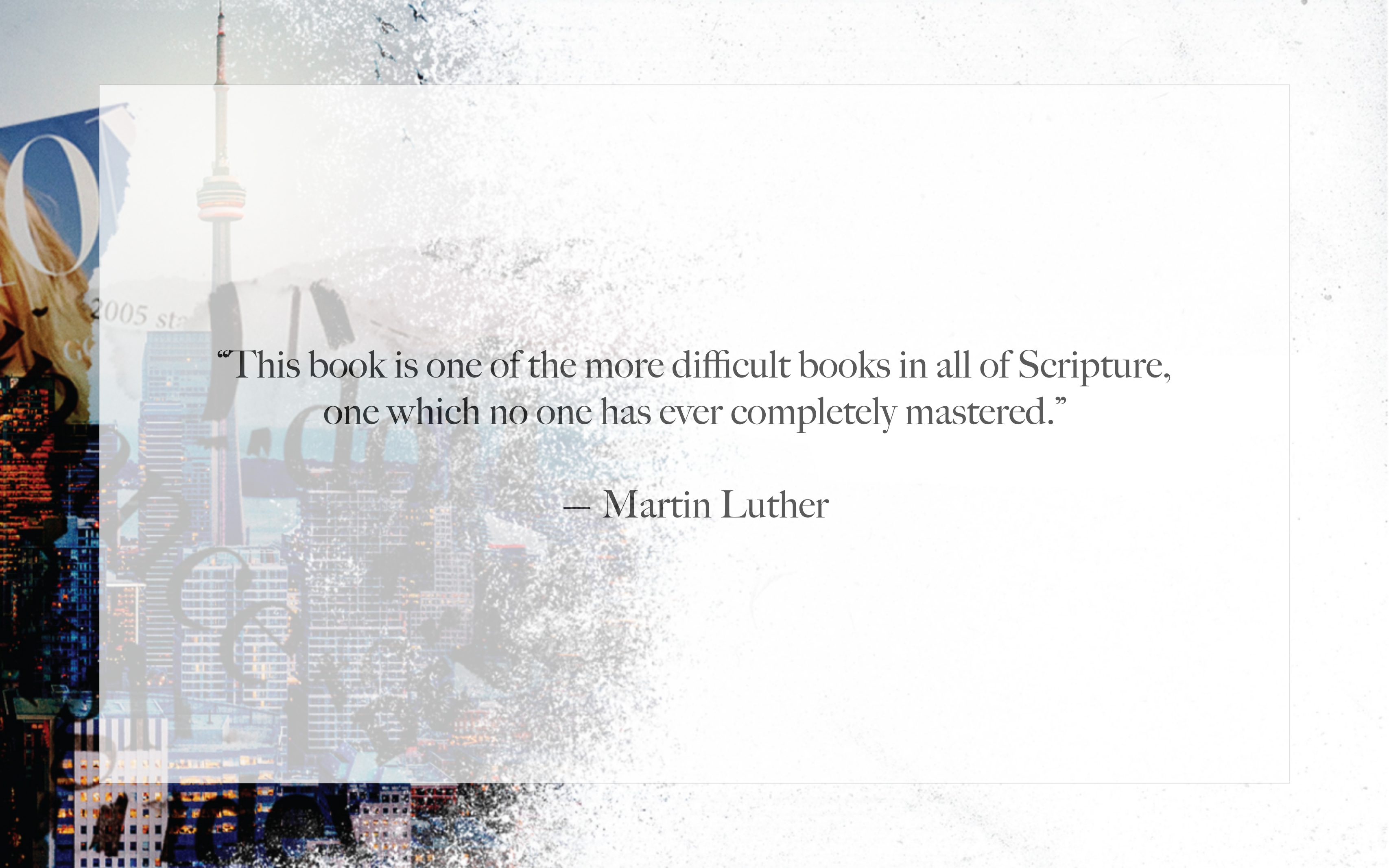




# ECCLESIASTES

MAKING SENSE OF A COMPLEX WORLD

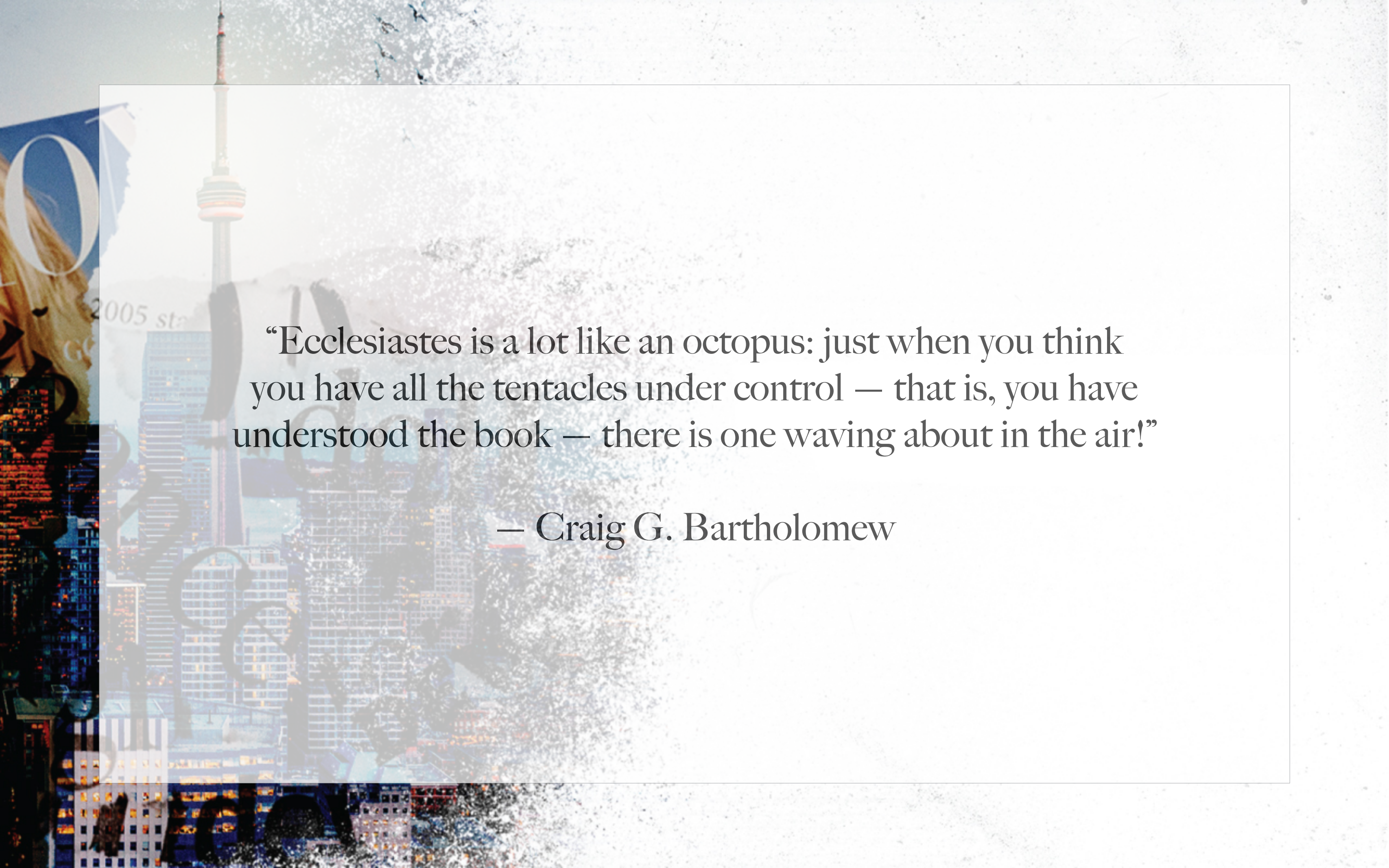




“This book is one of the more difficult books in all of Scripture,  
one which no one has ever completely mastered.”

— Martin Luther





“Ecclesiastes is a lot like an octopus: just when you think you have all the tentacles under control — that is, you have understood the book — there is one waving about in the air!”

— Craig G. Bartholomew

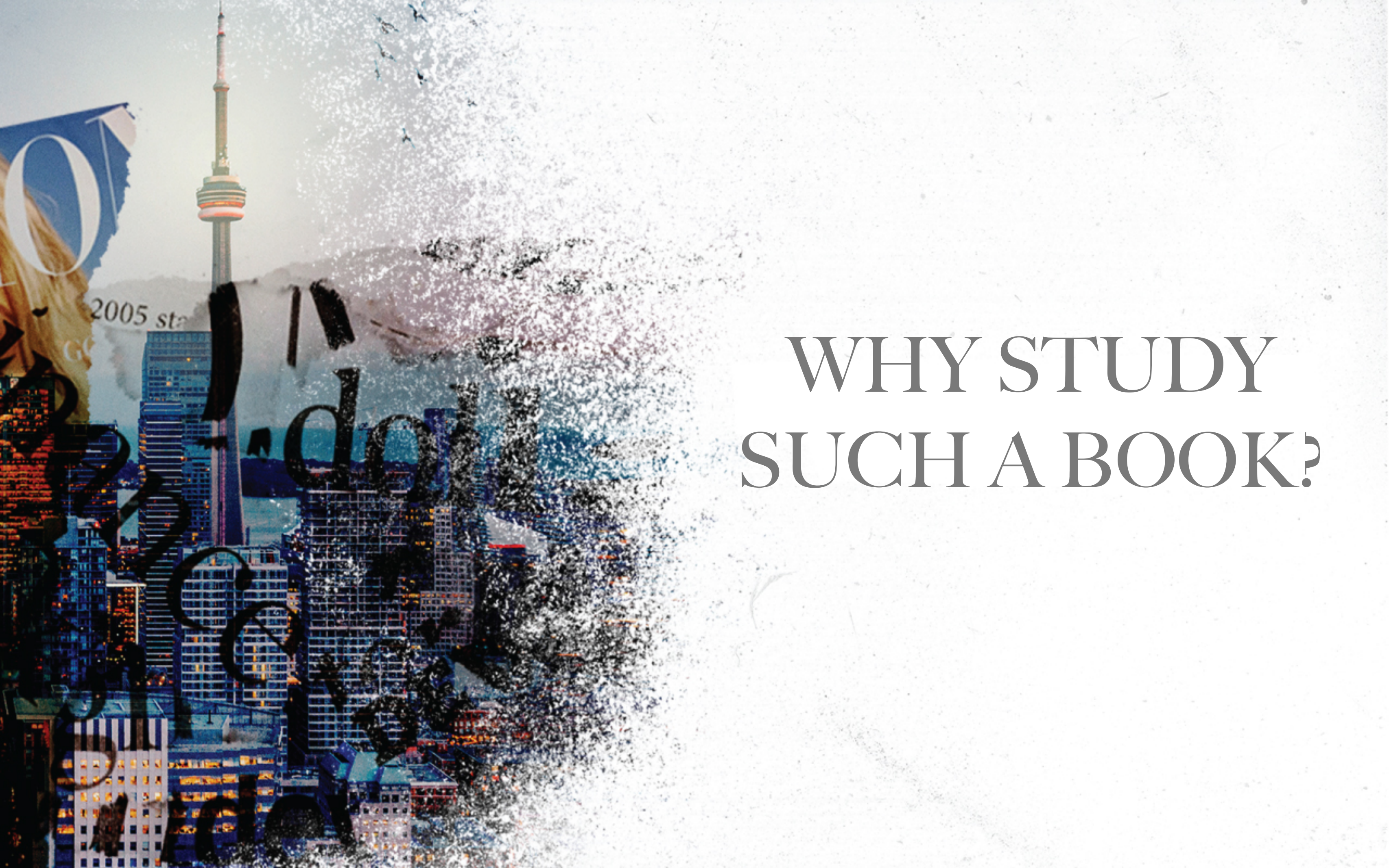




“the low-water mark of God-fearing Jews  
in pre-Christian times”

— J.R. Dummelow





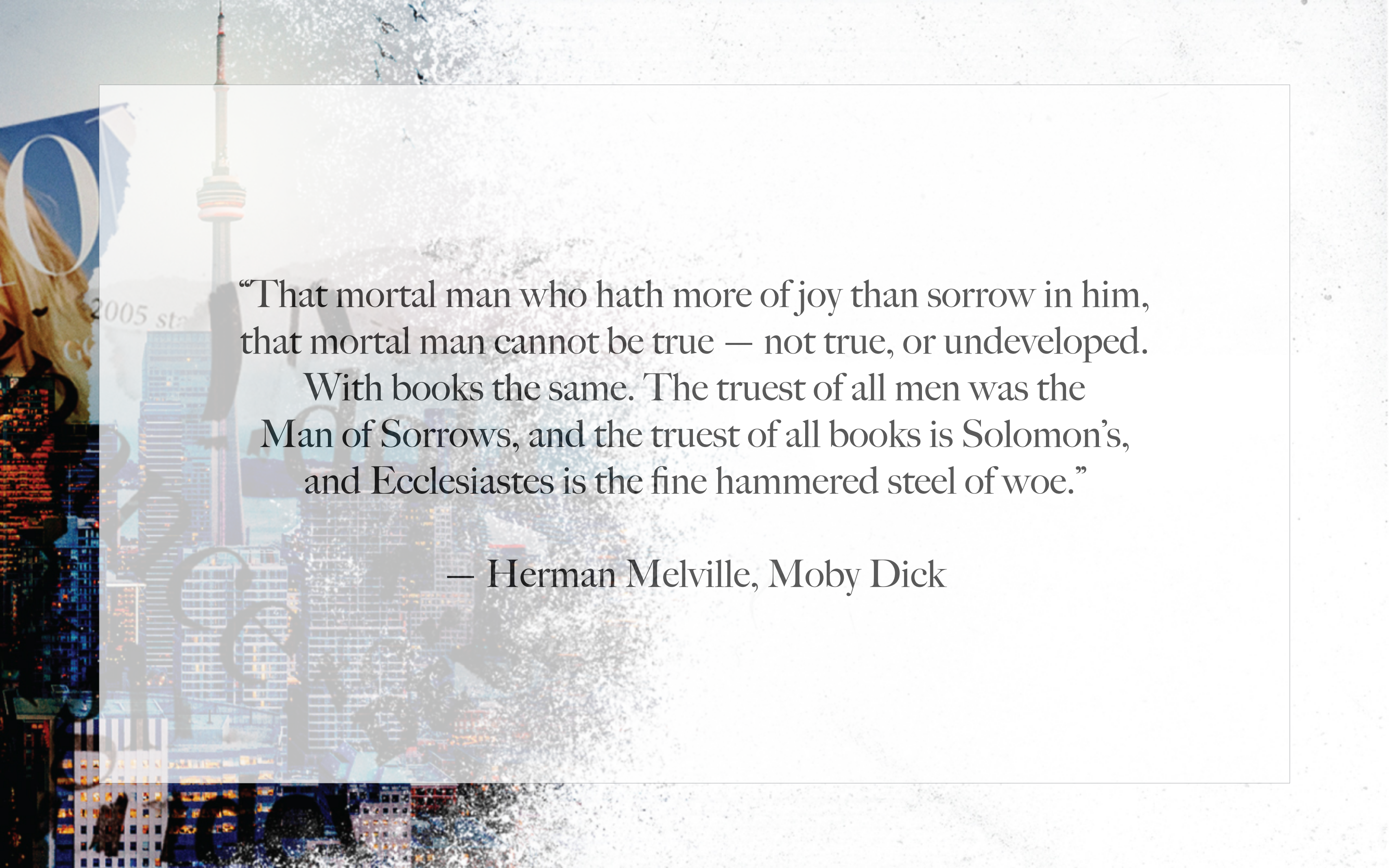
WHY STUDY  
SUCH A BOOK?





It's honest.





“That mortal man who hath more of joy than sorrow in him,  
that mortal man cannot be true — not true, or undeveloped.

With books the same. The truest of all men was the  
Man of Sorrows, and the truest of all books is Solomon’s,  
and Ecclesiastes is the fine hammered steel of woe.”

— Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*





It's honest.

It's course-shaping.



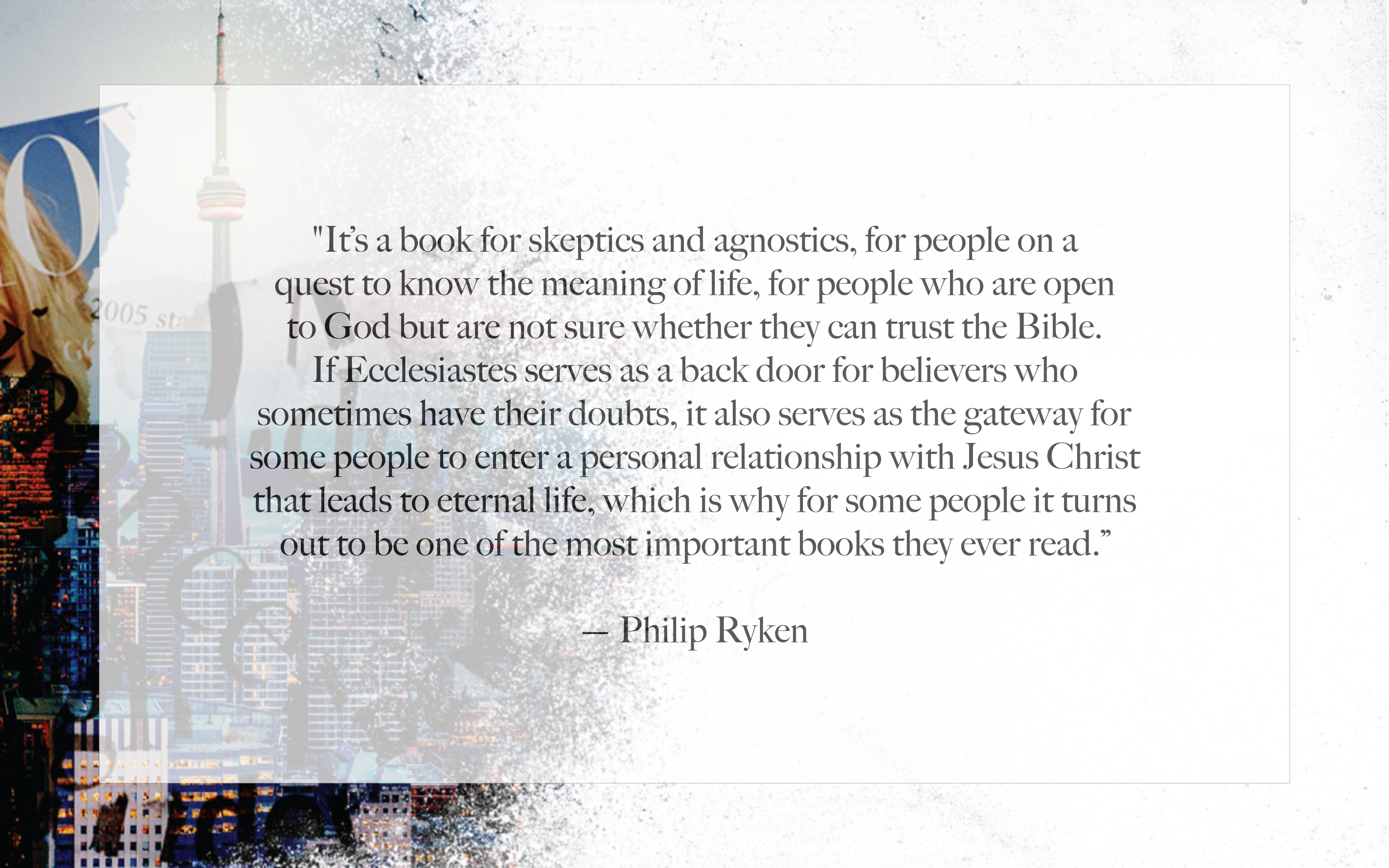


It's honest.

It's course-shaping.

It's apologetic.





"It's a book for skeptics and agnostics, for people on a quest to know the meaning of life, for people who are open to God but are not sure whether they can trust the Bible.

If Ecclesiastes serves as a back door for believers who sometimes have their doubts, it also serves as the gateway for some people to enter a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life, which is why for some people it turns out to be one of the most important books they ever read."

— Philip Ryken





It's honest.

It's course-shaping.

It's apologetic.

It's doxological.





It's honest.

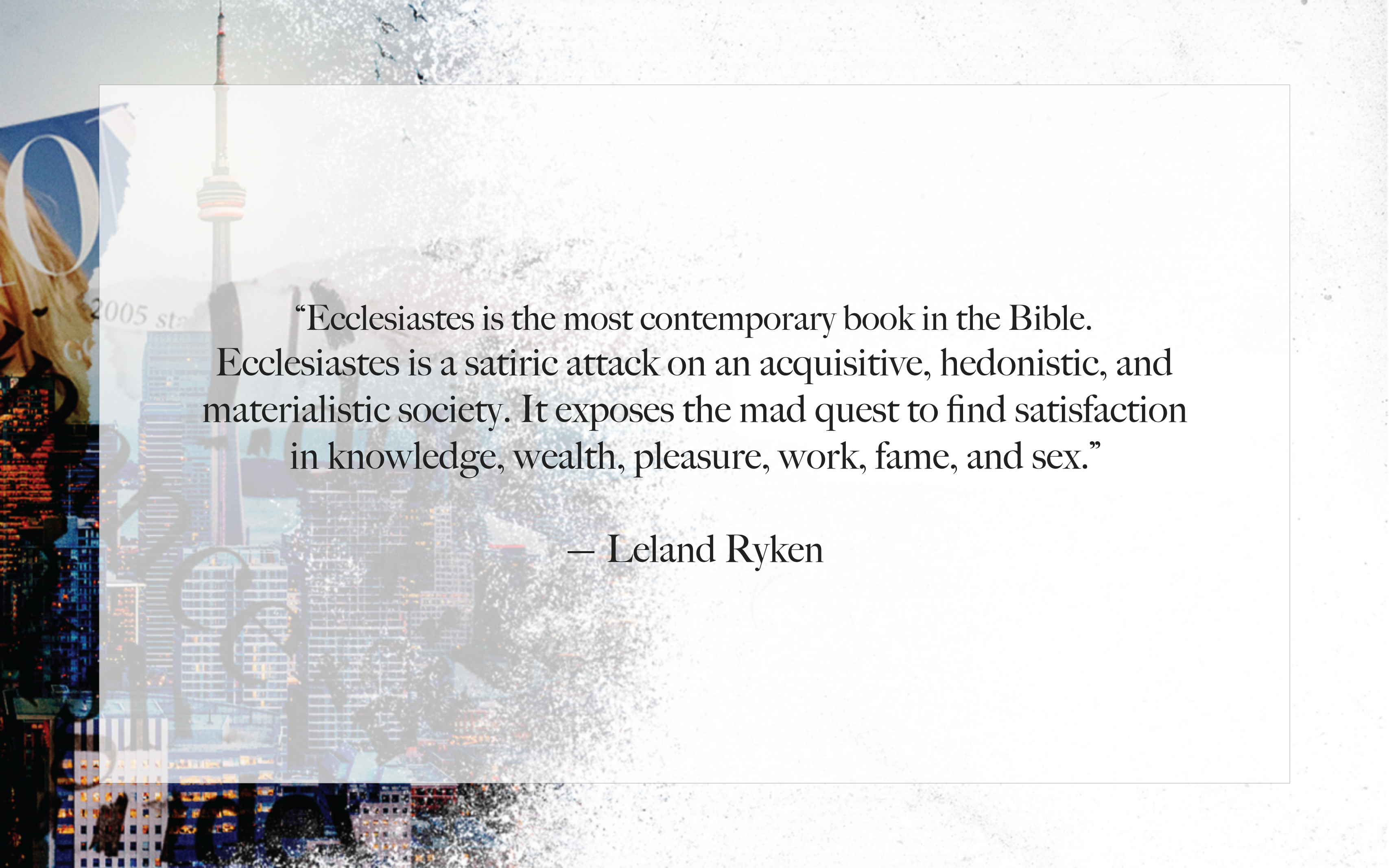
It's course-shaping.

It's apologetic.

It's doxological.

It's practical.





“Ecclesiastes is the most contemporary book in the Bible.  
Ecclesiastes is a satiric attack on an acquisitive, hedonistic, and  
materialistic society. It exposes the mad quest to find satisfaction  
in knowledge, wealth, pleasure, work, fame, and sex.”

— Leland Ryken

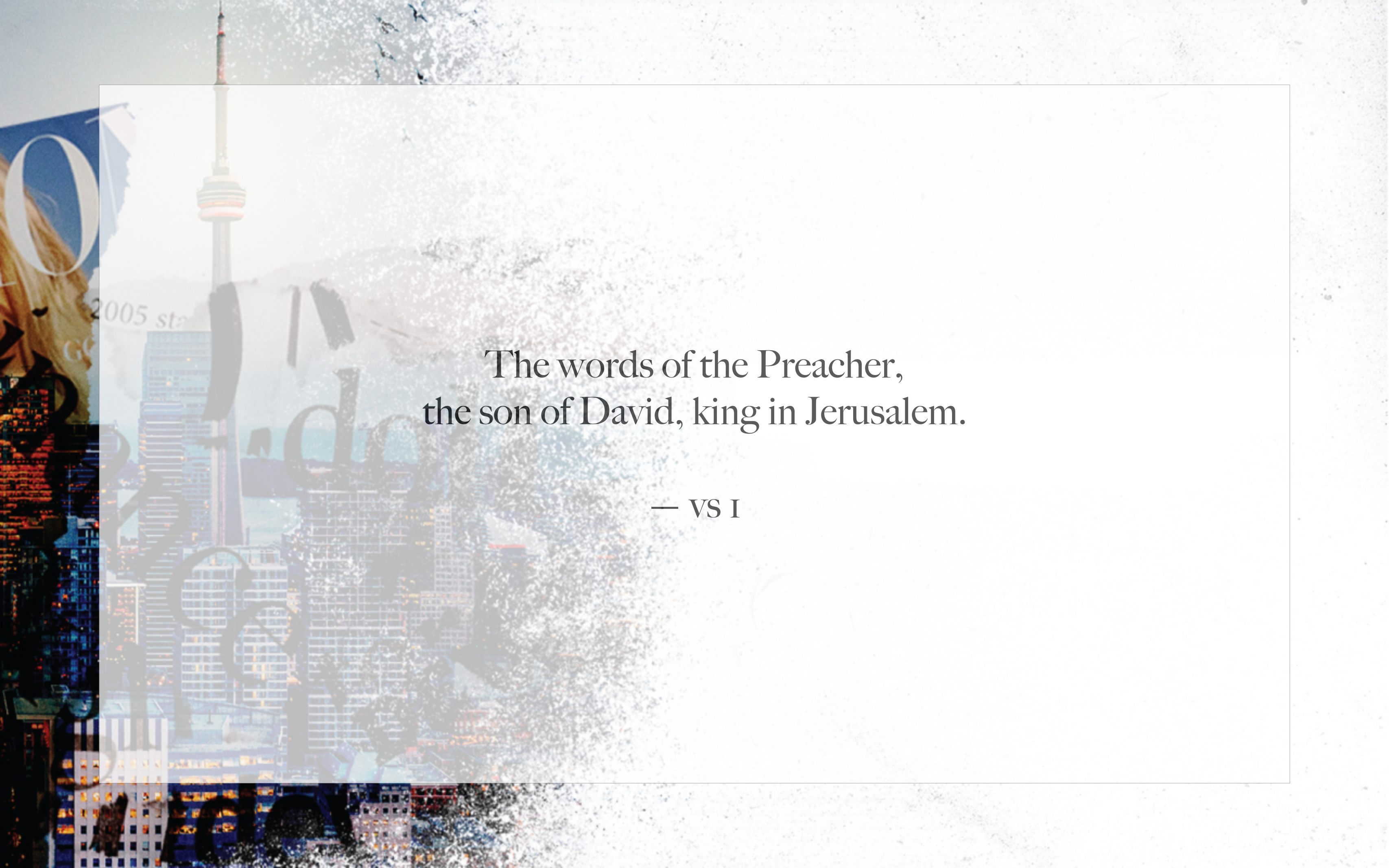




# VANITY OF VANITIES

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

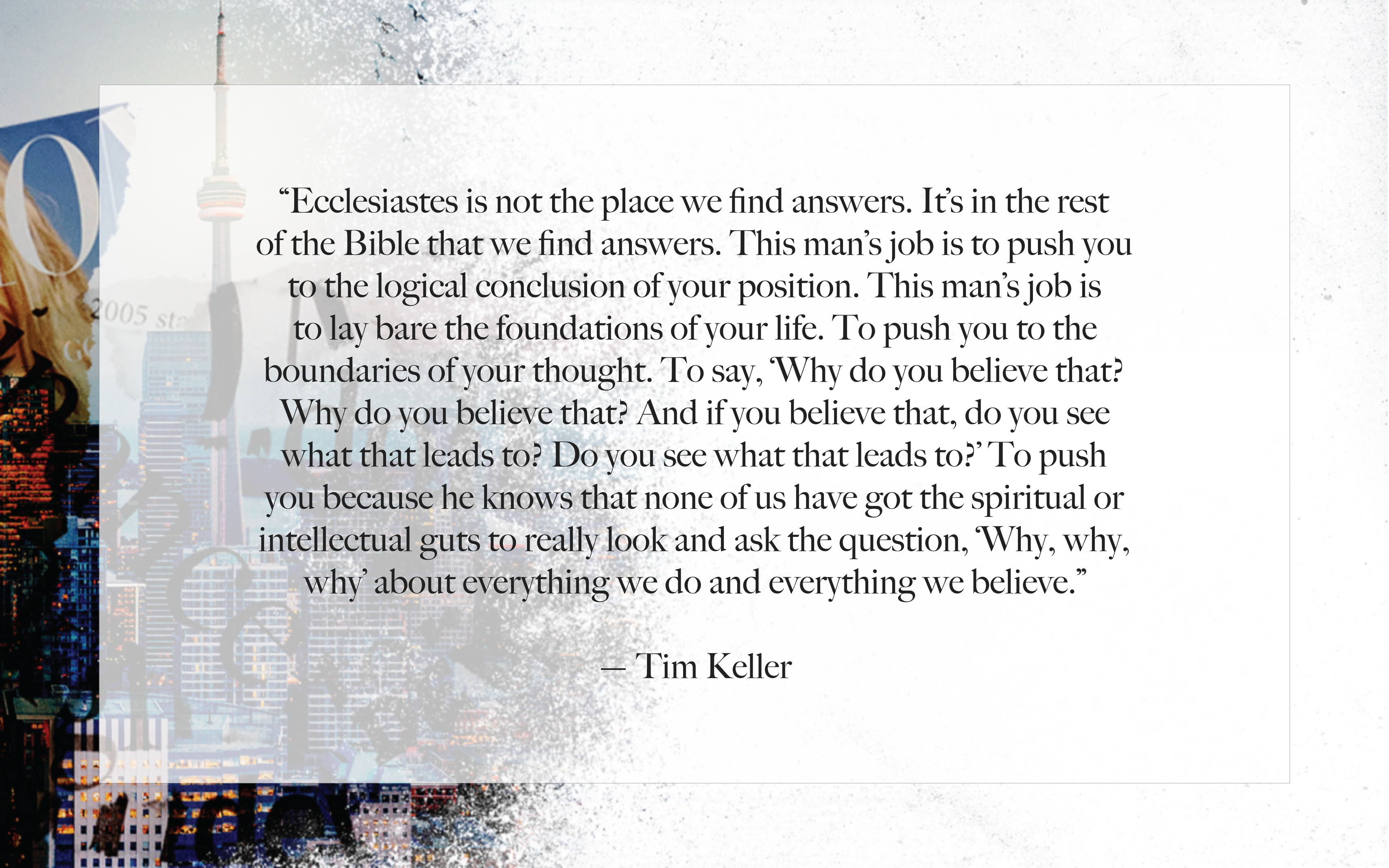




The words of the Preacher,  
the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

— VS I





“Ecclesiastes is not the place we find answers. It’s in the rest of the Bible that we find answers. This man’s job is to push you to the logical conclusion of your position. This man’s job is to lay bare the foundations of your life. To push you to the boundaries of your thought. To say, ‘Why do you believe that? Why do you believe that? And if you believe that, do you see what that leads to? Do you see what that leads to?’ To push you because he knows that none of us have got the spiritual or intellectual guts to really look and ask the question, ‘Why, why, why’ about everything we do and everything we believe.”

— Tim Keller






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

— VS 2





Every effort  
Any fruit of our labors  
Pleasure  
Life  
Youth  
Success  
Wealth  
Desire  
Frivolity  
Popularity  
Injustice  
All future events  
Everything





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

— vs 3





# UNDER THE SUN

life as we know it in a fallen world

a view of the world absent of God

a belief in God but one that falls short  
of the triune covenant LORD of Scripture

a right confessional belief in God  
and yet a functional living for self and now

a limited perspective on life compared to  
God's comprehensive, all-knowing view of the world

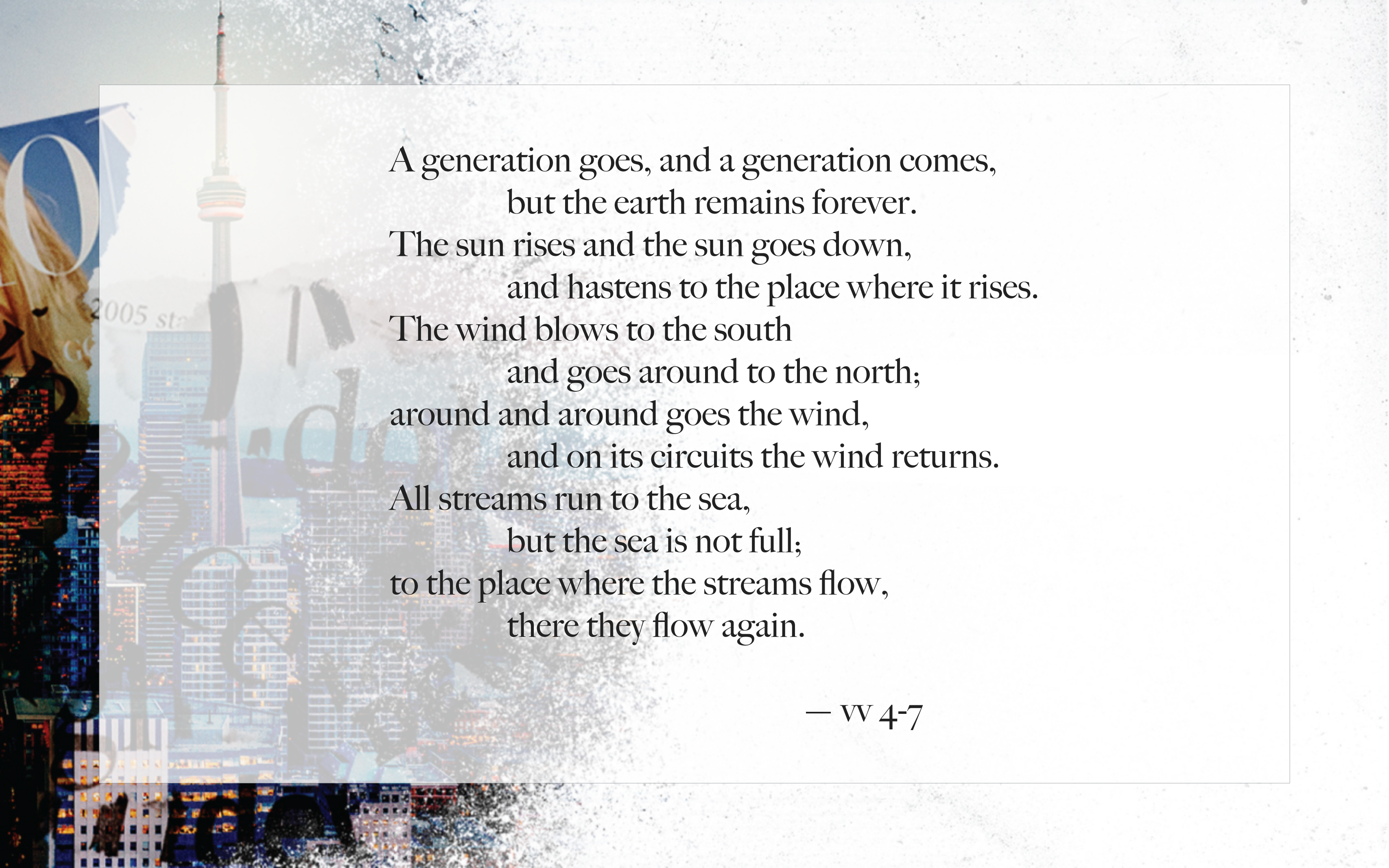




What does man gain by all the toil  
at which he toils under the sun?

— vs 3

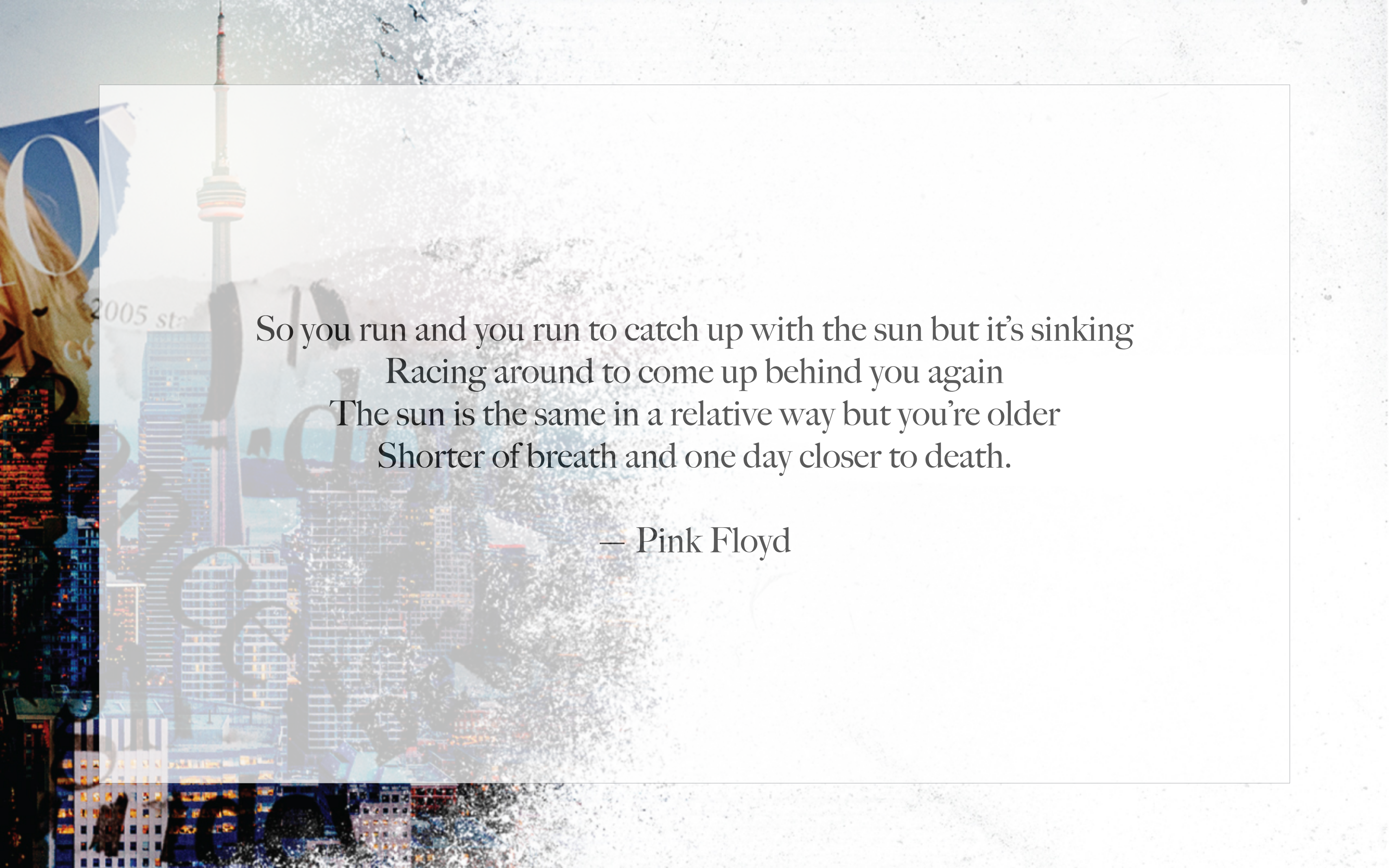




A generation goes, and a generation comes,  
but the earth remains forever.  
The sun rises and the sun goes down,  
and hastens to the place where it rises.  
The wind blows to the south  
and goes around to the north;  
around and around goes the wind,  
and on its circuits the wind returns.  
All streams run to the sea,  
but the sea is not full;  
to the place where the streams flow,  
there they flow again.

— vv 4-7

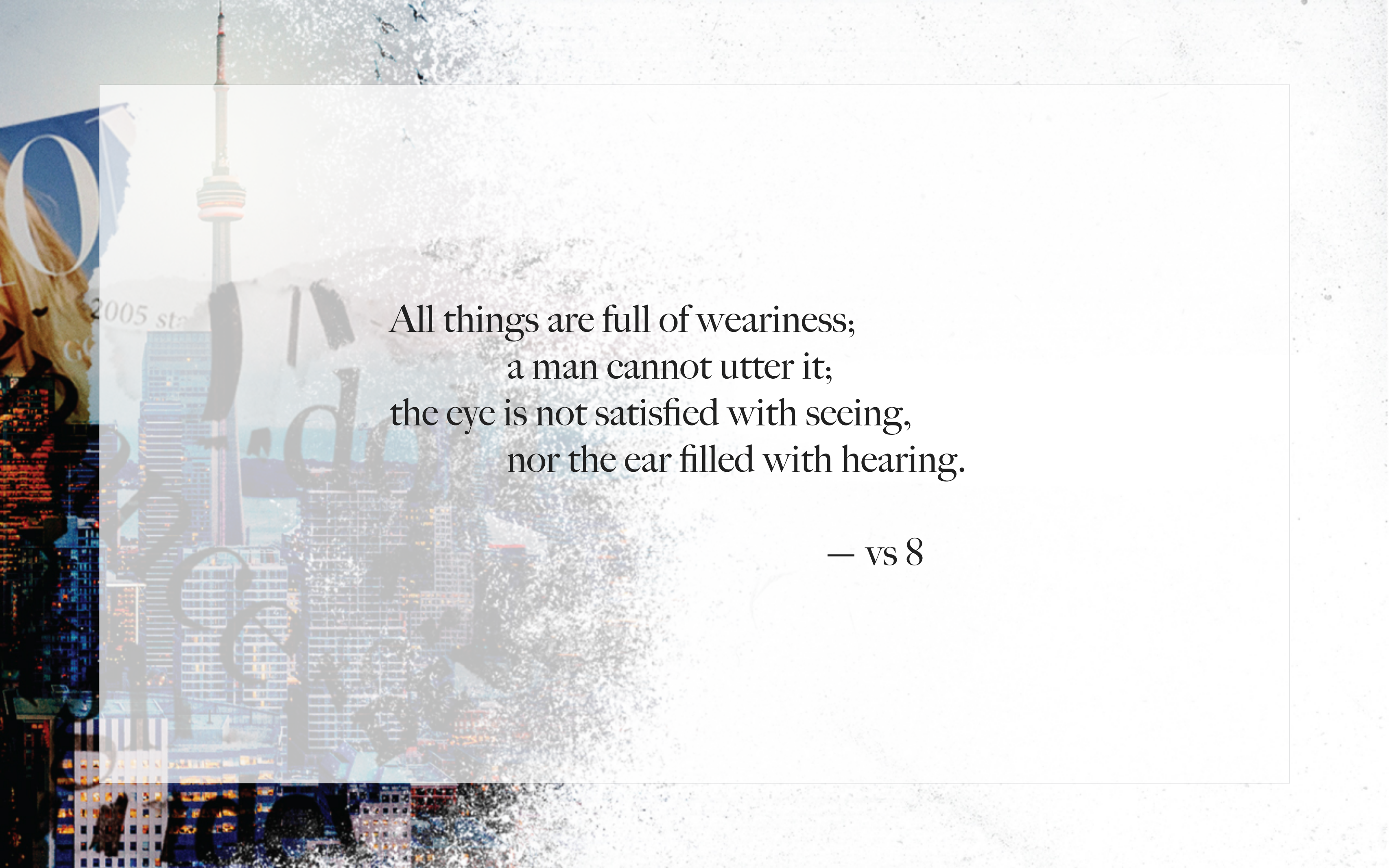




So you run and you run to catch up with the sun but it's sinking  
Racing around to come up behind you again  
The sun is the same in a relative way but you're older  
Shorter of breath and one day closer to death.

— Pink Floyd

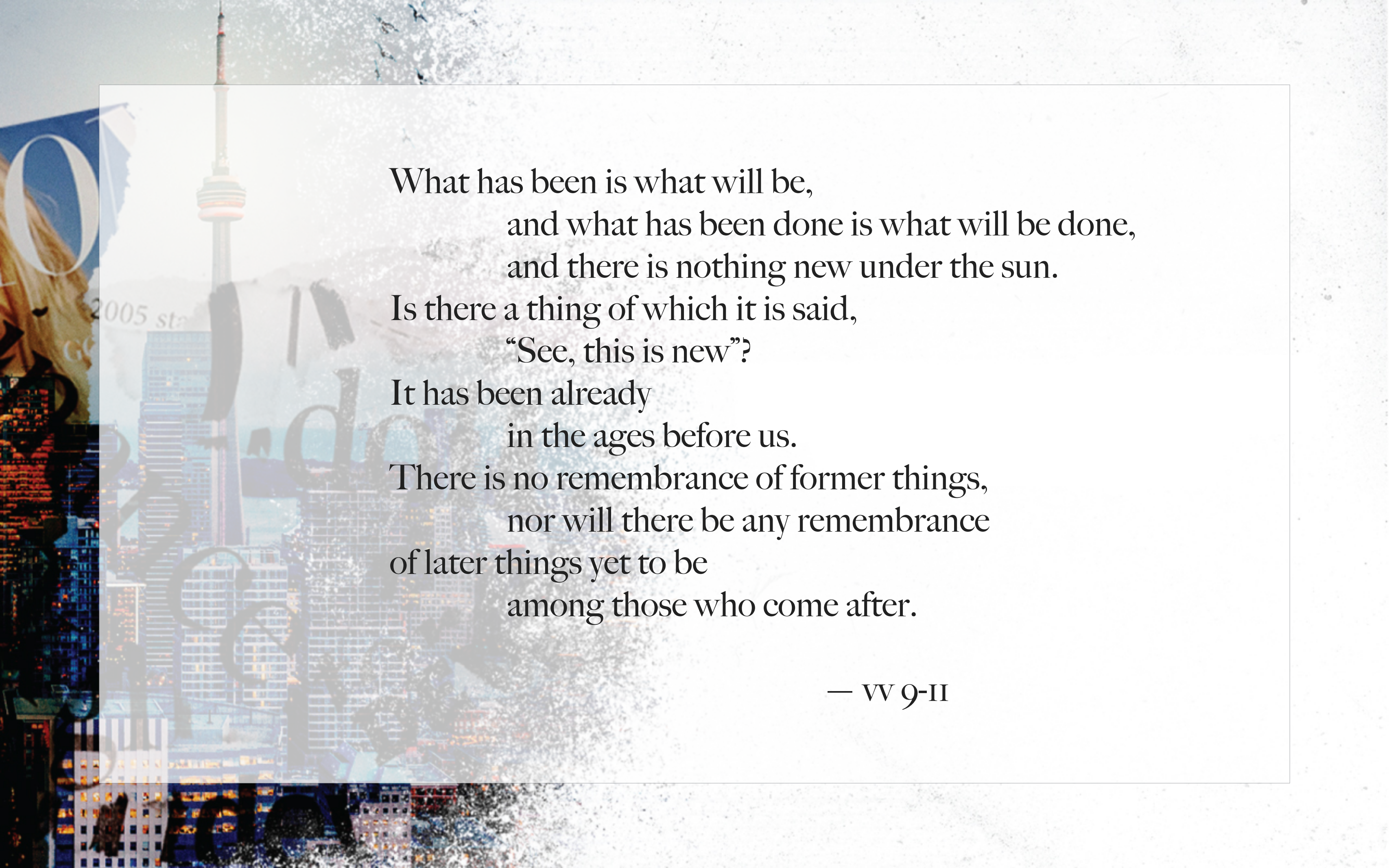




All things are full of weariness;  
a man cannot utter it;  
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,  
nor the ear filled with hearing.

— vs 8

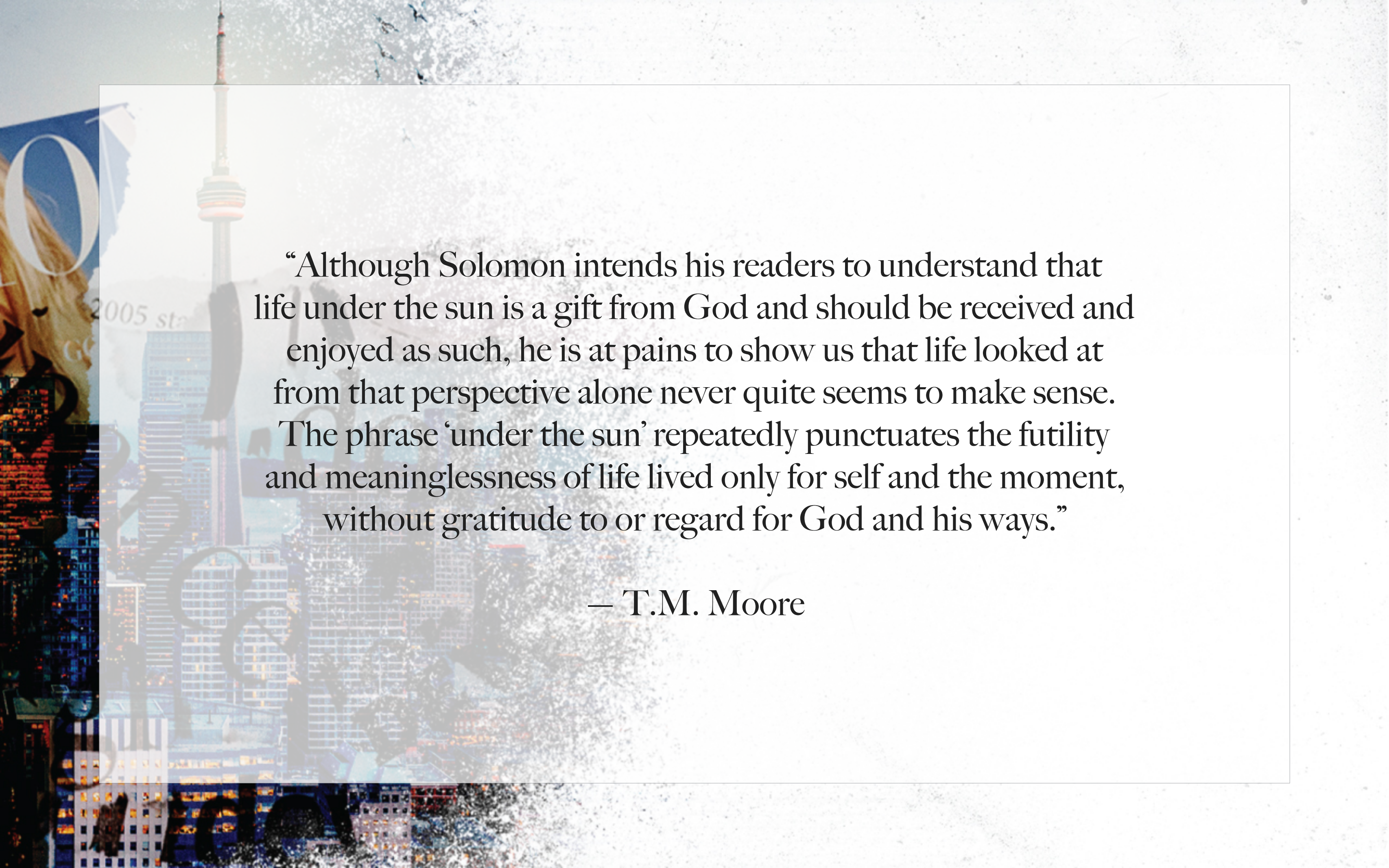




What has been is what will be,  
and what has been done is what will be done,  
and there is nothing new under the sun.  
Is there a thing of which it is said,  
“See, this is new”?  
It has been already  
in the ages before us.  
There is no remembrance of former things,  
nor will there be any remembrance  
of later things yet to be  
among those who come after.

— VV 9-II

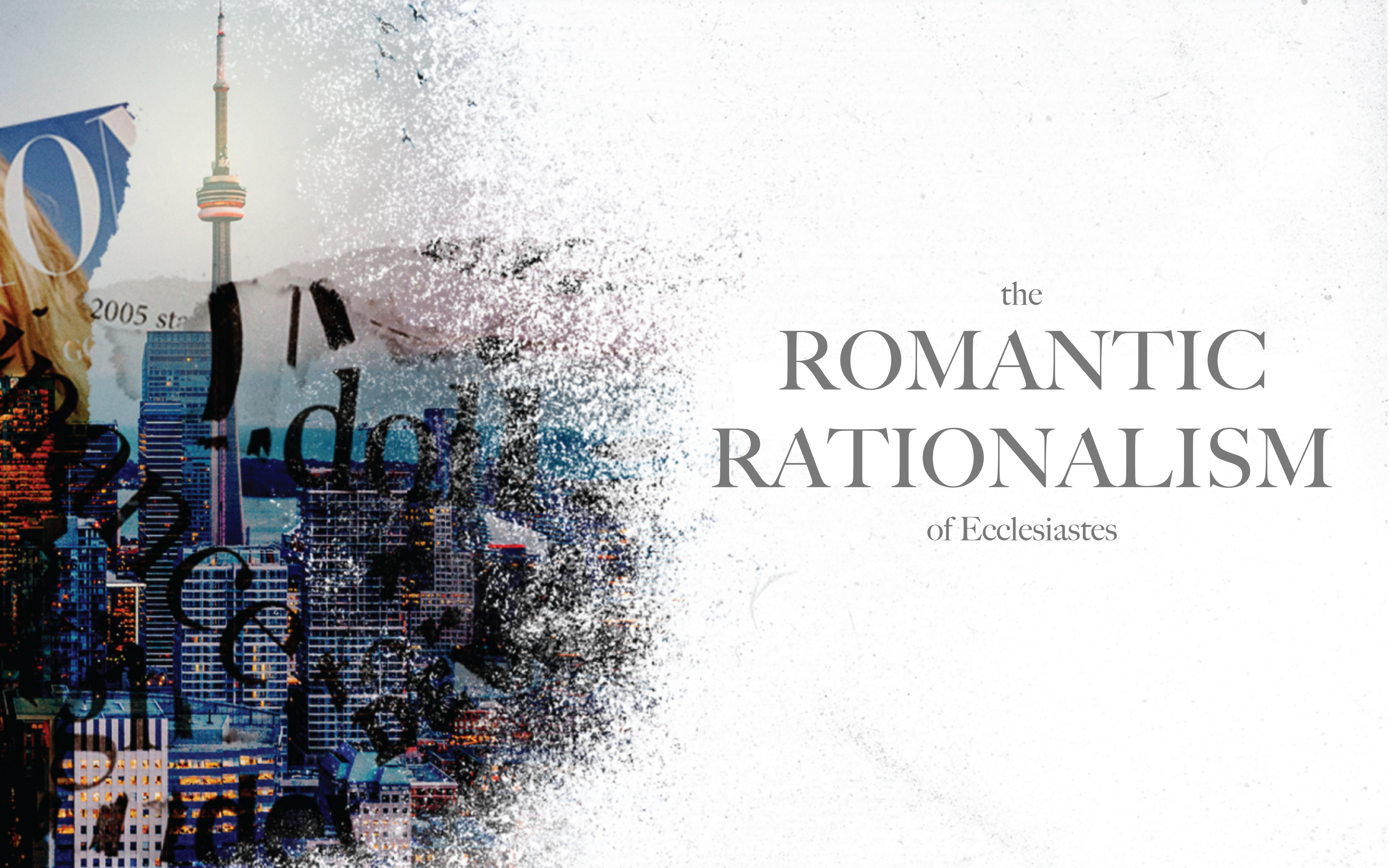




“Although Solomon intends his readers to understand that life under the sun is a gift from God and should be received and enjoyed as such, he is at pains to show us that life looked at from that perspective alone never quite seems to make sense. The phrase ‘under the sun’ repeatedly punctuates the futility and meaninglessness of life lived only for self and the moment, without gratitude to or regard for God and his ways.”

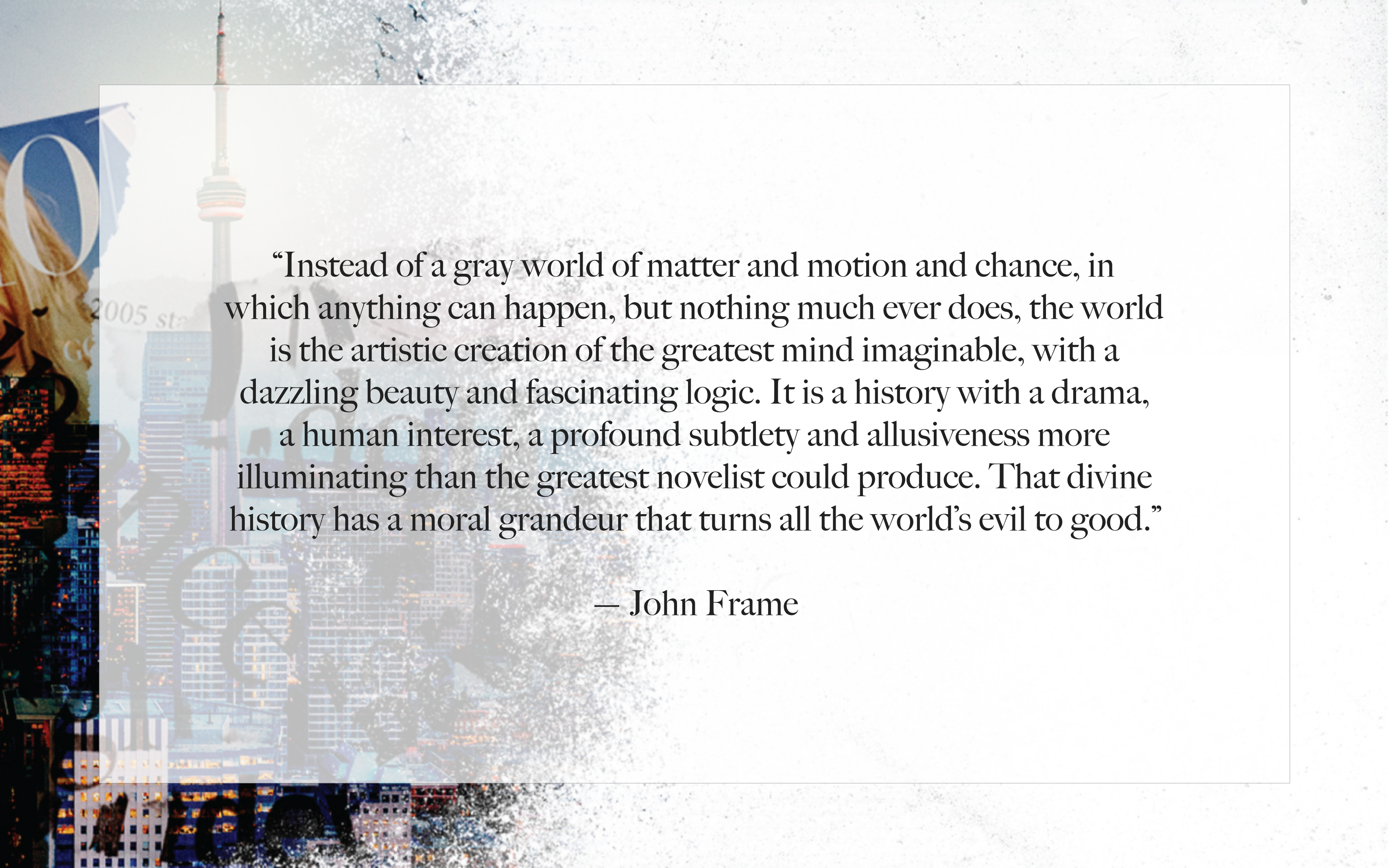
— T.M. Moore





the  
ROMANTIC  
RATIONALISM  
of Ecclesiastes

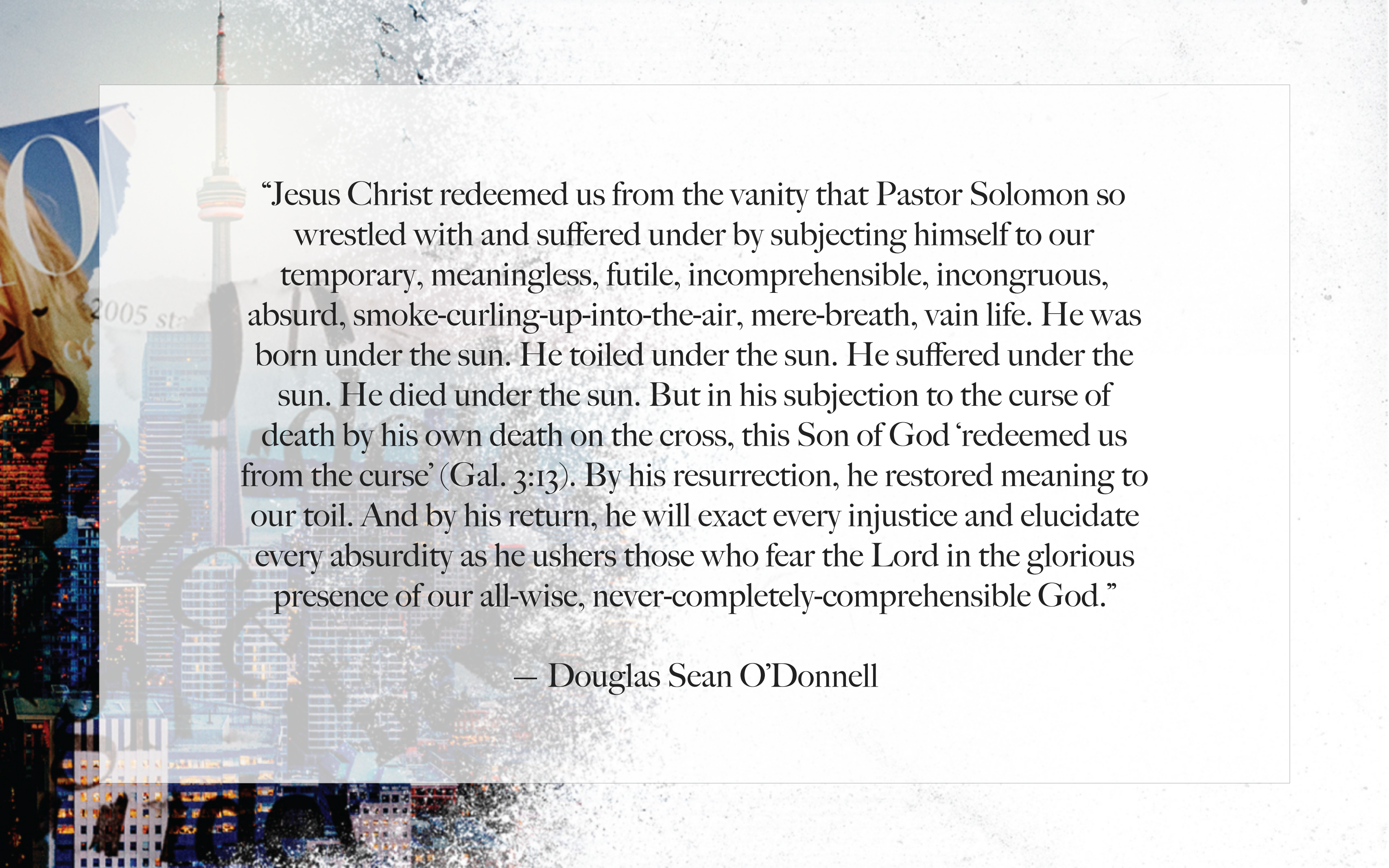




“Instead of a gray world of matter and motion and chance, in which anything can happen, but nothing much ever does, the world is the artistic creation of the greatest mind imaginable, with a dazzling beauty and fascinating logic. It is a history with a drama, a human interest, a profound subtlety and allusiveness more illuminating than the greatest novelist could produce. That divine history has a moral grandeur that turns all the world’s evil to good.”

— John Frame

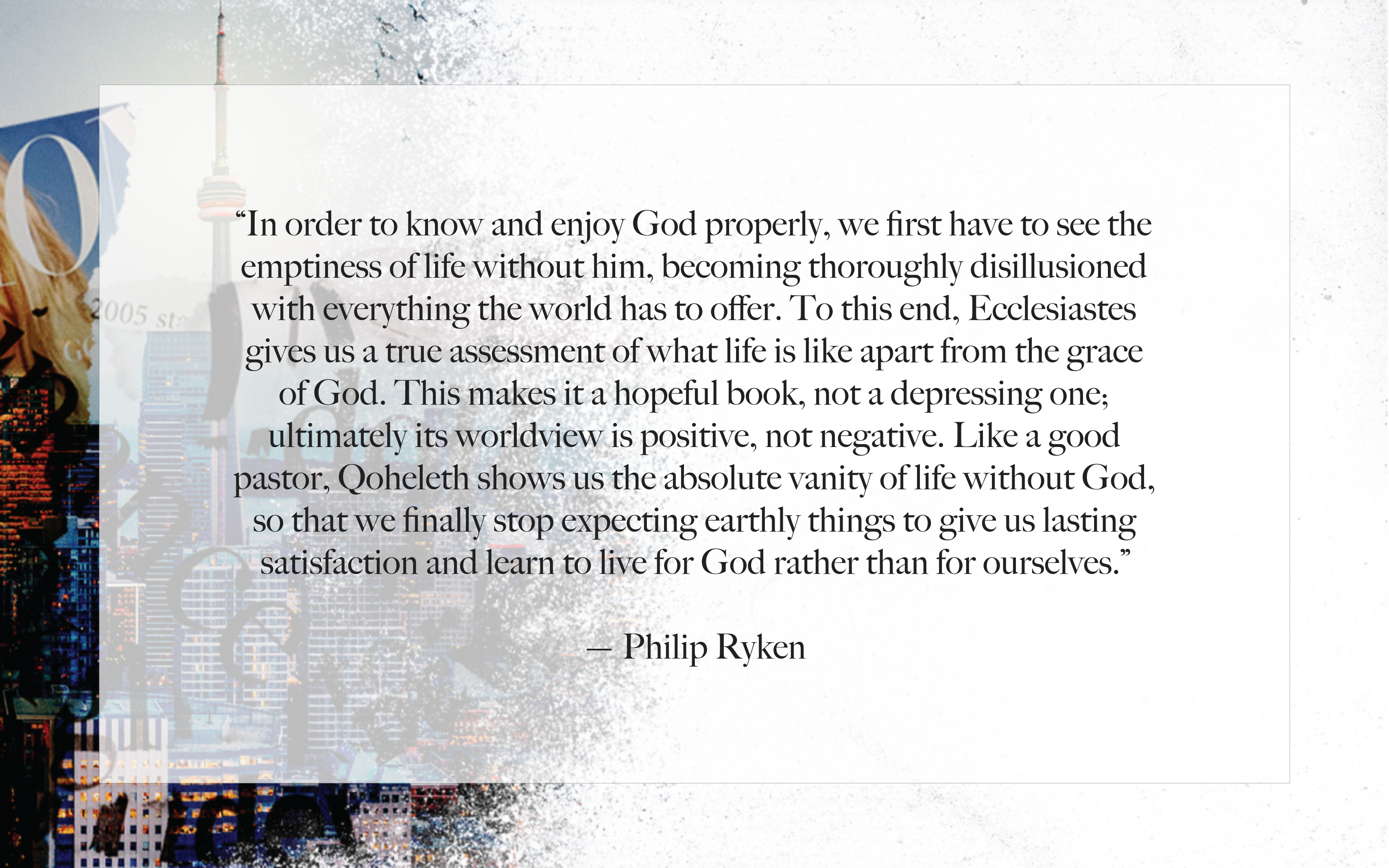




“Jesus Christ redeemed us from the vanity that Pastor Solomon so wrestled with and suffered under by subjecting himself to our temporary, meaningless, futile, incomprehensible, incongruous, absurd, smoke-curling-up-into-the-air, mere-breath, vain life. He was born under the sun. He toiled under the sun. He suffered under the sun. He died under the sun. But in his subjection to the curse of death by his own death on the cross, this Son of God ‘redeemed us from the curse’ (Gal. 3:13). By his resurrection, he restored meaning to our toil. And by his return, he will exact every injustice and elucidate every absurdity as he ushers those who fear the Lord in the glorious presence of our all-wise, never-completely-comprehensible God.”

— Douglas Sean O'Donnell

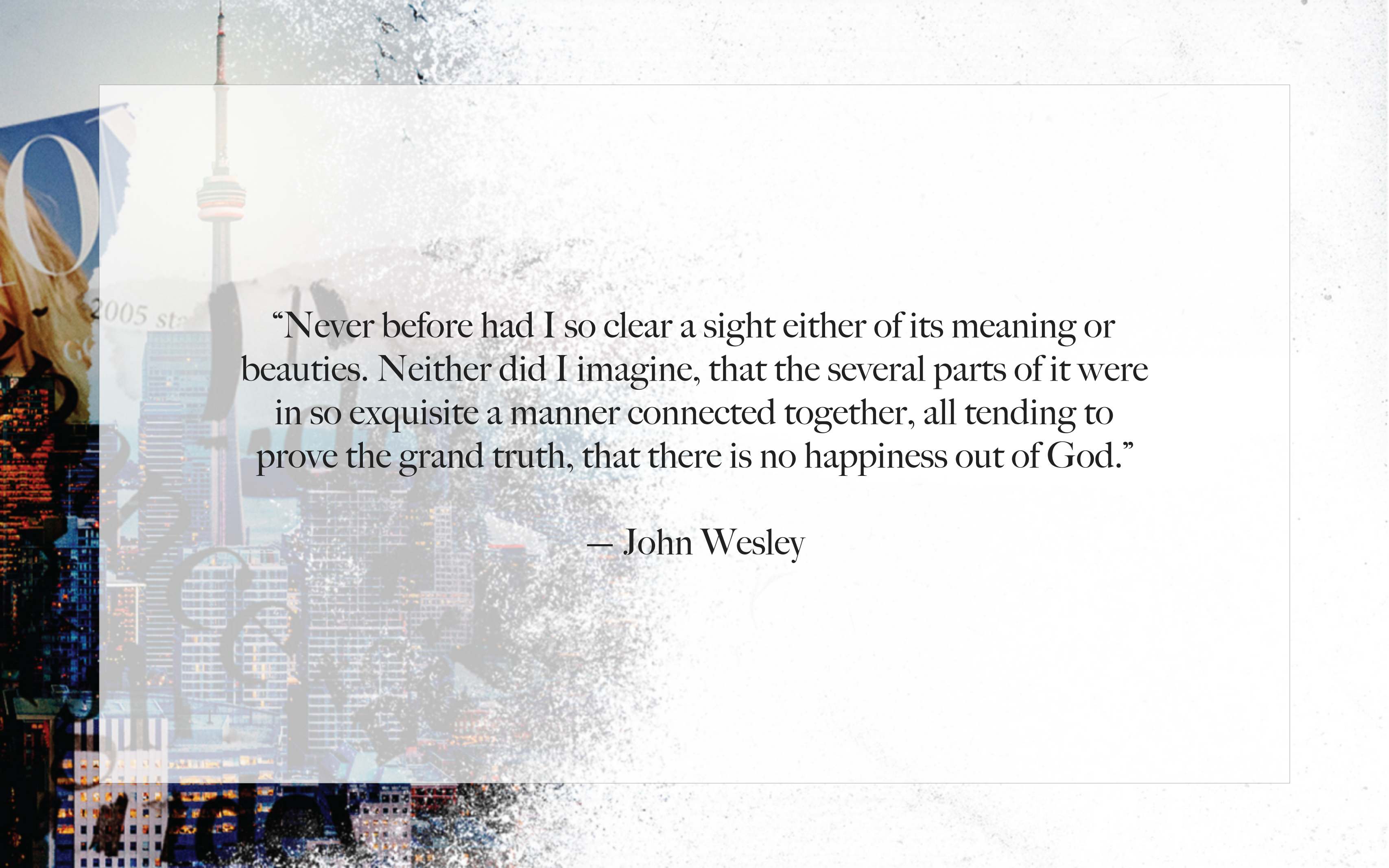


The background of the slide features a composite image. On the left, there is a vertical strip showing a book cover with a blue and gold design and the text "2005 sta" and "GO". The main background is a faded, artistic rendering of a city skyline at night, with the CN Tower prominently visible on the left side. The text is overlaid on this background.

“In order to know and enjoy God properly, we first have to see the emptiness of life without him, becoming thoroughly disillusioned with everything the world has to offer. To this end, Ecclesiastes gives us a true assessment of what life is like apart from the grace of God. This makes it a hopeful book, not a depressing one; ultimately its worldview is positive, not negative. Like a good pastor, Qoheleth shows us the absolute vanity of life without God, so that we finally stop expecting earthly things to give us lasting satisfaction and learn to live for God rather than for ourselves.”

— Philip Ryken

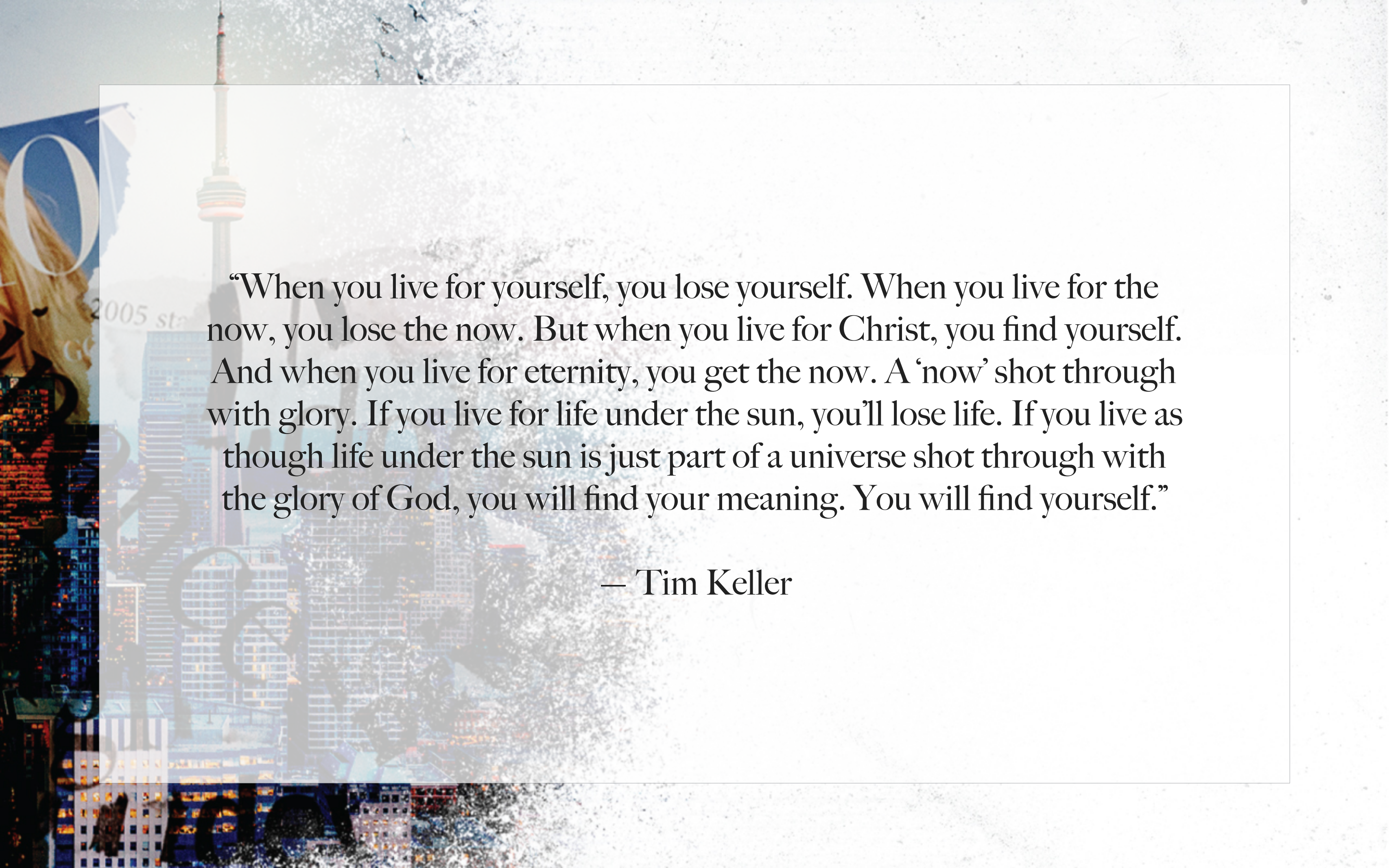




“Never before had I so clear a sight either of its meaning or beauties. Neither did I imagine, that the several parts of it were in so exquisite a manner connected together, all tending to prove the grand truth, that there is no happiness out of God.”

— John Wesley





“When you live for yourself, you lose yourself. When you live for the now, you lose the now. But when you live for Christ, you find yourself. And when you live for eternity, you get the now. A ‘now’ shot through with glory. If you live for life under the sun, you’ll lose life. If you live as though life under the sun is just part of a universe shot through with the glory of God, you will find your meaning. You will find yourself.”

— Tim Keller





# ECCLESIASTES

MAKING SENSE OF A COMPLEX WORLD