off his list by reminding us, there is not only is there "**A time to be born**" but now we must remember there is a time to "**die**"! That is important. Why is there death - because of sin "**just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned**" [Rom 5:12] That is why surprisingly there is a time to **hate!** Sol said elsewhere

“*the fear of the Lord is **hatred** of evil*”[Pro 8:13] Sol said that the whole object of life is to “**Fear God and keep His commandments**” the conclusion to this marvellous Book! *Have you ever wondered why the **only command** given to Adam was a **negative**? Have you ever wondered why **all** the 10 Commandments are **negatives** - apart from Remember the Sabbath Day? Because sin is **lurking** in the background - even in Eden! (Where did the Devil come from?)

“*The righteous **hates falsehood/lying***”[Pro 13:5] It amazes me how often Xns **daily** think little of lying/fibbing deceiving! Just a little twist on the truth, it doesn't matter, everyone does it!

Ephesus was **praised** “*this you have, you **hate the works of the Nicolaitans***” [2:6] You see, **righteousness** by its very **nature - must hate evil**! By hating evil, you are **confirming** your **love** for righteousness! It is **because** there is **justice** and **rightness** which needs to be **preserved**, that there is “*a time for war*”![8]! There is a duty now to **protect innocents** - because evil is lurking! The whole ‘economic’ **system** in Israel was built around protection of goodness and truth and those who promoted it. Punishment was the **removal** of protection and the **exposure** to all the evils and wildness of mankind.

There is a time to “*keep **silence***”[7] Its a time when things **could** be said but **ought not** to be said! It takes **grace** to keep quiet when we would love to ‘spill the beans’ but we know it would only do harm and there is **no need** to spread bad things about people! The world have discovered that ‘The least said, the least mended’!!

Conversely there is a “*time to **speak***”[7] Duties required in the **9 Command**: ‘**defending** the **innocency** of our neighbour’, but also ‘**promoting** the good name of our neighbour’ and having a ‘**charitable esteem** of our neighbour’ + ‘**covering** their **infirmities**’!!

Xnity is **not** a **kill-joy**!! There is a time to “*laugh*” and “*dance*”[4] God wants us all to be happy! God appointed at least **3 Festivals** in Israel - to **celebrate**, not to mourn! What kind of Book do you consider Deuteronomy to be? **Law, warnings, punishments**? Well there are over **10 x** ‘you shall **rejoice**’ in Deut - and at least **2 God**

rejoices over you! Paul “*Rejoice and again I say ‘Rejoice’!*”

ENJOY LIFE and REJOICE

Sol implies that life **should** be **enjoyable** - but it usual is not! “*What gain has the worker from his toil?*”[9] He **should** have gain! But if we trust God to work out things His way, there will be blessings! God “*has made everything beautiful in its time*”[10] **Story:** a man in car with wife and child - **crash** - child killed! They curse God! He visits the scene, ‘cursed place, cursed place, cursed place’! But the ‘accident’ **made** them both think seriously about the **uncertainty** of life and the **certainty** of death! **Both** of them were ultimately converted! They returned to the scene of the crash ‘Beautiful place, beautiful place, beautiful place’! “*he has made everything beautiful in its time*”! *‘Not till the loom is silent, and the shuttles cease to fly, shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why, the dark threads are as needful in the skillful **Weaver**’s hands, as the threads of gold and silver, in the pattern **He** has planned’!

For that couple, and for everyone of us how true that God “*has put eternity into man’s heart*”[11a]! We are to live as long as God lives - and that is forever! God for them turned their sadness to gladness and their mourning to dancing as [Psa 30:11] It is “*all things work together [not in isolation] for good*” to those who love God!

Sol’s conclusion is that “*there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live...that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil - this is God’s gift to man*”! [13] God gifted man happiness!

Note **where** our **security** comes from? Not simply from a weak whimperish God but from the **unchangeable** God. The God who **endures** forever! The problem with this world is that nothing **endures** - all fades away! But “*whatever God does endures forever*”[14] The past, the present, the future are all the same, He never changes “*That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been*”[15]! Jesus Christ is the meaning to life! “*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever*”[Heb 13:8]!