

## THE FACE OF GOD

### TEXT: PSALM 27:7-14

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. The face of God is mentioned three times in Psalm 27 (vss. 8, 9).
2. The face of God is also mentioned many other times in Scripture.
3. In Psalm 13:1, David prayed, "How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?"
4. In Psalm 17:15, David says, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."
5. Psalm 34:16 says, "The face of the LORD is against them that do evil."
6. Deuteronomy 34:10 says, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face."
7. Furthermore, other similar words are used -- countenance, presence, etc. For example, David said in Psalm 139:7, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence (face)?"
8. Students of Scripture understand that we can only think of God in terms applicable to man. Therefore we see in Scripture different parts of the human body applied to God.
  - Genesis 5:22 and 24 says, "And Enoch walked with God."
  - Genesis 8:21 says, "The LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake..."
  - In Deuteronomy 26:8, Moses said, "And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm."
  - The LORD said to Moses, "And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33:22, 23).
  - Deuteronomy 33:27 says, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."
  - Exodus 31:18 says the LORD gave unto Moses two tables of testimony "written with the finger of God."
  - Exodus 15:8 says "And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together..."

- Jesus said to Satan, "It is written (Deuteronomy 8:3), Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."
  - Second Samuel 22:9 says, "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it."
  - Psalm 89:34 says, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips."
  - Isaiah 30:27 says, "Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire."
  - Isaiah 59:1 says, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."
  - Second Chronicles 16:9 says, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth..."
9. Jesus said in John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
  10. Spirits do not have eyes and ears and nostrils and lips and a tongue and and a mouth, and fingers and hands and arms and legs and a back and a heart, etc.
  11. These figures of speech are called anthropomorphisms, that is, attributing human form and shape to God.
  12. The face is the most important part of man. Therefore, references to the face of God are very important.

## **I. THE FACE OF GOD SIGNIFIES THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

## **II. THE FACE OF GOD EXPRESSES THE WILL OF GOD**

## **III. THE FACE OF GOD INDICATES THE CHARACTER OF GOD**

### **I. THE FACE OF GOD SIGNIFIES THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

1. The face of God signifies the presence of God. Psalm 24:6 says, "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah." Seeking God's face means seeking His presence.
2. Fanny Crosby wrote,  
Trusting only in Thy merit,  
*Would I seek Thy face;*  
Heal my wounded, broken spirit,  
Save me by Thy grace.
3. The first reference to the face of God is found in Genesis 4:14, where we read that Cain fled from the face of God.

4. After murdering his brother Abel, Cain became a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth.
5. We know that the face of God represents the presence of God because Genesis 4:16 says, "And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden."
6. Last Sunday night our special speaker said the presence of God is not real to many young people. I think the presence of God is not real to many older people too.
7. You will recall that in Genesis 32, Jacob wrestled with a man until the breaking of the day. We know it was not an ordinary man. In fact it was the pre-incarnate Christ.
8. Genesis 32:30 says, "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."
9. "Peniel" means, "the face of God."
10. In Judges 6:12, an angel of the LORD (the pre-incarnate Christ) appeared unto Gideon.
11. Judges 6:22 says, "And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face."
12. "And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die" (Judges 6:23).
13. Isaiah 63:9 refers to "the angel of his presence." The Hebrew word *pä·nēm'* translated "presence" here literally means, "face."
14. Last week I quoted Exodus 33:14, where the LORD said to Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."
15. The Hebrew word translated "presence" means "face" here also. In fact, whereas this Hebrew word is translated "presence" 76 times, it is translated "face" 390 times. Sometimes this Hebrew word *pä·nēm'* is translated "before" (1,137 times).
16. For example, Jonah 1:2 and 3 says, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me (literally, "before my face"). But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence (face) of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence (face) of the LORD."
17. Genesis 6:11 says, "The earth also was corrupt before God (before the face of God) and the earth was filled with violence."

18. The same Hebrew word is found twice in Genesis 4:14, where Cain says to the LORD, "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face (presence) shall I be hid."
19. I said this is the first mention of the face of God in the Bible, but actually the first mention is found in Genesis 3:8 -- "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence (face) of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden."
20. Last week I preached from Psalm 16:11 -- "In thy presence (face) is fulness of joy."
21. Hundreds of verses could be quoted, demonstrating that the face of God always signifies the presence of God. When David got into sin, he cried out to the LORD, "Cast me not away from thy presence (face); and take not thy holy spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11).
22. Sin hides God's face. Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face (presence) from you, that he will not hear."
23. Here in Psalm 27:9, David prays, "Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation."
24. When God's face is hidden, God seems far away and there is despair.
25. On the other hand, the face of God signifies hope and encouragement. Psalm 42:5 says, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance (face or presence)."
26. The face of God guarantees rest. The LORD said to Moses, "My presence (face) shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."
27. The face of God represents power. Psalm 114:7 says, "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence (face) of the Lord, at the presence (face) of the God of Jacob."
28. The face of God assures us of protection. Psalm 31:20 says, "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence (face)."
29. The face of God brings joy and gladness. Psalm 21:6 says, "For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance (face or presence)."

## **II. THE FACE OF GOD EXPRESSES THE WILL OF GOD**

1. We understand this easily because men express themselves by their facial expressions -- smiling, frowning, winking the eye, looking surprised or unhappy or angry, etc.

2. There is an interesting scene in Shakespeare's play, *Julius Caesar*, where Cassius and Brutus are outside the capitol, getting ready to kill Caesar. Brutus is very afraid that Popilius Lena will warn Caesar about their conspiracy.
3. But Brutus assures Cassius that all is well by looking at the faces of Popilius Lena and Caesar. He says, "Cassius, be constant: Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes; For, look, he smiles, and Caesar doth not change."
4. The face of men like Popilius Lena and Julius Caesar reveal their purpose, their desires, and their will.
5. And the face of God reveals God's purpose, and God's desires, and God's will. Notice in Psalm 27:8 that the LORD says, "Seek ye my face." This is a command, expressing God's will, His desire, and His purpose.
6. This command implies a promise of finding God's face, for God would not have us seek Him in vain.
7. There is an expression found four times in the book of Psalms -- "light of thy countenance" (Ps. 4:6; 44:3; 89:15; 90:8).
8. The word translated "countenance" means "face of God" or "presence of God," and it signifies guidance. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance" (Ps. 89:15).
9. Fanny Crosby wrote, "I know that the light of His presence With me doth continually dwell."
10. By the way, Fanny Crosby was blind yet she could say, "I know that the light of His presence With me doth continually dwell." Yet there are many people who have good eyesight but do not dwell in the light of God's presence.
11. Psalm 44:3 speaks of the Israelites being guided by the LORD'S right hand, and His arm, and the light of His countenance (face).
12. The LORD gave them victory over victory. The Psalmist said, "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance" (Psalm 44:3).
13. The face of God brings sinners under conviction. The face of God exposes sin. Psalm 90:8 says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance (face)."

### **III. THE FACE OF GOD INDICATES THE CHARACTER OF GOD**

1. We can tell much about a man by looking at his face. When the famous Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson, who served in Burma for almost forty years, was home on furlough many, many years ago, he passed through the city of Stonington, Connecticut.
2. A young boy, playing about the wharves at the time of Judson's arrival, was struck by the missionary's appearance. He had never before seen such a light on a man's face.
3. Many years later that boy became a famous preacher himself, Henry Clay Trumbull. One chapter in his book of memoirs is entitled, "What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson."
4. Physiognomy is the theory that a person's appearance reflects his character. An engraving of George Washington was included in a book entitled *Essays on Physiognomy*. The book says this about President Washington -- "Everything in this face announces the good man, a man upright, of simple manners, sincere, firm, reflecting and generous."
5. We can tell much about a man by looking at his face. How much more when we consider the face of God!
6. Revelation 1:16 says our Lord's "countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."
7. Matthew 17:2 says that up on the Mount of Transfiguration, our Lord's "face did shine as the sun."

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. These are my three points:
  - I. THE FACE OF GOD SIGNIFIES THE PRESENCE OF GOD
  - II. THE FACE OF GOD EXPRESSES THE WILL OF GOD
  - III. THE FACE OF GOD INDICATES THE CHARACTER OF GOD
2. *Or:*
  - I. Dwell in His Presence
  - II. Discover His Will
  - III. Delight in His Character
3. Psalm 27:8 -- "Seek ye (plural -- for all) my face." David took this personally -- "My heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek."
4. Let us seek God's face this Lord's Day!