

# **Ecclesiastes 3:16 - 4:16**

## **Discourse II:**

### **Miscellany of Disappointments**

#### **“Further Causes of Emptinesses”**

Study by Jason Labonte

## **I. Review**

**A. Theme: Life under the sun is emptiness.**

### **B. Discourse I**

1. Part A: Wisdom is better than folly, but both are emptiness.
2. Part B: Labor, too, is emptiness, but its profit is the good we find in it in relation to the eternal perspective of God.

## **II. The Discourse**

**A. Legal systems are unfair, but God is sovereign Judge. (3:16-17)**

**B. Man and Animals (3:18-21)**

**Restatement of Conclusion from Previous Discourse (3:18)**

**C. Oppression (4:1-3)**

**D. Rivalry (4:4)**

**E. Hard Labor (4:5-6)**

1. No Hands: A fool<sup>1</sup> does no work and starves.
2. One Hands: Do not starve and have rest — the happy medium.
3. Two Hands: Work for emptiness without rest.

**F. Lonliness**

1. Disadvantages of It (4:7-8)
2. Advantages of the Alternatives (4:9-12)

**G. Political Fame (4:13-16)**

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<sup>1</sup> Fool — from כִּסְלִי *kisel* “sluggishness or stupidity”; originally meant “fatness”; sometimes means “(over)-confidence”

### **III. Application & Discussion**

- A. How might 3:16-17 affect our decisions as Christians? Does it relate at all to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:1-11?**
- B. Is it only pride that makes us think we have an advantage over the animals? Do these verses support vegetarianism? Has our status compared to animals changed since the Fall? Do these verses deny an afterlife?**
- C. Does 4:1-3 give support for abortion and euthanasia? What other verses in Ecclesiastes might show that Koheleth would be against such practices?**
- D. What does 4:4 have to say in regards to capitalism?**
- E. Do we allow enough time for rest in our lives? How can we tell if we are living a “one hand” life as opposed to a “no hand” life?**
- F. Are we actively seeking accountability and fellowship in our lives in light of 4:9-12?**
- G. Do we know how to receive instruction like the poor but wise youth?**