

iLight21

A lit candle is placed on top of a globe of the Earth. The candle is lit, with a bright yellow and orange flame. The globe shows the Americas and parts of Europe and Africa. The background is black.

Finding and Affirming
Hope in the 21st Century

Alain Gendron

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in the 21st Century

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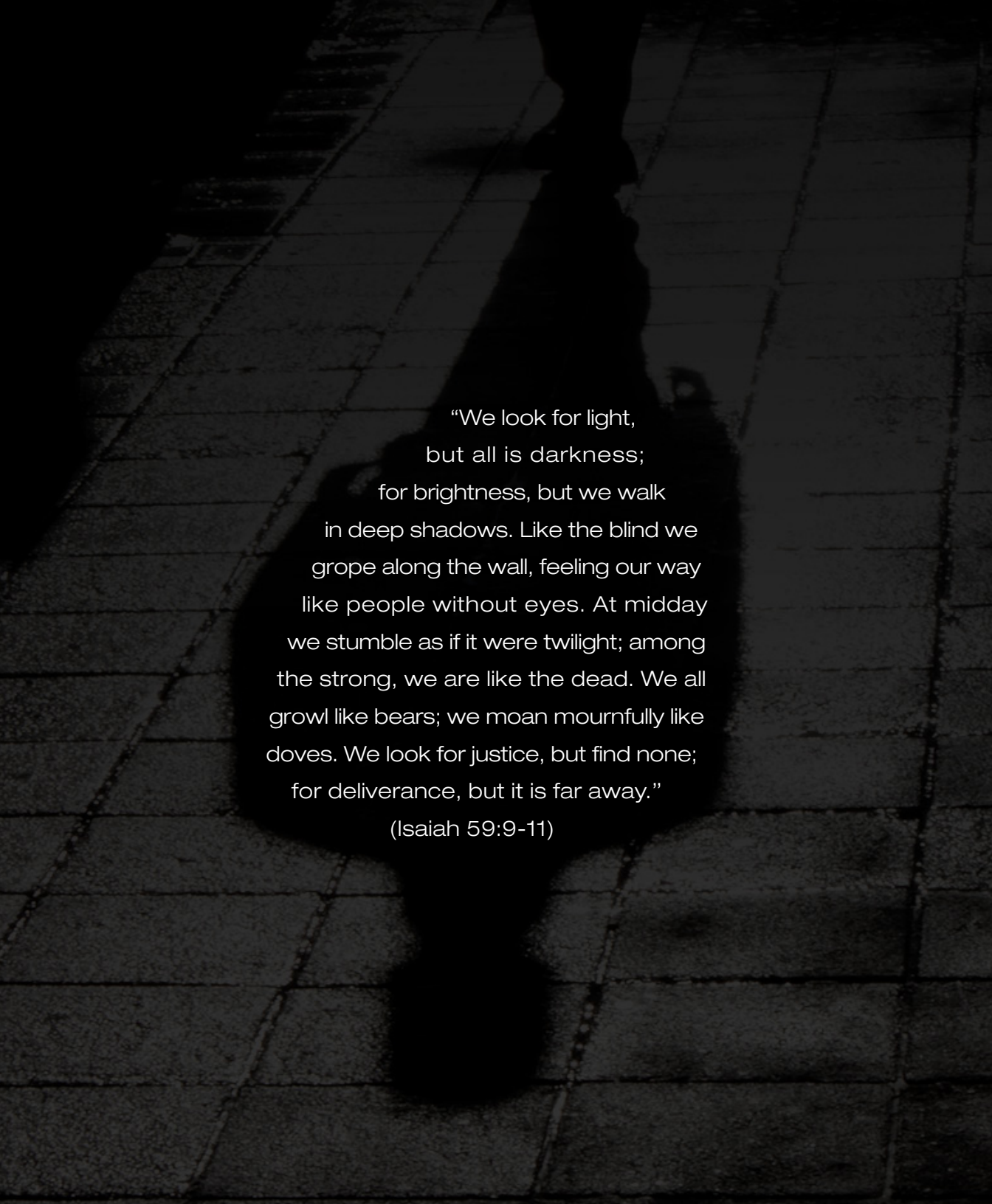
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“We look for light,
but all is darkness;
for brightness, but we walk
in deep shadows. Like the blind we
grope along the wall, feeling our way
like people without eyes. At midday
we stumble as if it were twilight; among
the strong, we are like the dead. We all
growl like bears; we moan mournfully like
doves. We look for justice, but find none;
for deliverance, but it is far away.”

(Isaiah 59:9-11)

“Yet when I **hoped** for good, evil came; when I looked for **light**, then came **darkness**.”

(Job 30:26)

“Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a **light** to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and **wait in hope** for my arm.”

(Isaiah 51:4-5)

“Give glory to the LORD your God before he brings the darkness, before your feet stumble on the darkening hills. You **hope** for **light**, but he will turn it to utter **darkness** and change it to deep gloom.”

(Jeremiah 13:16)

“...having the eyes of your heart **enlightened**, that ye may know what is the **hope** of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints...”

(Ephesians 1:18)



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How could the light we expected turns so fast into darkness?

With the endless possibilities of a hi-tech universe, the 21st century looked brighter than any other. But political and social unrest, terrorism and the recent COVID-19 pandemic have created this total blackout where it's almost impossible to figure the way out.

All this has revealed to the whole human race the shakiness of any confidence put only in the things they see. Living with the perspective of death and many uncertainties about the future, millions are now ready to reconsider the way they live, individually and collectively.

More significant, they understand they need REAL hope! But how do they find it? This book intends to help everyone answer that question. Christians will be reminded that they need to look beyond their dark circumstances to that great hope that will become a reality one day. And unbelievers will discover in a new way what the Christian hope is all about and how they can connect with the light and hope that has helped humanity get through its darkest times.



Vain hope or priceless gift?


In life, you get what you expect. If you expect anything, there are good chances you'll get that. Unless something you didn't plan suddenly changes the course of your life.

Even though I underwent this kind of experience when I became a Christian, my transformation from a gloomy and shy teenager into a young adult filled with joy and peace caused much turmoil amongst my family and friends.

Many were perplexed about my sudden decision to join a "religious sect," and my family tried without success to make me change my mind. They failed to see that this transformation was not something I had made up myself but was an undeserved gift from the God of the Bible, who declares himself to be the ultimate source of love, peace, and joy.

Looking back 40 years later, I can see how the hope found early in my life had impacted my future in ways I could not have imagined. This book is a testimony to the bright perspectives revealed when an individual, a community or a whole nation push open the doors of hope available to them through faith in Jesus.

Alain Gendron



SECTION 1
FINDING
HOPE

*“What oxygen is for
the lungs, such is **hope**
for the meaning of life.”*

Emil Brunner

Scanning the skies

Since the beginning of time, our ancestors have been fascinated by the vast expanse above their heads and have spent countless hours trying to decipher the mystery of these stars and planets who rule with such amazing precision over day and night.

In an age where science has concluded that life is a mere cosmic accident, most people go on with their lives without asking themselves any big questions. But when we contemplate eternity, we cannot help but wonder if our mortal existence could have a greater meaning after all.



Who turned that switch on?

No light, no life! That's the basic equation one faces when considering the universe.

Without the energy and warmth radiating from the sun to sustain all the plants, insects, animals and human beings, life would simply stop on our planet.

Today, while a majority of scientists have come to dismiss the existence of a Creator, one fundamental question still remains: who turned on the switch of the vital source of energy of the sun?



How could the ancients believe that?

For modern and educated men, everything that happened before their own time is suspected of belonging to the world of superstition and myths.

It is true that the imagination of philosophers has often gone wild as they tried to figure out the meaning of the universe. Hindu cosmology, for example, pictured the earth as being supported by elephants, which in turn were supported by a giant tortoise.

China, Egypt, Greece and other cultures may have developed similar imaginative stories, but there was so little truth in their stories that they are now completely buried in obscurity.

But how could they know that?

Browsing through the vast catalog of ancient mythology, a serious enquirer may still find some surprising truths in some of the oldest records of man's history.

The book of Job, considered to be one of the oldest books of the Bible along with the first eleven chapters of Genesis, viewed the Earth this way: "He spreads out the northern skies over empty space, he suspends the earth over nothing" (Job 26:7)

Too bad for the tortoise and elephants...

In the first chapter of the book of Genesis, we read that statement: "And God said, 'Let there be **light**,' and there was **light**." (Genesis 1:3)

It is rather significant that this book written more than 3,500 years ago begins by acknowledging that light is the most fundamental form of energy.

Today, we know that everything in the physical universe is energy in one form or another (heat, sound, electricity) and that even matter is a form of energy. In describing the creation of the world in Genesis 1, the Bible contains no errors or exaggerations.



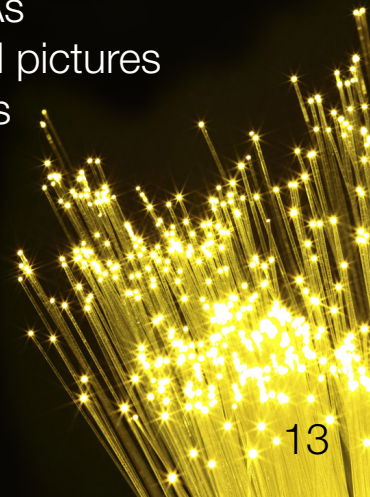
Traveling at light speed

Camels may not be the fastest animals, but the book of Job, written at a time when they were widely used as cargos, contains remarkable modern questions from God about the nature of **light**.

“What is the way to the abode of **light**? And where does darkness reside? Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings?” (Job 38:19-20)

“Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, ‘Here we are’?” (Job 38:35)

From these, we learn that **light** is always moving while darkness is static. And we may even have a hint about its ability to carry messages. As our modern devices, transmitting texts and pictures by lightning-fast electronic communications do by transforming electrical energy into sound and **light** energy.



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