

In the Gaze of the Almighty | 2 Chronicles 34:1-3 | 2/26/17

Josiah... did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. (34:2)

Eyes = *ayin* (Hebrew); *ophthalmos* (Greek)

TDNT, Vol. V

Ophthalmos – first “apple of the eye,” then “eye,” ... The great significance of the eye as the main agent relating man to his environment... 375

In the LXX *ophthalmos* occurs 700 times; it is almost always *ayin*. The frequency is noteworthy... It rests on the poetic usage which has eyes for the person who sees, (“to perceive,” “to note,” “to judge” etc.)... Often there is reference to God’s eyes:

You shall therefore keep the whole commandment that I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and take possession of the land that you are going over to possess... a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. *Deuteronomy 11:12*

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.” And Gideon said to him, “Please, sir, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.” And the Lord turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?” And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” And the Lord said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.” And he said to him, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speaks with me. Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you.” And he said, “I will stay till you return.” *Judges 6:12-18*

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love. *Psalms 33:18*

The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. *Psalms 34:15*

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. *Proverbs 15:3* 376

In the New Testament *ophthalmos* occurs 100 times... usually mentioned as the organ of sight. Only rarely, and always figuratively is there reference to the eyes of God:

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. 1
Peter 3: 12 quoting Psalm 34:15

The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12-13 378

F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews, (Eerdmans, 1964).

Hebrews 4:13: We may conceal our inner being from our neighbors, and we can even deceive ourselves; but nothing escapes the scrutiny of God; before Him everything lies exposed and powerless. And it is with Him, not with our fellow-men or with our own conscience, that our final reckoning has to be made. Stripped of all disguise and protection we are utterly at the mercy of God, the Judge of all. Therefore, "let us give diligence . . . !" 83

Meek, Loving To Know

...it was the tiny wild cedar waxwing, which grew back to flying health that summer of 2003 sitting on my shoulder. He wanted nothing more than to gaze at and be near my face. He wanted me always in his sight. He would fall asleep with his chest and bill gently touching my cheek. I learned that cedar waxwings are birds that dwell in groups. I was Bandit's "group." Bandit taught me that I may so gaze, even in my brokenness, at the life-and love-gazing face of my Heavenly Father. 300

I termed this gaze *noticing regard*... I felt immediately that in the gaze of my friends I was seeing the gaze of God... I felt that *this* was what the woman at the well in Samaria must have seen, in the face of Jesus, and what understandably lit her fire. His look of noticing regard conferred dignity. It was the noticing regard, not the naming of her sins, which impelled her excited race to bring her antagonists to Christ. 301

It transformed me and gave me, for the first time, a fledgling sense of personal beauty and wholeness... What is more, for the first time in my life I began to think of God knowing me with specificity... I actually began to feel that God delighted in me... Noticing regard, as I experienced it palpably, was a transformative knowing by another. It was self-knowing engendered by the face of another... I felt a sense of personal beauty. I connected it to seeing the face of God. It was a simultaneously self-knowing and God-knowing in reciprocity. And it changed me to invite the yet-to-be-known disarmingly. 301-302

Moltmann-Wendel recounts the early alienation of females from their bodies, often due to the lack of a “glint” in the eye of a father in which a girl may see her body as beautiful and desirable. “From then on too much emptiness and longing for fullness dog girls’ lives, and that can become the drama of their lives... “ Being composed in the gaze of the loving Other, the sort of thing that issues in a sense of personal beauty, is needed by all humans. Similarly, John and Staci Eldredge argue that every little girl asks a haunting question: “Am I lovely?” From her father in particular, for the sake of her life-time wholeness, she needs an affirmative response to her question. 302-303

Both Moltmann-Wendell and the Elodredges suggest that a sense of personal beauty is something meant to grow in the context of the loving notice of parents from a child’s earliest days. That it took me until I was almost fifty reveals the abnormality of my situation and my misperception.303

A delighted gaze accords value to the person in her or his embodied particularity. And this knowing and self-knowing lights the lamp of personal beauty that then may glow indefinitely, conferring life-giving dignity and beauty upon others. 305

This holds a most critical exhortation for all of us: we must grow much better at registering delight in other persons. 306

A sense of personal beauty unleashes us to be engaging, winsome, knowers who exercise delight, noticing regard, as an effective strategy to invite the real. 309