

Ecclesiastes

*& the Quest for Elusive Happiness:
Why Everything is Never Enough*

**Vanity of Vanities:
Introducing Ecclesiastes**

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

Rev. Dr. Jason Carter, Lead Pastor

Silence



“If I could prescribe one remedy for the ills of the modern world, I would prescribe *silence*. For even if the word of God were proclaimed in the modern world, no one would hear it; there is too much noise. Therefore create silence.”

Søren Kierkegaard

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3

(PAGE 656 PEW BIBLE)

The words of the Preacher [Qohaleth] the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

² Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

³ What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?







**Ecclesiastes is modern because it exposes
the greatest fear of modern man and woman.**



#2: Ecclesiastes is a modern book because it is a deeply honest and vulnerable book.



#3: Ecclesiastes is a modern book because it serves as a corrective to the tendency of modern knowledge.



#4: Ecclesiastes is a modern book because it challenges the shallow hedonism so pervasive in our culture.



#5: Ecclesiastes is a modern book because it is a highly empirical book that takes its cue from three things: *observation, observation, observation.*



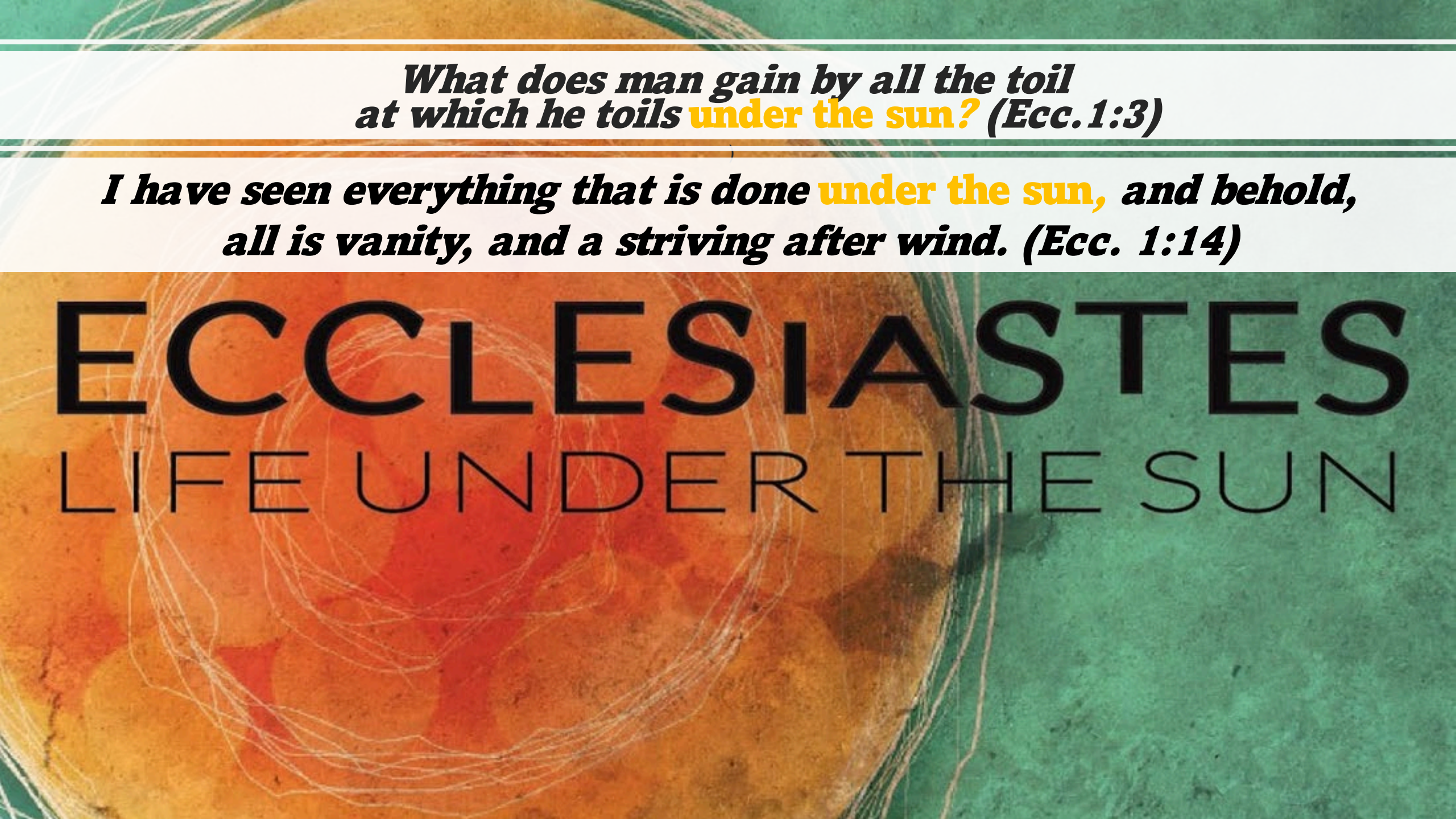
ECCLESIASTES

LIFE UNDER THE SUN

*What does man gain by all the toil
at which he toils **under the sun?** (Ecc. 1:3)*

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LIFE UNDER THE SUN



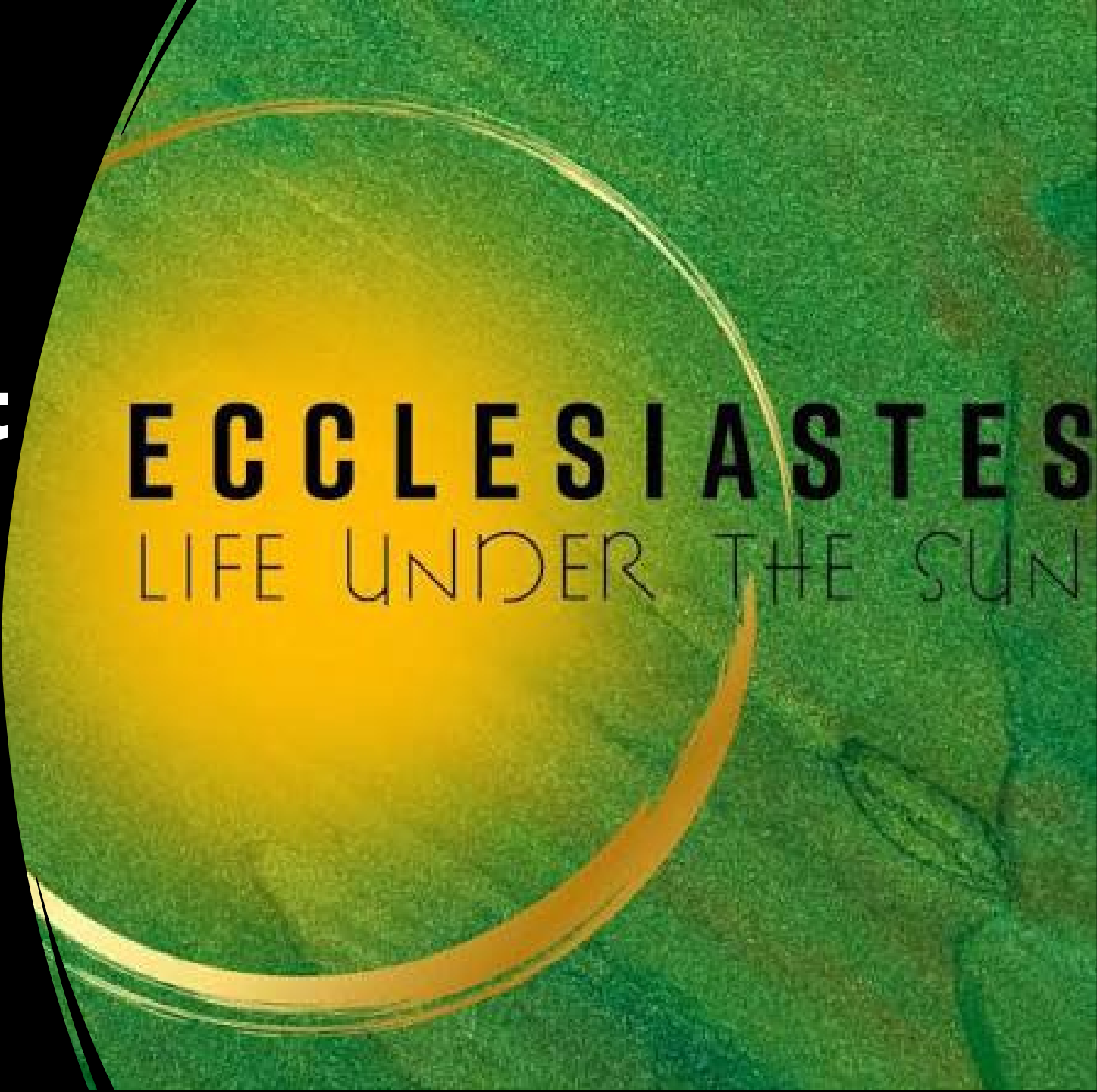
***What does man gain by all the toil
at which he toils **under the sun**? (Ecc. 1:3)***

***I have seen everything that is done **under the sun**, and behold,
all is vanity, and a striving after wind. (Ecc. 1:14)***

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**Ecclesiastes is
the dark contrast
to the light of
God's revelation**

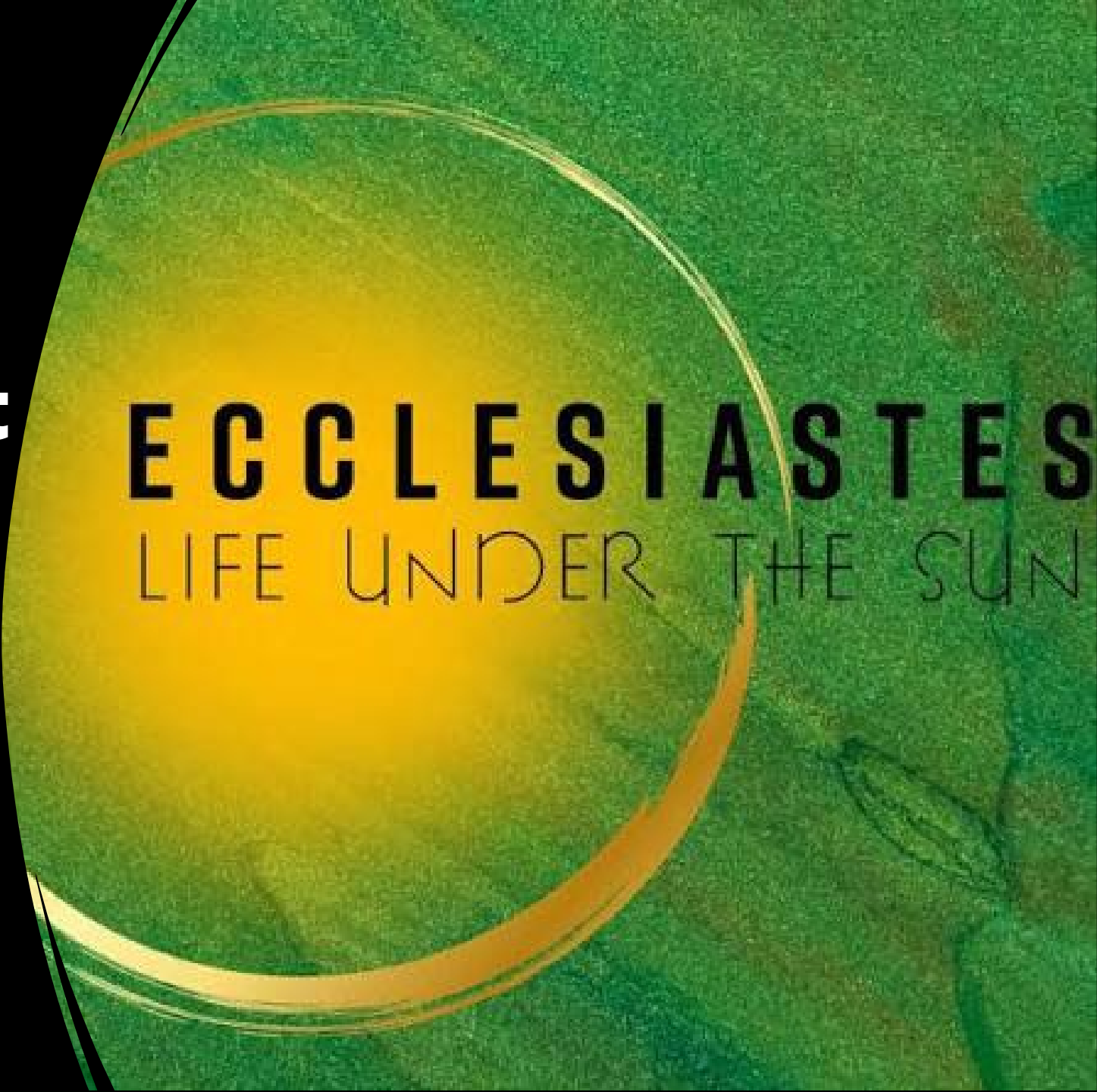


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**Ecclesiastes is
the dark contrast
to the light of
God's revelation**

“I believe in Christianity as I believe
that the sun has risen; not only
because I see it, but because by it
I see everything else.”

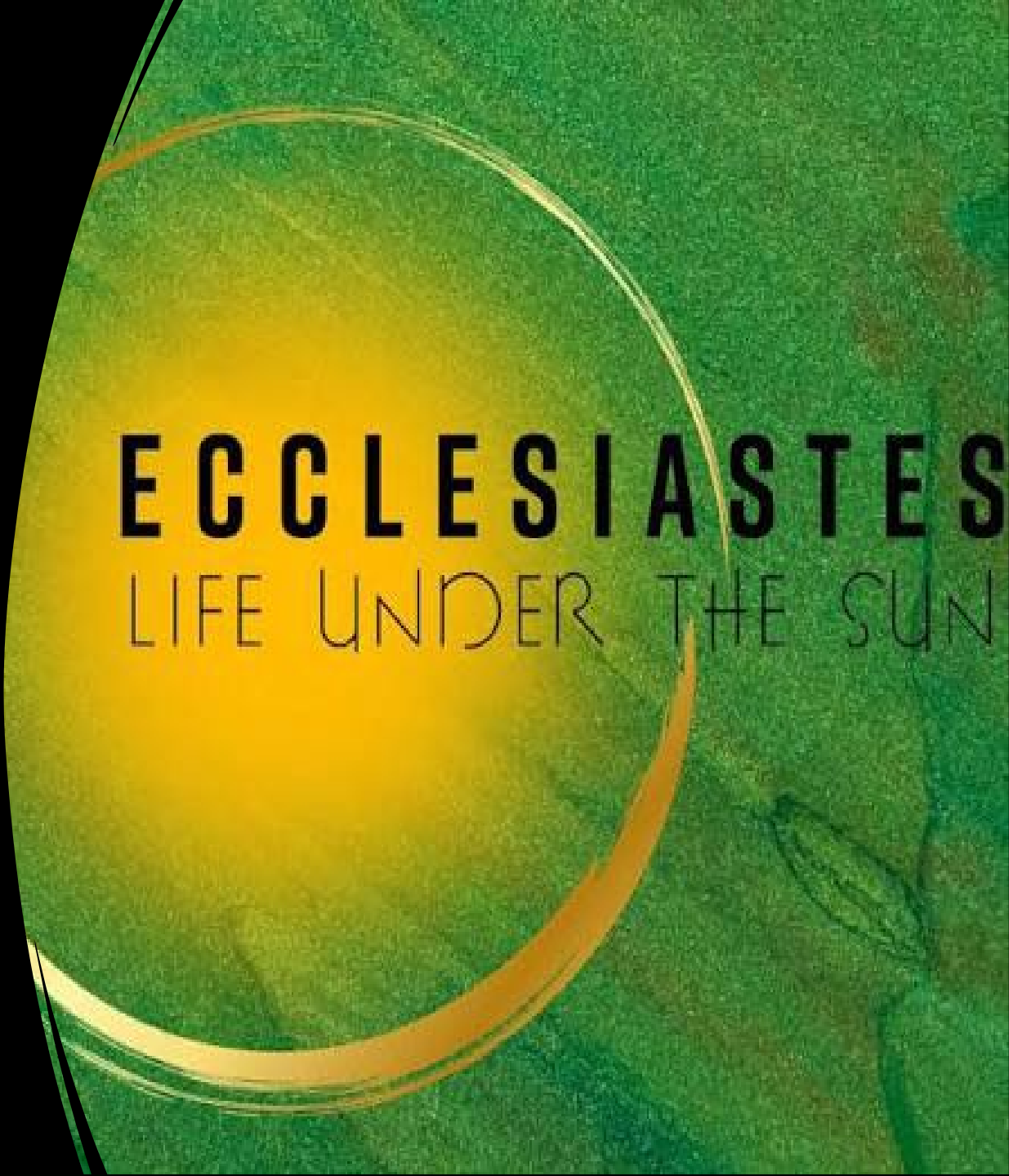
C.S. Lewis



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Ecclesiastes is the dark contrast to the light of God's revelation

“Only the wise know folly; fools know neither wisdom nor folly. Just as it takes wisdom to know folly, light to know darkness, it takes profundity to know vanity, meaning to know meaninglessness.” – Peter Kreft

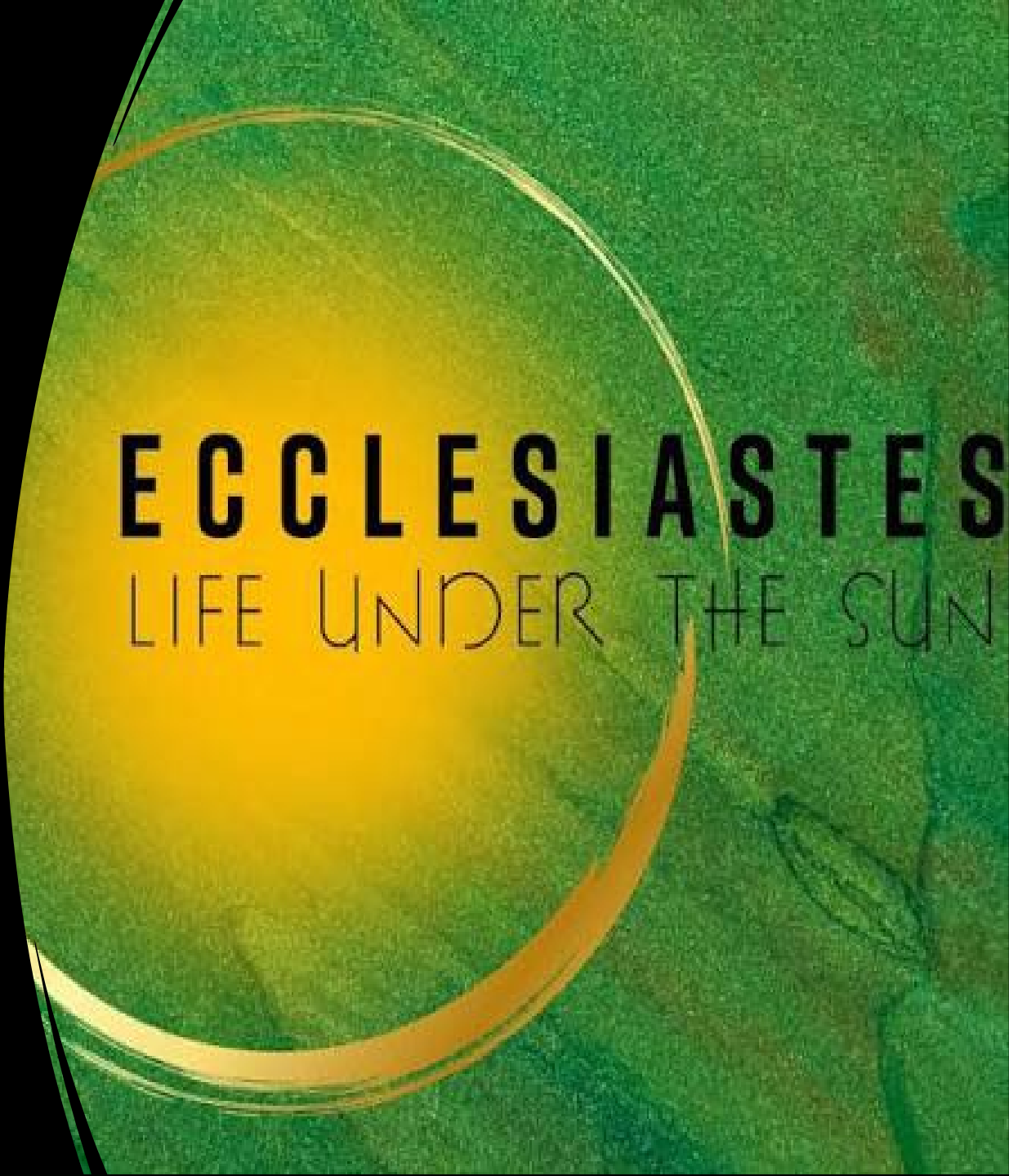


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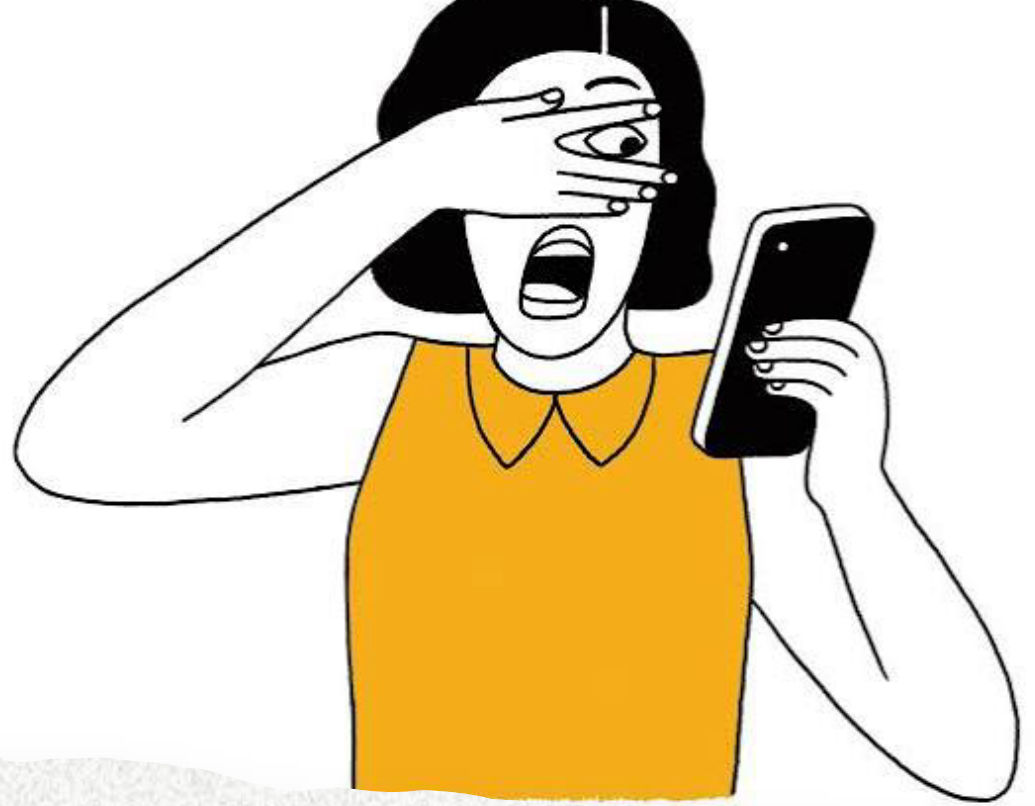
**Ecclesiastes is the
dark contrast to the
light of God's
revelation**

**Ecclesiastes is a “revelation by
darkness rather than by light.”**

– Peter Kreft



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LIFE UNDER THE SUN



Ecclesiastes is the “bad news” foil which first must be digested before the “good news” is received.

BAD NEWS!



“Ecclesiastes is the one book of the Bible that modern man needs most to read, for it is *Lesson One*, and the rest of the Bible is Lesson Two, and modernity does not heed Lesson Two because it does not Heed Lesson One....*Ecclesiastes is the contrast*, the alternative to the rest of the Bible, the question to which the rest of the Bible is the answer.

There is nothing more meaningless than an answer without its question.”

Peter Kreft

Ecclesiastes 1:1

*The words of the Preacher
[Hebrew: **Qoheleth**], the son of
David, king in Jerusalem
Ecclesiastes 1:1*

*The words of **Solomon**, son of David,
king in Jerusalem.
Proverbs 1:1*



Ecclesiastes 1:1

I, Qoheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

Ecclesiastes 1:12 (NIV)



Ecclesiastes 1:1

I said to myself, “Look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge.”

Ecclesiastes 1:16 NIV (see also 2:7,9)

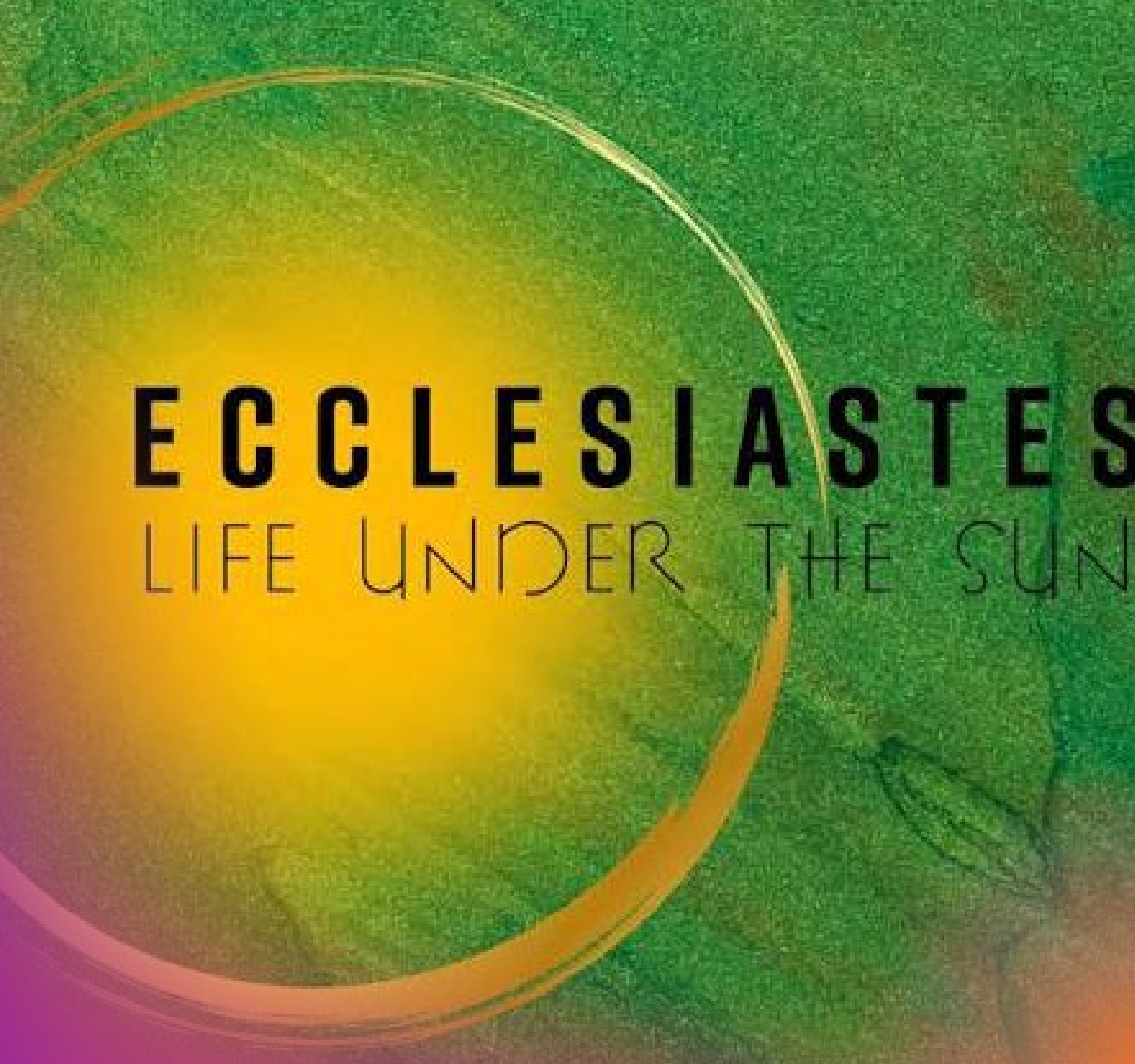


Ecclesiastes 1:1

“Then I turned and observed all the oppression that is done under the sun, and oh, the tears of the oppressed.” (Ecclesiastes 4:1)

*If Solomon is the author, did he not have the power to alleviate the oppression? Is this protest literature **against** the king or **by** the king?
(See also: Ecclesiastes 5:8-9; 10:20)*





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LIFE UNDER THE SUN

**With Qoheleth, “we
put on the mantle of a
Solomon”.**

“Who better than ‘King Solomon’ to illustrate the *futility of life without God*. The man had everything that anyone could ever want. But *the world is not enough*. If it could not satisfy the richest, wisest king in the world, it will never satisfy anyone.”

– Philip Ryken