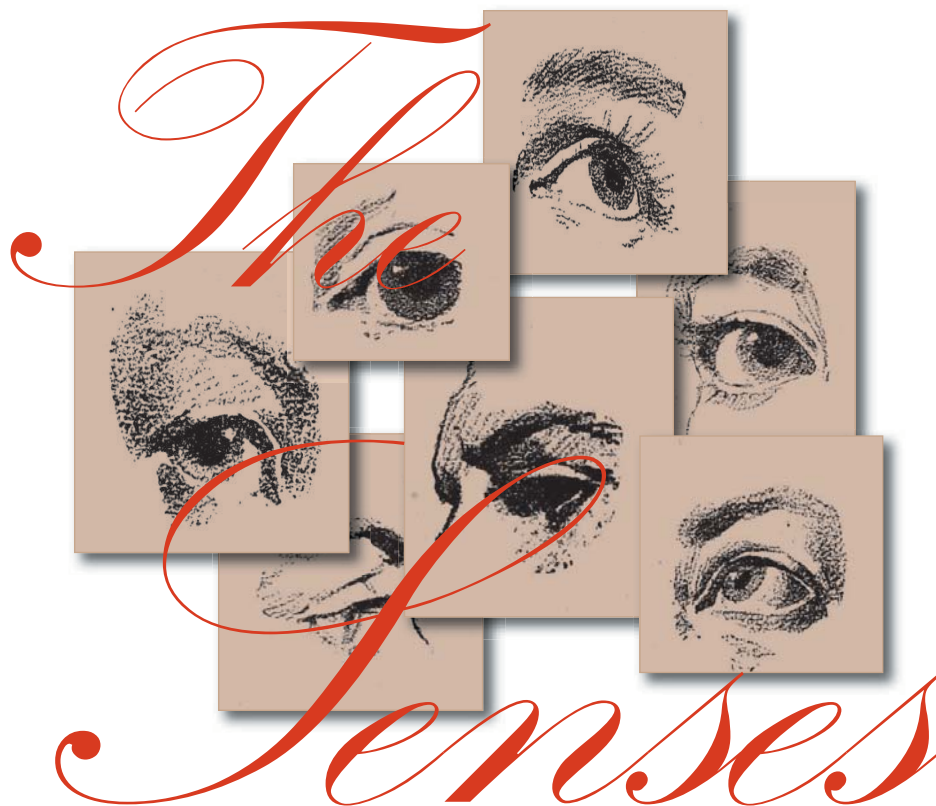


WHEN THEY ENTERED, HE LOOKED AT ELIAB AND THOUGHT, "SURELY THE LORD'S ANOINTED IS BEFORE HIM." BUT THE LORD SAID TO SAMUEL, "DO NOT LOOK AT HIS APPEARANCE OR AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS STATURE, BECAUSE I HAVE REJECTED HIM; FOR GOD SEES NOT AS MAN SEES, FOR MAN LOOKS AT THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE, BUT THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART."

(1 SAMUEL 16:6-7)



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few years ago this enfeebled writer stepped into a new epoch, a time of epic transition, a period of grand cosmic flux after which the world as he saw it would never again be the same.

I got glasses.

Understand, for almost fifty years I enjoyed vision of almost mythical clarity—always being the first in the car to read the approaching road sign, able to read the tiniest fine print on the back of a medicine bottle, identifying the smallest animal from a great distance. And one grows accustomed to being perfect, you know. Somewhere in the cosmos it is written that what is, will always be; eyeglasses were for people who have worn them for years—not for this one who always enjoyed such Immaculate Perception.

But then words on the television screen began sprouting companions, a brother image slightly skewed to the left and down. Reading anything from the printed page required much

squinting and flexing of the elbows to set the book just the correct distance from the eyes. So with great fear and trepidation I made an appointment at a nearby Corrected Vision Emporium, and found myself sitting in an alien environment: a small, dimly lit room peering through a Medusa-like contraption, reading rows of letters projected onto the wall.

Suddenly, that which I had believed all along to be sharp, through the magic of optical glass became *truly* sharp and clear! Over a period of decades my vision had so slowly deteriorated that what I had perceived to be perfect was, in fact, not. In recent years my eyes had been lying to my brain, telling it that this was as good as it gets, while all along denying the need for extra clarity. Not only had my eyesight deteriorated, but it had done so unevenly. Now my aging eyes required one prescription for things distant, and a different prescription for things nearby.

So I got bifocals. Oy.

A Timeless Clarity

Even the most callused agnostic will admit that if there really is such a thing as a god, he or she certainly would be capable of seeing everything and anything that transpires on this blue-white ball hanging in space. After all, that is just part and parcel of being a god: all-seeing, all-knowing, etc. It just goes with the territory. Any self-respecting, card-carrying god would have the ability.

But the Christian knows that while there are not gods, there is a God—and He most certainly is all-everything.

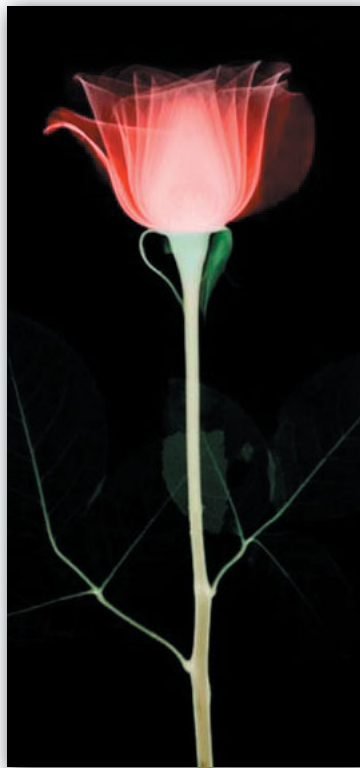
Not only does God see, but He sees in ways both awe-inspiring and terrible to mere flesh. He sees *everything*, no matter how infinitesimally tiny, no matter how craftily hidden, no matter how far away. God does not need bifocals; He sees everything that exists—both nearby and far away—with a sharp clarity that makes High Definition Television seem blurred and distorted.

Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He

said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

(Exodus 3:13-14)

Beyond that acuity, however, God’s eyesight is inexorably linked to *time*. For, to God, there is no time: no present demarcated from history or future. For God, all of time is so universally *now*, as not to exist at all. God dwells outside of time as we understand it. Which means that at once He not only sees everything in our present, but He sees with equal clarity everything in what we refer to as the past, and everything in what we refer to as the future.



X-ray Vision

As if this over-arching vision were not sufficient, God’s eyesight has one more quality. Man sees only what is reflected for him—light bounced from one surface to another. But God sees with the hot displacing vision of a laser, slicing down into that which is unseen to natural man.

“...for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

(1 Samuel 16:7b)

Here God’s vision is inexorably linked to *election*. He is capable of seeing everything and anything. No caveats. No excuses. No corrective lenses perched atop His nose. But His eyesight is, as it were, selective.

When He looks down upon an unregenerate sinner, someone utterly and eternally detached from His Spirit, God sees every part of that person. He sees the hard outer crust of sin’s putrefaction, the self-centered machinations percolating in the mind, the cold depravity of the heart. His vision, by choice, misses nothing.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

But when He looks down upon a member of His elect—a believer in Christ—God sees not the corruption, but the cleansing blood of His Son. Believe it, in the eyes of flesh the corruption is still there; from a human standpoint we are covered by the same putrefaction, the same self-centeredness, the same depravity as our unregenerate neighbor. But with a selective focus, God looks at the condition of the believer’s heart. Finding there the Spirit in residence, He sees only a justified son or daughter.

...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—

(Revelation 1:5)

By God’s sense of sight, the Christian’s outer covering is no longer sinful flesh, but the cleansing, regenerating blood of Christ. ■