

# *Eternal* PERSPECTIVE *Ecclesiastes*

## BIBLE TEXT | ECCLESIASTES 3:16-22

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**16** Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness. **17** I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work. **18** I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. **19** For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the

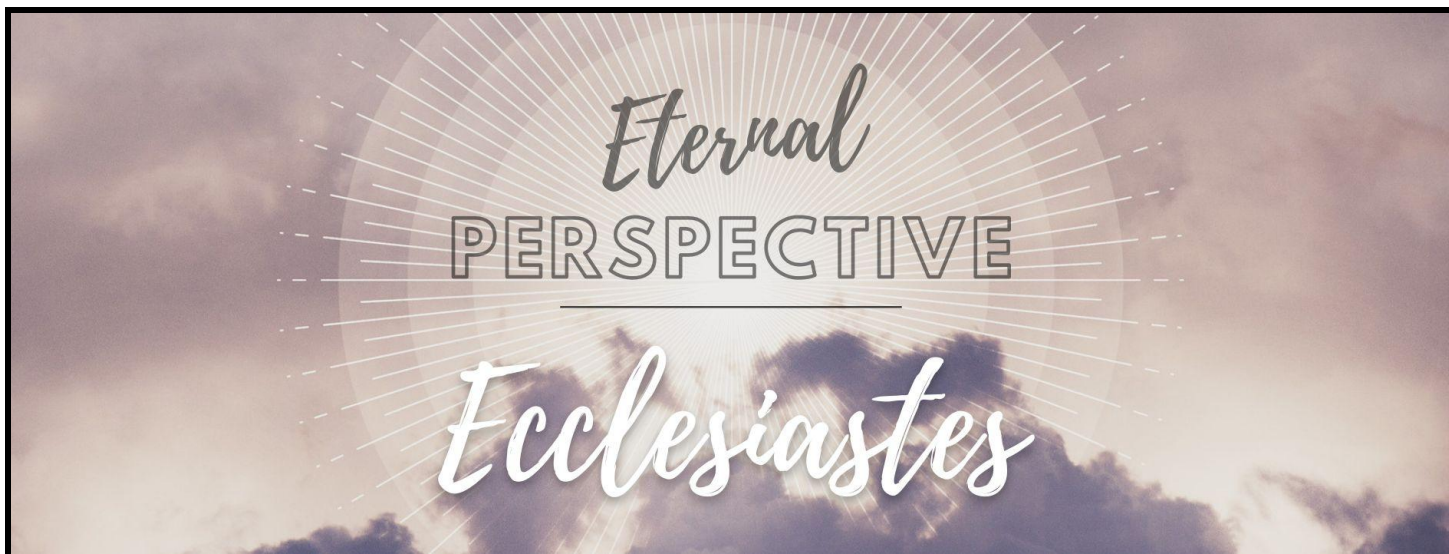
same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. **20** All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. **21** Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth? **22** So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?

## DEVOTIONAL FOR ECCLESIASTES 3:16-22

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How sad and depressing is life when you have nothing to live for, nothing to hope for, and nothing to look forward to? I think back to my life before Christ, and it was a sad, depressing life. I struggled with depression. I was a negative, bitter person. Sure, I filled my days with stuff to do to keep me busy, because I didn't want to be left alone with my thoughts. The last place I wanted to be was alone! I filled my days and my life with things that were fleeting and didn't matter. This is the exact picture I get when I read these passages from Solomon. It is a life that serves no purpose other than to stay busy and die. There is not a defining moment to separate this type of life from that of an animal: they are born, they live, they die, and return to dust.



Being in Christ, we are called to more in life. We also have hope for something more than this world! These things give us something to live for, a purpose. We know that this world is not our home. Romans 12:2 tells us to not be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Colossians 3:23 tells us to do whatever we are doing as if we are doing it for the Lord. You see, when we place our hope in Christ, we are no longer just living life, we are living for Him and His Kingdom! We have a hope for more. Matthew 28:19-20, known as the Great Commission, gives us something more to do in this life. In the parable of the talents, Matthew 25:14-29, we see that laziness is not something we should be striving for. We should be taking the gifts that God has blessed us with - salvation, justification, sanctification - and we should be working to multiply those who have these gifts, for the Kingdom!

Without purpose in life, we wander aimlessly. As a leader, the most successful people I have encountered had a goal, a mission, and a vision. They were driven and knew what they were trying to do and how to do it. I watched a young man go from one of our worst to one of our best when he decided that he wanted to join the military. It wasn't necessarily his decision that brought about the change, but rather the goal. We have a goal that we should be working toward, and that is making disciples of all people! Taking the gospel to the lost, gives them hope and a mission as well. Don't wander aimlessly through life, never achieving your true potential by not setting goals for yourself!

#### Questions:

1. What goals or visions have you set for yourself? Do any of them involve what God has called us to do?
2. What areas are you allowing yourself to wander aimlessly through life?
3. What is stopping you from fulfilling the Great Commission?